

# Sustainability Alumni Advisory Council Minutes: April 20, 2020

## Attendees

Katharine Targett Gross, LU Sustainability Officer  
Miki Sankary, Assoc. Director of Development  
Olivia Barz, Office of Sustainability GA  
Brendan Casey, '11  
Amy Earley Morton, '93  
Victoria Herrmann, '12  
Ellen Iobst, '81  
Genna Reed, '09  
Ben Walmer, '98  
Daniel Zarrilli, '97  
John Matranga, '88

## Meeting Agenda:

- Lehigh Updates
- 1:1 Consultation Alumni Report Out
- Sustainability Strategic Plan Website - Feedback
- Sustainability Literacy Assessment Student Results
- Working Session: Creating a Sustainability Vision
- Next Steps
- Questions?

## Happy Earth Week!

- We are hosting a virtual event- see the end of this document for details
- Visit earth month celebration [webpage](#) for a list of other virtual events around the country all month long

## Lehigh Updates

- COVID-19 and Budget
  - Lehigh is experiencing significant costs and as well as some savings
  - Impacts to the budgets for the next 6-8 months at minimum
  - Maybe having to push goals back, particularly in facilities/campus operations

- Operating and infrastructure budgets cut for the remainder of the fiscal year and into next fiscal year
    - Lehigh is still more fortunate than others, good enrollment numbers still coming in and looking good for next year
    - We understand there will be some budget implications, but this is a 10 year plan, so keeping that in mind moving forward is important
  - Unclear if COVID-19 will impact the overall timeline of the plan
    - Will still likely be released in the fall
    - Goal setting meetings are in the process of being finalized and should be completed by early May
      - Goals finalized by May/June to be reviewed
      - Some delays in departmental goal setting meetings and higher level meetings due to COVID-19 delays
  - Upcoming meetings
    - 5 Deans and CFO (4/29)
      - Update on strategic plan and discussion on better integrating sustainability into academic experience in all 4 colleges
    - Senior leadership meeting (June TBD)
    - BOT call (June/July TBD)
    - Bethlehem community meeting (TBD)
  - Lehigh Giving Day Results
    - Raised a little under \$4,300
    - Going toward 4 priority areas
      - Campus innovation project- native meadowing on Mountaintop Campus
      - Student leadership development- supporting students to advance leadership qualities (conferences, webinars, symposiums, LEED GA exams, etc.)
      - Climate action and resiliency planning- investing in climate action and resilience plan
      - Sustainability content integration- support faculty to integrate sustainability into their curriculum
        - Online workshop coming up to instruct faculty how to integrate sustainability into curriculum, regardless of focus or subject

## 1:1 Consultation Report Out

- **Brendan Casey**
  - Energy and transportation issues
  - Divestment
    - Considering current events in oil markets, better time to get out
    - It has come up previously, but did not get traction with BOT, but should bring it up again while the oil markets are low
  - Reasons Lehigh may be having problems with transportation technology

- Problematic history with electric bus
  - Reasons why we may be having these problems and how to improve
  - Manufacturers, charging infrastructure, right type of technology for Lehigh's use, planning before making decisions on electric shuttle routes
- Examples provided of switching from diesel to electric or EV with reduction in costs
  - Some up front investment, but long term it doesn't take long to break even
- Fuel cells
  - How do we want to use it, planning before implementing
  - Locally based shuttle at Lehigh- electric will be cheaper in the long run because of back end operations and maintenance
  - Could be best used for stationary power and long haul trucking
- Telematics
  - You can't master what you don't measure
  - Measuring transportation needs to plan appropriately for the future
- Right sizing and optimizing the fleet, transportation master planning, smart charger infrastructure
- Fuel cell and electric will both be considered in cost benefit analysis
  - Air products partnered with LVHN and has supported a fueling station used as a demo site
  - Could be opportunities to partner with them
- PPA
  - Virtual does not always add up to savings
  - Work with ISO to lease land for wind and solar
- Energy service performance contracts
  - LEED for new buildings and retrofitting what is already built
  - Entire campus retrofitting
  - Third party financing
- **Amy Earley Morton**
  - Air Quality
    - Retrofitting buildings
      - Low hanging fruit
        - Light bulbs
        - Turning unoccupied buildings off at night
        - Indoor/outdoor air
    - MERC
      - Solar panels installed at office buildings to generate electricity on site
      - Co-generation power and steam for the site
      - Green roof

