



Meeting Summary
March 31, 2016

Council Members Present:

Carlo Colella, Vice President for Administration and Finance (Chair)
Linda Clement, Vice President for Student Affairs
Maureen Kotlas, Executive Director, Environmental Safety, Sustainability & Risk
Scott Lupin, Assoc. Dir., Environmental Safety, Sustainability & Risk, and Director, Office of Sustainability
Mary-Ann Ibeziako, Director, Department of Engineering and Energy
David Cooper, Assistant Director of Systems Architecture, Division of IT
Jelena Srebric, Professor, Mechanical Engineering
Steve Cohan, Professor of Practice, Plant Science and Landscape Architecture
Samantha Bingaman, Undergraduate Student, Environmental Science and Policy
Todd McGarvey, Graduate Student, School of Public Policy

Meeting start time: 2:00pm

Meeting Highlights

Welcome and Review of February 25, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Carlo Colella welcomed the Council members and called the meeting to order. Meeting summary from February 25th was approved.

University Sustainability Fund Projects

Samantha Bingaman, undergraduate representative, presented six University Sustainability Fund projects to the Council for review.

The Council reviewed and approved the following projects:

How to Increase Commuting by Mass Transit

A professor in the National Center of Smart Growth will collaborate with DOTS and the Office of Sustainability on the proposed study to determine effective ways of increasing the number of student, faculty, and staff commuters who choose transit as their primary means of commuting to and from the UMD campus. The results of the study will help the campus respond to its forthcoming parking shortage and further reduce carbon emissions associated with commuting. The Council voted to approve the request of \$19,000

Rooftop Garden on South Campus Dining Hall

This project aims to revitalize and augment existing infrastructure for food production on the roof of South Campus Dining Hall building. The augmentation will involve construction of a dozen of raised beds for food production as well as a greenhouse facility to support production of plants. The greenhouse and

beds were originally installed and used for a yearlong project that later was not continued. Faculty from three different colleges are collaborating in an effort to not only to revitalize the existing infrastructure, but also to outline a joint sustainable vision that includes both continuous educational and research activities. The Council voted to approve the request of \$6,196.79

Increasing Campus Bicycle Parking

DOTS proposes to install 10 new bike racks (parking for 80 bikes) at McKeldin Library, Kim Engineering, Chemistry Library, and the UMD Golf Course. The grant covers the full cost of the racks including shipping. DOTS will cover installation labor. The Council voted to approve the request of \$5,823.66

Using Red Clover to Reduce Greenhouse Gas and Increase Pollinator Services – Researchers in Entomology propose to conduct field studies during two separate growing seasons at the UMD Upper Marlboro Center to evaluate the use of red clover to reduce GHG emissions and enhance the number, diversity, and effectiveness of pollinators. The Council voted to approve the request of \$11,000

Recycling Bins for Greek Life – This project seeks to improve recycling behavior for students in the two housed councils, the Panhellenic Association (PHA) and the Interfraternity Council (IFC). The grant will provide one standard recycling bin for each of the 65 satellite houses and two standard and two fire-rated bins for each of the 33 chapter houses. The Council voted to approve the request of \$17,331 with one abstention.

Sustainability Mini-Grant Requests for Permanent Appropriation from the Sustainability Fund – This proposal requests a permanent, annual allocation from the Sustainability Fund to support the Sustainability Mini-Grant program and to change the dividing line between Sustainability Fund grants and Mini-Grants to \$2000. The SGA Sustainability Committee reviews Mini-Grant proposals on a rolling basis and is able to award small grants more quickly than the Sustainability Fund process allows. The Council voted to approve the request of \$20,000, pending bylaw changes

Sustainability Fund By-Laws – Proposed Revisions

Samantha Bingaman and Mark Stewart presented proposed revisions to the Sustainability Fund By-Laws. The Council recommended a change to the proposed revision to section 5.1 of the by-laws to specify that the Sustainability Fund Coordinator would prepare an annual report on Fund activity and present that report to the Council at its first meeting of each new academic year. The Student Advisory Subcommittee will develop an amendment to section 5.1 and, if approved by the subcommittee, will present the full set of amendments to the Council during its next meeting.

Carbon Offsets Workgroup Report and Recommendation – Continued Discussion

The Council discussed the working draft of an official university Carbon Offset Document (Appendix A). The Council recommended that the document undergo further editing and be reconsidered at the next meeting. Specifically, the Council recommended that the specific recommendations be clarified and that the document reflect information about potential cost impacts.

Carbon Offset Workgroup Report Recommendations

The Council continued discuss of the Carbon Offset Workgroup Report recommendations.

