

## **Sustainability 2028 Planning Workshop: Engagement**

January 15, 2019, 2:00pm-4:00pm

### **Meeting Notes**

Recorded by Elias Platte-Bermeo

### **Meeting Attendees**

Seth Strongin,, Ellen Dux, Mark Ewalt, Farris Sukkar, Elias Platte-Bermeo, Joshua Sierra, Kim Sandoval, Emily Sandoval, Gabe Valenzuela, Nichelle Mitchel-Huizar, Gary Polakovic, Naomi Martinez, Nick Hudson, Ratri Lertluksamipun, Isabella Caltabiano, Matthew Stevens, Amy Blumenthal, Elizabeth Held, Lance Ignon, Ana Orvieto, Larissa Puro, Jim Key, Jose Eskenazi, Brooke Bell, Ron Mackovich

### **Agenda**

1. Introductions and goals of the meeting
  - a. This group represents the “USC Sustainability Culture Club” as the key experts and ultimately drivers of campus sustainability engagement
  - b. This is the first of 2 meetings centered on outlining campus engagement goals for the 2028 Sustainability Plan
2. 2028 Sustainability Plan overview
  - a. The Office of Sustainability and Sustainability Steering Committee (SSC) have been developing the 2028 Plan based on 3 key drivers:
    - i. 2 of President Folt’s Strategic Priorities
      1. Furthering sustainability, taking effective and extensive actions to lower the carbon, water and waste footprints of the USC campuses and the L.A. region.
      2. Embracing the urban future, solving problems faced by major world cities and leveraging the power of USC’s schools in new ways and in partnerships with USC’s neighbors.
    - ii. LA City + LA County Sustainability Plans and LA 2028 Olympics Sustainability Strategy
    - iii. 2020 Sustainability Plan
      1. Launched in 2015 and wraps in December 2020. Updates on progress towards the goals of the 2020 Plan live on the Office of Sustainability website
  - b. 2019 Annual Report published in February
    - i. The Office of Sustainability has gathered and will report info on the past year of progress towards the 2020 Plan goals in February through the 2019 Annual Report.

- ii. Previous Annual Reports live on the Office of Sustainability website.
- c. 2028 Plan current status:
  - i. Senior Administration has indicated that they want far more aggressive goals laid out in the 2028 Plan than were laid out in the 2020 Plan
  - ii. The tentative 2028 Plan goals you'll see today are not approved nor funded; please take this information back to your respective divisions but do not publicize this information.
- d. 2028 Planning Process Timeline
  - i. Beginning in September, the SSC has held 2 meetings per month to roughly outline goals for each major sustainability category in conjunction with key SMEs per each category
    - 1. The group in this meeting represents the SMEs for "Engagement"
  - ii. The remainder of 2020 will be quiet in terms of public-facing 2028 planning -- next Friday's full SSC Engagement meeting will be the final SSC meeting before the 2028 Plan Proposal is outlined and shared with senior administration. The full 2028 Plan should be launched in January 2021 if all goes according to schedule
- e. Tentative 2028 Plan goals:
  - i. In the planning process, the Office of Sustainability and its consultants have benchmarked against City of Los Angeles goals (among others) and want to move at least in tandem with the City's goals. The following tentative goals were shared with Cabinet, and as such, they only touch on high level goals. Each goal has many potential programs/initiatives behind it.
  - ii. Carbon Goals
    - 1. Carbon Neutrality by 2028
      - a. Largely dependent on FMS, Capital Construction, and Transportation
    - 2. Support City of LA Green New Deal Urban Trees Initiative
  - iii. Transportation Goals
    - 1. Develop infrastructure to support alternative modes of transportation
    - 2. Decrease by 35% the use of single-occupancy vehicles
    - 3. Require all new vehicles, all USC busses, all Campus Cruisers to be zero emissions
    - 4. Offer low-interest loans for electric vehicles
  - iv. Waste Goals

1. Increase landfill diversion to 90+% by 2022
2. Ban single-use plastic bottles by 2021
  - a. Jose asked if we're expecting RecycLA--the City of LA's new waste management system--to change at all in the near future to help further support
    - i. While it's unclear if there will be any major changes to RecycLA in the near future, Seth believes USC is a large enough player that if the university were to go zero waste it could help encourage greater zero waste across the city

v. Water

1. Reduce potable water use by 20% over 2014 baseline
2. Complete water conservation initiatives currently in progress
  - a. USC has currently installed roughly 90% of "purple pipe" recycled water infrastructure; currently waiting for the City to provide this recycle water to UPC, which could take until 2024

vi. Education & Research

1. In the Provost's spring 2019 "Mini Retreat," it was decided that planning and reporting of any sustainability goals touching Education & Research would fall under the Provost
    - a. President Folt convened the "President's Working Group on Sustainability" chaired by Dan Mazmanian with representatives from a wide variety of schools. This group is drafting plans to promote sustainability through Education & Research
  2. However, "engagement" is a great link between academics and the campus community. Communications staff from various academic schools are important for getting the sustainability message out to the community
  3. Note: faculty do sit on the SSC and are fully aware of this team's goals and proposals for sustainability as it relates to the USC built environment.
3. Creating a campus culture of sustainability through engagement
    - a. "Engagement" in the 2028 planning process is broadly defined as co-curricular education, marketing, communications, and outreach.
      - i. We are focused on increasing engagement around sustainability by encouraging sustainable behavior change and promoting/marketing built environment initiatives undertaken by the university