- Teleworking
  - Waste
    - Reuse
    - Recycle
    - Compost
    - Energy recovery
    - Incineration
    - Landfill
      - Less than 20% of operation sent to landfill by 2025
      - Last year at 9%, striving to reach that goal through recycling initiatives
  - Single stream recycling contamination struggles
    - Trying to get generators to separate recycling
  - Surplus property will soon be under the Office of Sustainability at Lehigh
    - Construction waste and recycling
    - Large projects already have good recycling rates
    - Small projects and renovations reducing will be improved
- **Victoria Herrmann**
  - Discussion around creating core program for Lehigh students to go through sustainability curriculum
    - Georgetown Core Pathway
    - Every student has the option of completing their requirements through a sustainability lense
    - Required course for incoming freshmen (Yale)
  - Alumni connections
    - Connect current students interested in sustainability careers to feel supported
    - Create a mentorship cohort
      - Year long program where students can work with a mentor and have webinars on sustainability topics to show the value of sustainability to Lehigh students and alumni
  - Ensure that Lehigh's emergency management of flooding, extreme heat, and extreme weather is rooted in participatory framework for Bethlehem residents and Lehigh is not assuming what is needed from the community related to extreme weather events
    - Community leaders and representatives are included in the early discussions and informs how Lehigh responds to those events
    - Including the community early rather than at the back end of those conversations
- **Ellen lobst**
  - Procurement and supply chain
    - Only working with suppliers that have sustainability plans and have that be a requirement for partnering with Lehigh

- Sustainability plans have to meet Lehigh's guidelines
    - When choosing vendors, look for minority run and locally run vendors
    - Smart Way certified, EPA guidelines round smart way partnerships
      - Carbon footprint reporting
  - Partnering with someone to produce own food on Lehigh land
  - Getting to zero waste
    - Waste audits around reducing, recycling and reuse
    - Reduce waste by improving efficiency of operations
      - Get employees involved
    - Worked with construction companies that had zero waste programs
      - Some needed help with that
      - Reusing construction waste
      - Donating concrete to the state as linings for water/sewer pipe
  - Composting facility
    - Clean food waste can sometimes be sold or donated to pig farms
  - Going digital in a bigger way
    - Mailing could just be done digitally
- **John Matranga**
  - You can't manage it if you don't measure it
  - Focus on data
  - Drill down into daily usage and consumers to understand overall trends in energy use
  - Having campus operations be data driven and not just project and transaction oriented
  - Having strong research tie to the data that is on campus
    - Partnership between campus operations and research
  - Experiential learning of the sustainability environment
    - Living laboratory to drive projects among students
    - Long running projects with Creative Inquiry
  - Data infrastructure to collect data from all operations sources to use toward these research and student run initiatives
  - UC Davis case study sustainable campus
- **Genna Reed**
  - Food waste
    - If there are events, leftover food could be brought to other locations in the Bethlehem community where there is need
  - Food procurement
    - Lehigh has a lot of local food and farms to source from and contribute to local economy
    - Lehigh farm contributing to local community and food on campus
  - Making sure Lehigh is acting as part of the larger Bethlehem community
  - Better filtration and air flow in new buildings and retrofitting older buildings
- **Ben Walmer**

- Lehigh food system and Lehigh farm
  - Data driven realities and using Lehigh as a living laboratory
  - Using the farm as a living laboratory
  - Key to financing the farm- researching data, integrating technology, and the college of health
    - Independent operating farm business outside firm dovetail with living laboratory component
    - Using and implementing new tech to generate and collect useful data, within healthcare sector as well
  - Networking food system data out to the local healthcare systems and other farms
- **Daniel Zarrilli**
  - Climate action
  - The value of commitment backed up by real action plans
  - How to align those goals with what other peer institutions are doing
    - Networking with other schools
    - What other schools and peers are doing
  - Divestment
    - Internal politics at Lehigh around BOT and President Simon
      - Value of student engagement and activism in divestment
      - Divestment as central to a climate action plan
      - What will get through to senior leadership and the board is working through Katharine on divestment
        - Can share sentiments and values of alumni with senior leadership who is saying what about divestment
      - Investing money into Lehigh rather than in oil