The following recommendations were discussed:

- Recommendation 3: Create a Carbon Offset Program with a focus on the state of Maryland and Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Add language that indicates we will explore option of providing aid to vulnerable communities in the United States as a potential offset. Remove portion about the Big Ten. Change the word “priority” to “consideration.” Approved as amended.
- Recommendation 5: Give Commuters the Option to Offset their Emissions. Approved.
- Recommendation 6: Find Innovative Ways to Develop and Support Local Offset Projects. Rejected because the Sustainability Fund is already a mechanism that can be used to fund research that could support local offset projects.
- Recommendation 8: Explore the Potential of Developing Offset Projects to Reduce the Carbon Intensity of Power Generation. Approved.

Adjourn: 4:00pm

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

UNIVERSITY SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL – ESTABLISHMENT OF A CARBON OFFSET PROGRAM

The University of Maryland signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (Carbon Commitment) in May 2007 and committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2050. The 2009 Climate Action Plan, developed as part of the Carbon Commitment, established greenhouse gas emission reduction milestones including a 25% reduction by 2015 and a 50% reduction by 2020 compared to a 2005 baseline. The university has taken many measures to meet these goals and has been on track with all milestones to date.

The university conducts an annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emission analysis to quantify emissions from a variety of sources including power generation, purchased power, commuting, air travel and miscellaneous sources. To guide the University Sustainability Council and focus campus emission reduction strategies, projections are made to gauge future emissions. The most recent projections reveal that by 2020, almost all of the university's greenhouse gas emissions will come from three sources:

- *On-site Power Generation (Combined Heat and Power Plant -CHP)* – The CHP produces power, steam and chilled water to the campus. Options are being explored to reduce long-term emissions, but none are likely to be implemented in time to meet the CAP 2020 target.
- *Commuter Vehicles* – Faculty, staff and student emissions from commuting are gradually decreasing. These emissions will continue to be a contributing source and their elimination would not allow the university to meet the CAP 2020 target.
- *Air Travel* – Air travel is essential to the university's mission of teaching, research and outreach. The university has little control over air travel emissions.

University GHG emission data shows that air travel has been the fastest growing source of emissions since the Climate Action Plan was launched and has increased from 32,458 MTCO_{2e} to 49,332 MTCO_{2e} between 2005 and 2014, a growth rate of 52%. These emissions are considered "unavoidable" in the carbon accounting industry given they are necessary to the institutional mission and tied to current aircraft technology. The university will have to offset air travel emissions in order to achieve carbon neutrality and meet its 2020 emission reduction goal of 50%.

As a result of these factors, the University Sustainability Council established a multi-stakeholder workgroup to determine the most cost-effective strategies to address air travel emissions so the campus may meet its 2020 goal. Background information considered by the workgroup includes:

- A carbon offset is a credit for greenhouse gas reductions achieved by one party that — once verified by a qualified third party — can be used to compensate for (offset) the emissions of another party. Carbon offsets meet strict criteria in order to be verified and traded.
- Several other universities including the University of California Berkeley, Duke University, University of Florida, and Yale University have created carbon offset programs to help meet their climate action goals.
- The university has an opportunity to help develop new environmental projects in Maryland and around the world and can benefit from those projects by receiving associated carbon offset credits and creating learning opportunities for faculty and students.
- An independent and recognized third party verification process exists to ensure that carbon offsets are real and additional.

As a result of the workgroup's report, the University Sustainability Council supports and recommends the following strategies be put in place by the university:

- **Continue to prioritize carbon emission reductions through on campus improvements.** Maintain the university's highest priority on reducing carbon emission through energy efficiency improvements in current buildings and infrastructure.
- **Offset all carbon emissions associated with air travel starting in FY18.** All carbon emissions associated with air travel for university business, education, and athletics will be surcharged to support the purchase of verified carbon offsets or investments in on-campus emission reduction activities starting in fiscal year 2018. All offsets will be independently verified through the Gold Standard or Verified Carbon Standard (VCS). Offsets from land management projects outside the United States will also be independently verified to meet the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards (CCBS).
- **Establish a carbon emission fee for air travel.** The university will establish an annual carbon emission fee to be imposed and collected upon all university related air travel. A separate fee will be established for domestic air travel versus international air travel and adjusted by July 1 of each year.
- **Establish a carbon offset committee.** The University Sustainability Council will establish a Carbon Offset Committee represented by key stakeholders that will establish and administer an annual carbon emission fee for domestic and international air travel conducted through the university.