

Sustainability Alumni Advisory Council Minutes: June 29, 2020

Attendees

Katharine Targett Gross, LU Sustainability Officer
Aleksander Gulkewicz, Office of Sustainability GA
Ellen Lobst '81
John Matranga '88
Amy Earley '93
Ben Walmer '98
Daniel Zarrilli '97
Victoria Herrmann '12

Meeting Agenda:

- Lehigh Updates and Progress
- Plan Progression
- Draft Vision and Mission Statement Discussion
- Draft 2030 Plan Goals Discussion
- Bethlehem Community Engagement
- Next Steps
- Questions

Lehigh Updates and Progress

- Lehigh Fall 2020
 - Will begin academic semester on August 24th (as scheduled) and will complete in person instruction by Thanksgiving
 - Integrating online and in-person coursework to suit the needs of all students
- COVID-19 impacts
 - Temporarily slowed down the progress for the 2030 plan as key departments are preoccupied with the financial impacts of the pandemic
 - There is the potential to leverage this going forward to make bold statements about sustainability and to view it in the lens of a grand challenge. How can we do this?
- Goal setting meetings
 - All goals finalized except for 2 (incorporating sustainability permanently into the Lehigh annual report and divestment/EGS/carbon neutral endowment)

- Waiting to discuss these two goals further with senior leadership, once the new provost starts on July 1
- Plan drafting and graphic design elements
 - Work has been continuing on drafting the plan and putting together the graphic design layout of the plan
 - The completed draft and design elements will be shared with the Lehigh Sustainability Council later this week or early next week
- Recent meetings
 - 5 Deans and CFO
 - Very positive meeting and the deans were onboard with integrating sustainability into their colleges
 - Decided the best way to do this would be for the office and the sustainability council to draft a framework for sustainability integration into the curriculum and college level strategic plans
 - Some items would be required and some would be suggestions
 - Each college would have a different timeline for this integration and for their college level strategic plan
 - Lehigh Sustainability Council
 - Presented the outcomes of the meeting with the 5 Deans and CFO
 - Rossin Dean's Advisory Council
 - Gave a brief overview of Lehigh sustainability while focusing on experiential learning opportunities in the Rossin College
 - Incoming provost
 - Met with the new provost to give a brief overview of Lehigh's sustainability goals in early June. He seemed very receptive and knowledgeable about sustainability in general. It was an interest of his. He wants to see it incorporated in Lehigh's next strategic plan
- Upcoming meetings
 - Senior leadership
 - Will give an update on the plan to senior leadership in the coming month or so
 - Board of Trustees - CPO Subcommittee
 - Will give an update on the plan to BOT - CPO Subcommittee at the October meeting

Plan Progression

- **Early July:** share the first draft of plan with LSC for feedback
- **Mid July:** Receive all feedback and address comments/make edits
- **Late July:** Share second draft of plan with LSC for final review
- **Early August:** Make final edits to plan and LSC drafts recommendation letter to senior leadership
- **Mid August:** LSC sends 2030 plan to senior leadership with recommendation

- **Goal is to release the plan by October 2020**

Draft Vision and Mission Statement Discussion

- Crafted a new vision and mission statement based on April 20th meeting's brainstorming
- A [revised draft](#) was shared before the meeting on June 29th
- Thoughts on the revised vision and mission statement:
 - Genna (comments via email)
 - Vision statement has significantly improved
 - Possibly include what sustainability is from Lehigh's perspective
 - Dan
 - There's a lot of good things in the new statements
 - If we can tie it to Lehigh's overall mission statement it would be more powerful
 - Less about language but more about how it is released (i.e., if it comes from the top of the university then it will be better)
 - It is missing language about specific outcomes or goals (e.g., carbon neutral, zero waste, etc.)
 - Ellen
 - Agrees with Dan, but is also worried about how people will relate to them if it doesn't tie to Lehigh's overall mission statement
 - She thinks that if the living body of the university (students, faculty, and staff) owns and adopts these statements then it will tie in with the entire university better
 - Victoria
 - A lot of leading language which is necessary, but we should also include collaborating and listening language
 - Ben
 - It is missing a regenerative component (such as collaboration and what is next) which would tie into the previous comments as well and make it inherently inclusive

Draft 2030 Plan Goals Discussion

- First completed draft should be done sometime later this week or early next week
- This process has been iterative and a bit challenging at times, but also very rewarding as it is coming together
- Unfinished 2030 plan goals
 - Incorporating sustainability permanently into the Lehigh annual report
 - Lots of support for this goal and it is still being worked on
 - Ultimately, it will be a decision made by President Simon
 - Divestment/ESG/Carbon neutral endowment