- ii. This involves engaging students, staff, faculty, and alumni; however, it also can involve strengthening ties to the broader community through external partnerships
- b. In the 2028 Plan, “Engagement” will rely on a distributed network of all the players in this room--and more. The Office of Sustainability will continue to be a driver of sustainability education and engagement, but successful sustainability engagement ultimately requires buy-in and sustained effort from stakeholders across the campus
  - i. Consider how your teams may support sustainability engagement at USC by:
    - 1. Communicating 2028 Plan status
    - 2. Educating new employees and students about the 2028 Plan, and the sustainability initiatives your unit is responsible for
    - 3. Conducting outreach and/or informational campaigns to your unit’s alumni, city contacts, community stakeholders, etc.
    - 4. Training staff to comply with sustainability objectives
  - ii. Consider how your teams can drive sustainable resource use behavior change
  - iii. Consider how your sustainability engagement initiatives can help to achieve USC’s 2028 Plan carbon neutrality, zero waste, and water goals
- 4. Working session: Develop 2028 Plan Engagement strategy + initiatives
  - a. Sustainability engagement is often about expanding on programs already in place, then leveraging these programs/initiatives as assets
    - i. Example: Athletics operates the highly successful zero waste program at the Coliseum and can leverage this as an asset to improve waste sorting infrastructure in other Athletics facilities
  - b. It’s important to change the mentality that projects and initiatives under the 2028 Plans will be funded by a “Sustainability” budget
    - i. Certain components will come from Central Costing but there will also be distributed costs. Costing will be worked out through the remainder of 2020
    - ii. We are aware that the timing of this process is not ideal for creating FY21 budget requests, so next year’s and future years’ budget request will be more important
  - c. Peer University Examples:
    - i. Duke
      - 1. Zero Waste New Student Picnic

- a. showcase campus farm and introduce students to Duke Dining sustainable standards and policies
  - 2. Annual Deliberate Dining Picnic
    - a. Procurement highlights and overview of initiatives
- ii. University of Virginia
  - 1. Community Partnership with surrounding cities and schools
    - a. In 2019, UVA, the City of Charlottesville, and Albemarle County sustainability staff collaborated to form Climate Action Together.
    - b. UVA and the College of William & Mary committed to partner on carbon neutrality solutions.
  - 2. President Folt has indicated that she wants USC to collaborate more with outside entities, like cities and universities
- iii. Stanford
  - 1. Green Events Program
    - a. Guidelines and support for producing most types of on-campus events sustainably
    - b. Incentivize participation through evaluating and rewarding the sustainability “level” events can achieve
- iv. Harvard
  - 1. Designate “Green Heroes” as an award into the Harvard Heroes employee recognition program
  - 2. New employee “green orientation” video
  - 3. Sustainable Living Community Outreach – lawn games to educate surrounding communities about sustainable living
  - 4. Sustainability welcome kits – green cleaning set & discount code, LED lights, sustainable living brochures
- v. UC System Advocacy Network
  - 1. Provide information on how stakeholders can get involved, and benefit from sustainable practices (i.e., incentive programs, conferences, awards, programs, etc.)
- d. Open Discussion and Brainstorming Session:
  - i. The Staff Assembly has begun pursuing sustainability engagement through its Green Meetings & Events Committee which outlined tips for making staff gatherings more sustainable
  - ii. Ana pointed out that there is currently almost zero sustainability information and messaging at HSC