## Sustainability Strategic Plan Website - Feedback

- [Sustainability Strategic Plan Website](#)
- Send feedback after meeting

## Sustainability Literacy Assessment Student Results

- [Sustainability Literacy Assessment Student Results](#)
- 166 responses to 15 question multiple choice assessment on sustainability literacy
  - How can we close knowledge gaps

## Working Session: Creating a Sustainability Vision

- Current vision (2010)
  - Have sustainability be integrated into the values and practices of Lehigh
- Current mission (2010)

- Lead that integration of sustainability into operations, curriculum, co-curriculum research and engagement of the community
- Current Operating Objectives
  - Leadership- provide info, resources, and guidance to senior administrators
  - Policy development- we develop policies that promote environmentally sensitive behavior by campus users
  - Projects and programs- we create, implement and manage programs and events on campus that integrate sustainability in the engagement process and operations
  - Monitoring- establishing metrics and tracking sustainability performance
  - Outreach- sharing Lehigh's sustainability story and encouraging the campus community to contribute to its growth and success
- Think about vision statements
  - What are the characteristics of an effective vision statement
- Vision brainstorm
  - Brainstorm big, aspirational visions
  - Forward thinking
- What are ideas that you have in terms of key things you want to see in a vision statement covering the next 10 years
  - More powerful
  - To "have" vs. to "do"
  - Having a program in improving things related to climate change
  - We will have the leadership to make significant reduction in carbon emissions to make a real impact on climate change
  - Be the premiere university on training the next generation of climate leaders
  - Actions that are at the scale and pace of the current crisis
  - Being anticipatory
    - Not being reactive, but proactive to showcase engineering leadership
  - Definition of sustainability at a university campus looking at Lehigh 150 years from now and tie that into our story
    - What can we do to make Lehigh remain another 150 years
  - Life cycle thinking
  - Recovery and resiliency from emergency and extreme events
    - Thinking about infrastructure in a sustainable way makes you more resilient to things that may come up in the future
  - Culture
    - How to get sustainability into the forefront of minds of students who are not involved in an environmental club/major
    - You need the power of the people on campus to achieve sustainability
      - Doing your part
    - Making sure vision and mission is succinct enough to remember
    - Tie it in to experiential learning
      - Engaging the students through a living, vibrant campus

- Producing better, smarter students through sustainability and experiential learning
- Sustainability initiatives for and led by students being built into vision statement

## Summary of brainstorming session

- More powerful statement
- Making an impact on climate change and focusing on climate related issues
- Anticipatory rather than reactive
- Engineering leadership
- Culture shift and experiential learning
- For and led by students
- Tying Into the Lehigh emblem
- Regeneration and resiliency
- Lehigh as an actor in partnership with not just students and employees but also the greater community

## Next Steps

- Plan goals finalized by May/June
- Invite Alumni Advisory Council Members for goal presentation in June
- Upcoming projects/additional 1:1
  - Climate action resiliency plan (Dan, Victoria)
  - Campus farm (Ben)
  - Data first culture (John)
  - Zero waste (Ellen and Amy)
  - Transportation alternatives (Brendan)
  - ESG and tracking progress (Sunny)
  - Academic integration (Victoria)
- Opportunities for virtual events around these topics
  - Mountain talk
  - Coming to sustainability career conversations
- Sustainability Career Conversations with students
  - In the fall and spring
  - Meet alum in the field and network connections
- Lehigh Alumni Sustainability Alliance
  - Bring expertise and experience back to Lehigh to help shape the next generation of students.
  - Let Katharine know if you are interested in joining LASA and she can connect you will the leadership team



## Virtual Earth Day Keynote Speaker

- Wednesday, April 22 at 4:30 pm
- Joseph Robertson
  - Global Strategy Director, Citizens Climate Lobby
  - Integrative Geopolitics: Climate Resilience in a Post-COVID World
- [Join the webinar here](#)

## Resources

[April 20, 2020 Presentation Slides](#)

[Earth Month Celebration Web Page](#)

[Updated Strategic Plan Website](#)

[Literacy Assessment Results](#)