

Faculty Senate Environment and Resources Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2015

Present: Richard “Dick” Bernhard, Fred Cabbage, Chris Gunter, Sophia Kathariou, Marguerite Moore, Darby Orcutt, Harry Perros, Phillip Sannes, Samuel Sotillo

Guest: Jack Colby, VC Facilities Operations

Excused: James Bartlett, Bryan Laffitte

Darby opens the meeting with introductions and follows with our motivation for asking Jack Colby join us to apprise us of the following items: 1) the PE committee; and 2) sustainability initiatives on campus.

Physical Environment Committee Comments (Colby):

Many of the committees’ past responsibilities have been passed on to other committees or to newly formed campus committees.

For example, the “CDRP” was formed to review building/grounds aesthetics (i.e., to guide the appearance of buildings on campus).

In addition, the former PEC subcommittee for Resources that has been supplanted by the University Sustainability Committee.

Development projects are also a former concern of the PEC as an advisory to the Vice Chancellor. Many projects have slowed down due to funding issues (with the exception of activities on Centennial Campus).

There are also redundancies between the PEC and the Transportation Committee.

Steve Ardent has been tasked with reviewing the PEC in terms of its current function/scope. One suggestion is that the committee may be used to serve in an advisory capacity rather than functioning as a standing university committee.

Mr. Colby adds that due to the evolution of our campus, they are evaluating the PEC’s role/purpose as we move forward.

Sustainability Comments (Colby):

The scope of sustainability on campus is expanding and is seen as an important part of our university community moving forward (coming 5-year plan).

A major part of the sustainability effort on campus is to devise and implement the strategic plan through the creation of the Sustainability Council (SC) to coordinate efforts across the institution.

Mr. Colby indicates that the sustainability goals that have been realized on campus are primarily operational (e.g., recycling, water, etc.).

The SC would build on the university's sustainability mission by formulating and implementing strategic initiatives across campus through five defined working groups: Academics, operations, Planning & Campus Design, Communication, Community & Culture and Student Leadership.

A strong emphasis on integrating sustainability into university life, opposed to isolated activities on campus is a major goal of the leadership.

Mr. Colby invited faculty participation in the process of establishing the SC.

Additional Comments:

- Fred questioned whether Environmental Sciences was likely to assume a central role as an academic sustainability program in the future. Mr. Colby did not have a definitive answer but expressed that (in his opinion) having a single academic unit represent sustainability could ultimately limit efforts on campus.
- Fred also followed up with a question regarding whether NC State is a part of a university rating system. Jack responded that numerous rating groups exist with various approaches to ranking. At one time, the university reported to ten different ranking bodies. In an effort to focus our efforts, the university decided to participate in the STARS ranking. Mr. Colby further noted that the importance of internal benchmarking should be of utmost importance to the university.
- Dick brings up the issue of “the cockeyed steps” behind Riddick. He wants to know if they are ever going to be addressed. Apparently, this is an issue related to a steam tunnel in the vicinity. Mr. Colby noted that a lack of attention to this area of campus is due to the long-term initiative to straighten out Yarborough drive.
- Mr. Colby ensures Darby that faculty will be consulted and informed of decision processes related to facilities. He stated that, “the wisdom of the community always generates the best result.”
- Sophia asked about planting trees on campus. Mr. Colby responded that many species are being rotated out (non-native species). Every time a tree is lost, two are planted. The program that carries out this action is the Heritage Tree Group.
- Sophia also asked about the use of solar energy on campus moving forward. Jack indicated that it is likely that we will use more solar but mentioned the state legislature's decision to end the renewable energy tax cuts which may undermine our efforts in this area.