- Working with the CFO and others on this goal, but are waiting until the new provost begins (the next coming weeks) which is why the language and wording has not been finalized yet
- Thoughts on the draft 2030 plan goals:
 - Genna (comments via email)
 - [“Food as Medicine”](#) course originally learned about from Emory and Grady Medical Center could be replicated by Lehigh’s College of Health and St. Luke’s hospital network
 - Daniel
 - Covers lots of ground and likes the focus on electric bikes
 - It’s not clear if all items listed in the Climate Action section will add up to a specific goal and the importance of items is not ranked or listed
 - Is there any non-dollar amount or metric that we could use to show progress?
 - Social cost of carbon and the intangible benefits of projects
 - John
 - There is a good connection to North Bethlehem and extending sustainability efforts to there which was an important thing to mention
 - About $\frac{1}{3}$ of goals fall under the office and about $\frac{1}{4}$ fall under facilities which means we should be able to make significant progress on those goals
 - Make sure you can show the return on investment so early successes will be very obvious
 - Any thoughts about expanding investment in students to help push these goals forward? (ex: a sustainability scholarship)
 - Ellen
 - Lots of good content
 - Implementation should maybe be broken down into blocks of time (i.e. Goals that will be done within 2 years, 5 years, 7 years, etc.)
 - This would allow progress to be tracked easily
 - Amy
 - May want to classify based on which projects would have the best returns and make a way to measure them (particularly the energy efficiency section goals) rather than just done or not done.
 - Ben
 - Return on investment is important in sustainability so we should determine a way to analyse each project in terms of ROI to create a greater level of transparency
 - Katharine (comments and responses to other comments)
 - We will be able to prioritize based on return on investment, GHG emissions reductions, energy reductions, etc. to decide which projects to implement and to plan a budget

- A key component of of the communication strategy is how we can change the perceptions of incoming students and parents
- Working on a way to convey progress without dollar amounts
- There will be a Campus Sustainable Impact Fellowship launching in spring 2021. There are a lot of conversations happening now to see if the office can expand some of these fellowship opportunities and also if the office itself can expand beyond only 2 full time staff

Bethlehem Community Engagement

- Before COVID-19, we were actively working with Lehigh Community and Regional Affairs on coordinating at least one Bethlehem community meeting
- This 2030 plan is not a priority for those on the ground throughout Bethlehem
- Katharine is now sitting on the Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council and the Bethlehem Climate Action Stakeholder Committee to represent Lehigh and to listen to what other people think and what is important to them
- Katharine is actively attending and participating in the virtual city's climate action process also to gather even more input and opinions
- Post COVID-19, a public meeting (or virtual public meeting) with the community will be scheduled

Next Steps

- Finalize draft plan and share with LSC
- OoS and LSC finalize plan by early/mid August and recommend to senior leadership
- Release plan to campus in October 2020
- Upcoming projects/additional 1:1 consultations
 - Climate Action & Resiliency Plan (Dan, Victoria)
 - Campus farm (Ben)
 - Data first culture (John)
 - Zero waste (Ellen and Amy)
 - Transportation alternatives (Brendan)
 - ESG and tracking process (Sunny)
 - Academic integration (Victoria)
- Fall Sustainability Career Conversations
 - Will probably be partnering the the Office of International Affairs
 - Katharine would love for a couple of you to participate as panelists at this virtual event
- Who would like to continue on the Alumni Advisory Council going forward? (the plan is to have a check-in with the council about once a semester to assist with, and shape, plan implementation)
 - Amy - YES
 - John - YES

- Ellen - YES
- Victoria - YES
- Ben - YES
- Dan - YES
- Genna - YES
- Brendan - YES
- Sunny - TBD - let Katharine know by August 1 if you would like to continue

Questions

- Victoria and Daniel
 - In addition to full council meetings, will there be an opportunity to talk more individually about smaller projects/ideas?
 - Yes, Katharine will work to break these ideas into smaller categories to continue to work on them with the key alums on the council
- Daniel
 - Is there any way to make this group more diverse and inclusive to gather more voices and opinions?
 - Yes, once we hear back from all the previous members of the council, Katharine will talk with Development and Alumni Relations to add additional members.

Resources

- [LASA](#) - if you're interested in joining please let Katharine know and she will connect you with the leadership team
- [June 29, 2020 Presentation Slides](#)