

ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

January 25, 2021 – 2:00pm
Zoom Meeting Protocol

Attendees: Paul Winistorfer, Jon Clark Teglas for Chris Kiwus, Nick Woods for Ken Miller, Mary-Ann Ibeziako, Mike Dunn for Liza Morris, Blake Bensman for Frances Keene, Denny Cochrane, Scott Kerklo, Rob Glenn, Rob Lowe, Matt Eick, Erin Hopkins, Jamie Stein, Brandon Burkey, Elena Lind

Guests: Sean McGinnis, Jeri Baker, Nick Quint, Steve Durfee, Lowell Jessee, Teresa Sweeney, Eli Meyer, Jody Booze-Daniels, Nathan King, Emily Vollmer, Nick Quint, Wendy Halsey,

Chair Denny Cochrane called the meeting to order at 2:00pm. A quorum was present. He welcomed members and guests. Professor Robert Weiss from the Department of Geosciences will be substituting for faculty member Professor Dana Hawley for the 2021 Spring Semester. The Chair introduced our new Campus Energy Manager Steve Durfee.

Adoption of Agenda. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion carried.

Announcement of Approval and Posting of Minute of November 17, 2020. Chair Denny Cochrane noted the minutes were approved by electronic vote prior to the end of the 2020 Fall Semester. The minutes can be accessed on the Governance Information System on the Web (<http://www.governance.vt.edu>).

Old Business:

Green RFP Subcommittee to Prioritize 2020-21 Student Proposals: Launched during academic year 2010-2011, the student Green RFP Program serves as a formal process for student organizations to advance their sustainability ideas for formal university consideration. To date a total of 83 proposals have been approved with funding exceeding \$1.2 million. The Energy and Sustainability plays a key role in the review process as it is tasked to prioritize those select student proposals deemed worthy of university consideration and funding.

Chair Cochrane announced this year a total of 65 student proposals were submitted to the Office of Sustainability – the second highest ever. Following a detailed technical review by subject matter experts, 29 select proposals were deemed worthy of further university consideration.

Historically the Energy and Sustainability Committee has selected a five member Green RFP Subcommittee to review and prepare a recommended priority order for presentation, discussion and approval by the full committee at our next meeting. The Subcommittee consists of 1 faculty member, 1 staff member, 1 graduate student, 1 undergraduate student, and full committee chair. Matt Eick volunteered to be the faculty member. Rob Lowe volunteered to be the staff member and Chair of the Green RFP Subcommittee. Jack Leff and Jennylynn Johnson volunteered to be the graduate student and undergraduate student members respectfully. Rob Lowe and the subcommittee will prepare their recommended priority list of student proposals, and he will

present that list to the full committee for review, discussion and approval at our next meeting on February 22, 2021.

STARS Update: STARS stands for the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Reporting System, and it is recognized nationally as the premier management tool for measuring our sustainability progress and performance. To date, the university has received 4 STARS ratings from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. The Office of Sustainability has the overall responsibility for gathering data and information for our 5th STARS submission. Chair Cochran reviewed the current status and noted that we have only a couple of items left to complete before our submission.

Associate Professor Sean McGinnis has led a team of students in preparing our 2019 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory and Assessment Report. Dr. McGinnis reviewed the process that was used to collect data and information, and announced that for the first time Virginia Tech is using the SIMAP protocol to review the results. Developed by the University of New Hampshire, STARS recognizes the value of having a Third-Party review of our GHG figures. Dr. McGinnis was extremely pleased with our work, and had just one minor suggestion. Dr. McGinnis is working with University Relations to prepare a quality report for use in our STARS submission and for placement on the Office of Sustainability Website. When completed, we will be in position to launch our 5th STARS submission.

VT 2020 Climate Action Commitment Financial Plan: Dr. Chris Kiwus (Vice President for Campus Planning, Infrastructure, and Facilities) and Mr. Ken Miller (Vice President for Finance) have been charged with conducting a financial analysis of the cost to implement the Virginia Tech 2020 Climate Action Commitment. The purpose is to have this information available for discussion at the upcoming March 20-21, 2021 meeting of the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors when the university seeks their approval of the VT 2020 CAC.

A team of nearly a dozen key operations and finance personnel from the Office of CIPF and the Office of Finance have been meeting weekly since early January to conduct this work. Assistant Vice President for Facilities Mary-Ann Ibeziako is representing Dr. Kiwus and she outlined the process being used and the goals we are working toward for this most important task.

New Business:

Comprehensive Waste Management Plan: Guest and Program Consultant Teresa Sweeny showcased the new Virginia Tech Comprehensive Waste Management Plan (CWMP). The intent is for this document to serve as a “user’s guide” to provide members of our university community with an overview of waste management operations, a listing of the numerous solid waste components for collection, and the names and information of our university contacts. This will be an outstanding reference and will be reviewed and updated annually.

Earth Week 2021 Program: Sustainability Coordinator Emily Vollmer addressed the planning process being used for Virginia Tech’s Earth Week 2021 Program. Traditionally Earth Week has been planned and implemented by the student group Environmental Coalition along with a number of other student organizations. Recently the Office of Sustainability has joined this

partnership and enhance collaboration and coordination. She announced Earth Week 2021 will take place during the period April 18-24, it will have daily themes, and that it will be mostly virtual similar to last year. Having been the Environmental Coalition's Earth Week 2020 Co-Planner, and three time student intern with the Office of Sustainability, Emily Vollmer is the ideal person to help plan and coordinate this year's program.

VT 2020 Climate Action Commitment Goal #13 - Proposal to Change E&SC name, charge and membership: The Virginia Tech 2020 Climate Action Commitment Working Group recommended the university consider renaming the Energy and Sustainability Commitment to become the Climate Action Sustainability and Energy Committee, or CASE, in Goal #13. Chair Denny Cochrane stated the Office of Policy and Governance has advised him that any change to the name, charge, and/or membership of an existing committee would take require approval by the university governance system, and to begin that process requires the recommend change be placed in resolution format. The E&SC would have to prepare the resolution, recommend approval, and then advance it to the Commission on University Support. The commission would in turn have two readings and a vote to approve. If successful, the resolution would proceed to University Council for action. The council would have two readings and a vote to approve. In summary, this process will take a full semester at best.

The Virginia Tech Board of Visitors will hopefully be presented the VT 2020 Climate Action Commitment Resolution for approval at their March 20-21 meeting. If the resolution is approved, Chair Cochrane suggested we use the remainder of the 2021 Spring Semester to prepare an initial draft of a resolution to change the name, charge, and membership proposed to be consistent with the language contained in the VT 2020 CAC Working Group's Final Report. This would give our commitment a jump start on the process for the 2021 Fall Semester. The members concurred with this approach. Chair Cochrane said he would lead that effort and reached out to other members to join him.

Open Discussion:

Climate Action Commitment Survey: Jack Leff seeks to prepare a short document (one-pager or so) that addresses the key components of the VT 2020. To facilitate this he wishes to prepare a survey for the university community seeking their input, and to prepare a separate survey for the general public. More to follow at our next meeting.

Member Observations: Dean Paul Winistorfer raised questions or concerns on three issues. Specifically, the effectiveness of the Big Belly Solar Trash Compactors/Recycling Units; water run-off, mud and erosion problems noted at various locations to include the outdoor track; and the design of our covered bike racks. All three issues will be addressed by appropriate campus personnel.

Announcements: The next meeting will be held on February 22, 2020 at 2:00pm using the Zoom protocol.

Adjournment: There being no further business, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried at 3:10pm