- iii. Brooke believes this group and others have the power to make behavior change through precise, explicit nudges
    - 1. For example: departments can roll out signage/stickers reminding people to take only one paper towel
    - 2. Brooke believes it's important to have messaging where the action we're trying to change occurs, and that we should prioritize consistency of branding across campus
  - iv. Lance emphasized that in order to make sustainability a more salient issue we need to capitalize on "stories"--big and small--through social media, websites, and more
  - v. The Office of Sustainability is hiring a Marketing/Communications staffer who can hopefully be a liaison between the office and Communications teams around campus.
  - vi. Annual Earth Day celebration
    - 1. There isn't currently a concerted campus-wide effort for Earth Day. Office of Sustainability is currently in discussion with campus partners--CRUE, Student Affairs, Auxiliary Services, student groups, etc.--about how to collectively own Earth Day 2020 plans
    - 2. Student Affairs has reached out to CRUE to help plan and own Earth Day celebration events.
    - 3. The Mayor's office is interested in potential service-oriented projects and partnerships with large entities like USC
    - 4. Brooke believes USC should have large outdoor events, panelists, and speakers who can draw a crowd and drum up momentum
  - vii. Engagement through academic schools -- looking at the curricular level to allow students hands-on experience solving sustainability problems?
    - 1. Example - The Architecture School ironically exhibits poor waste diversion practices but likely has many students who would be able to and want to try to solve this problem
  - viii. Green Engagement Fund for student sustainability projects: opportunities to expand, advertise, and possibly replicate in academic or administrative departments?
  - ix. Adding campus engagement components to current environmental awards like the Tyler Prize and Wrigley Environmental Prize
  - x. Sustainability messaging needs to be explicit in how every current initiative/future program is communicated
5. Conclusion and next steps for Jan 24 SSC meeting

- a. Currently, the Office of Sustainability is the primary driver of campus sustainability engagement, creating and sharing content and serving as an ad hoc consultant to business units/schools, but the entire university should take 2020 to determine who the right players are within each division to drive sustainability engagement. 2020 should also be used to take inventory of who and what will be needed to meaningfully advance sustainability engagement. For example, additional staff members or budget for marketing and communications.
  - b. Next Steps: Email Ellen ([dux@usc.edu](mailto:dux@usc.edu)) by EOD Tuesday with ideas for how to leverage sustainable actions your team is already taking to increase Engagement, or challenges your division is facing. Be sure to take information from this meeting back to your teams.
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### **Ideas Captured During 1/15 Engagement Meeting**

- Facilities – equipment/infrastructure
  - Ex. Waste bins at Athletic facilities
    - 20% are easy to use right; rest are not available
- Infrastructure & equipment funding – budget planning cycle needs to be factored
- We need to know what the challenges/barriers are - start of the dialogue is now, but not the end
- Staff Assembly – implemented green meetings initiative that was well received, there is more appetite for this among staff assembly
- Zero Waste events – expand to broader set of events
- Already working on engagement of their own will
  - Student affairs
  - Staff assembly
- University Events Committee
  - Meets Wed.
  - Wide range of events that could be reached
    - Existing zero waste football games are the model to build from
      - Basketball to start zero waste games in Feb
- @HSC – no marketing/comms regarding sustainability – where do we start?
- Opportunity - lists/stickers of how to be sustainable
  - Ex. Napkin holders that say “please take one”
  - Consistent branding/messaging logo based on recycle symbol, light bulb replacement
- Signage @ sinks (all sinks on campus) w/ water conservation message
- Comms folks need/want stories/content (2 way comms between OOS and communications team)

- Can be big or small
  - Make it human
  - Give #s to tout success
- OOS to bring on marketing/comms person
- Sustainability Week on campus?
  - Tie in Earth Day celebrations
  - Student assembly does something but could be greatly expanded and connect to broader groups
- Earth Day Off – campus service projects?
- Large outdoor event for Earth Day
  - Local entertainers
  - Make it campus wide/McCarthy quad
- Welcome Experience group could be an asset
  - OOS to consult, provide content but use existing functions and groups to leverage those groups as a “vehicle” for sustainability
- Curriculum-level
  - School of architecture promotes sustainability, but their program has students that are creating a lot of trash for school projects. Could OOS come in and consult?
  - Grant program to fund sustainability-oriented projects from students
  - Grant program exists now but needs to be expanded
- Sustainability Prize, Ex. Wrigley Sustainability Prize
- Green Office/ Business certification through the City
  - Zero waste has been a barrier in the past but maybe this connect to 2028 goals
- Procurement – swag, marketing materials, sust. Vetting
- Food services – sustainability engagement

#### Auxiliary Services Engagement Suggestions:

- Early Fall – Freshman Welcome Pack (introducing/explaining Sustainability to our new housing residents)
- Early Fall – Messaging/Engagement on Waste Management via Dining venues
- Early Fall – Food waste Audits begin/Nutritional and plating education (messaging/engagement)
- Early Fall – Messaging pushing Waste Management/ZW during Football season at tailgates
- Mid Fall – Energy competition (now that meters have been installed, this will move back to Fall) (messaging/engagement)
- Late Fall – Winter Shutdown (more energy conservation education) (messaging/engagement)
- Early Spring – Food Waste Audits/Nutritional and plating education
- Early Spring – Recycling push campaign (messaging/engagement) hoping to be able to tie this in with the OoS doing Recyclemania for the campus.



- Mid Spring – Meatless Monday Engagement (meatless options/healthy plating) (messaging)
- Mid Spring – Water conservation education (engagement/messaging)
- Late Spring – Partner with OoS and campus partners for “Earth Month” activities
- Late Spring – Waste (move out) (Engagement/Messaging)