Meeting Summary
May 8, 2026

Council Members Present (via Zoom)

Mary Dorman — Executive Director, Environmental Safety, Sustainability & Risk
Scott Lupin — Assoc Director, Environmental Safety, Sustainability & Risk; Director, Office of Sustainability
Colleen Wright-Riva — Assistant Vice President, Division of Student Affairs
Tim Knight — Program Director, College Park Scholars Program, Environment, Technology & Economy
Thomas McMullen — Special Assistant to the Provost, Facilities Management
Bryan Quinn — Director of Technical Operation, Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering
Shannon Files — Director of Enterprise Data Services, Division of Information Technology
Eric Wachsman — Professor, Materials Science and Engineering, and Director, Maryland Energy Innovation Institute
Courtnee Connon — Graduate Student Representative
Zie Goodman — Undergraduate Student Representative

Guests Present:

Javiera King — Administrative Coordinator, Office of the Vice President & Chief Administrative Officer

Meeting start time: 2:00 pm

Meeting Highlights

Sustainability Council Goals 2.0 Review and Approval — *S. DeLeon*

Sally DeLeon facilitated review of the draft Sustainability Council Goals 2.0 (*Appendix A*). Council members discussed ways to strengthen the research and scholarship goal, including adding a searchable inventory of sustainability-related research activities across campus and refining language around research impacts to acknowledge both positive and negative outcomes. DeLeon reviewed how stakeholder input was used to adjust some of the goals, including linking community partnership goals to the Do Good Campus initiative, incorporating the university's experiential learning definition, and adjusting facilities-related language to reflect budget realities. Council members suggested incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) alongside Indigenous science and technology references for the Ecoregional Wisdom goal. There was also a comment that future work may be needed to create measurable indicators and

timelines for several goals. The Council voted to approve the goals, pending final editorial revisions by staff. **The motion to approve the goals was passed.**

Sustainability Fund Project Presentations — *Various Presenters*

To acknowledge the Sustainability Fund's impact on both the campus and students involved in Fund projects, the Office of Sustainability invited various grant recipients to present the outcomes of their projects to the Council.

Campus Forest Carbon Project

George Hurtt and Natalie Rosenthal presented on the Campus Forest Carbon Project, a Sustainability Fund-supported initiative that began in FY20and was renewed for further funding in FY21, FY22, and FY25. The project tracks carbon stored by the university's forested lands–a complicated pool to monitor accurately, but an important component for tracking progress towards UMD's climate commitments. Hurtt highlighted the project's role in providing professional research experiences for undergraduate and graduate students, many of whom have gone on to careers in environmental leadership, government, consulting, and academia. Rosenthal described how the project provided her and other students with hands-on experience in grant writing, GIS, remote sensing, coding, carbon accounting, and collaboration with campus partners. They also discussed recent findings showing a decline in net forest carbon sequestration due to a forest clearing event on university property in Garrett County and how those findings are informing land management recommendations.

Campus Creek Restoration

Christopher Ho discussed the Campus Creek Restoration Project, a decades-long effort to restore more than a mile of degraded stream running through campus. Prior to restoration, the creek suffered from severe stream bank erosion, exposed infrastructure, invasive vegetation, and poor water quality. Through support from the Sustainability Fund and campus partners, the project implemented regenerative stream restoration techniques that slowed water flow, improved groundwater infiltration, stabilized stream banks, and restored surrounding ecosystems. The project included restoration of the Animal Sciences Pond and the planting of more than 1,300 trees. Ho presented before-and-after photographs demonstrating dramatic improvements in stream health and stormwater management.

Water Quality Monitoring of Campus Creek

Dr. Sujay Kaushal shared research findings evaluating the environmental outcomes of the Campus Creek restoration project. Through years of water quality monitoring conducted largely by undergraduate students both pre- and post restoration, researchers found that dissolved nitrogen concentrations

declined after restoration and that these improvements were observed throughout the entire creek system. Although organic matter increased in some restored areas, resulting in localized increases in oxygen demand, these effects were limited and did not create broader water quality concerns. Kaushal highlighted that the project has generated multiple peer-reviewed publications and involved more than 50 undergraduate researchers, many of whom have gone on to graduate school, government positions, and environmental careers. He emphasized that the project provides scientific and professional training, research credits, and invaluable opportunities for students to engage in hands-on experiential learning.

Sustaining Student Engagement, Education, and Environmental Leadership

Savannah Holt and Solana Page shared some of the ways in which the Sustainability Fund enables student engagement, outreach, and professional development through a variety of sustainability programs. Funding in FY25 supported two Sustainability Associates positions and six undergraduate interns, which has allowed the Office of Sustainability to expand its outreach efforts and provide meaningful leadership opportunities for students. Page described a program that she developed while in the Associate role– the Green Terp Bucket List Challenge. This initiative connects students with sustainability resources and experiences across campus and has enrolled over 600 students since its launch. Student interns Michelle Wang and Trisha Raghuram shared how their roles provided hands-on leadership and career-building experience. Wang helped coordinate outreach events that engaged over 3,000 students, while Raghuram led staff engagement initiatives, including a plant propagation swap and a food drive that collected more than 1,000 pounds of food for the campus pantry. The presenters emphasized that Sustainability Fund support not only expands sustainability education on campus but also provides professional development opportunities for UMD students and recent graduates.

Terp Farm

Guy Kilpatric highlighted the growth and impact of the university's sustainable vegetable farm, which was launched in 2014 thanks to a Sustainability Fund grant. The farm produces 50,000–60,000 pounds of food annually, all of which is supplied to Dining Services and the Campus Pantry. Beyond increasing access to local, sustainably grown food, the farm serves as a hands-on learning environment for students, having employed nearly 50 student workers and supported numerous internships, research collaborations, and academic programs. Kilpatric noted that many former student employees have gone on to careers in farming, agricultural policy, extension services, and food systems. Council members praised Terp Farm as one of the university's most successful Sustainability Fund projects and a model for how sustainability projects can create lasting environmental, educational, and community benefits.

Terp to Terp Campus ReUse Store

Lisa Alexander, manager of Terp to Terp, emphasized the environmental and social impacts of the program, which collects and redistributes free, gently used items to students. Since its launch in 2021, Terp to Terp has collected and redistributed approximately 60,000 pounds of items (~24 dumpsters worth). The store helps reduce financial barriers for students to get essentials such as microwaves, lamps, cookware, clothing, and household items at no cost. The program is particularly valuable for graduate and international students, allowing them to save money that can instead be used for tuition, groceries, and other necessities. Through donation drives, open-shop events, and collaborations with student organizations, Terp toTerp has created a circular reuse system that keeps resources in the campus community while reducing waste. The project has also helped student employees develop skills in outreach, event planning, and sustainability education.

Closing remarks — *S. Lupin*

Scott Lupin thanked all presenters and Council members for their support in advancing sustainability initiatives across the university, recognizing that many of these initiatives began as small or risky pilot projects and have since become successful, lasting programs that support sustainability, food security, reuse, and student leadership. The meeting concluded with acknowledgements and gratitude extended to Sustainability Council members, particularly those rotating off the council, for their service and contributions.

Adjourn 3:56 pm

Appendices

Appendix A: Sustainability Council Goals 2.0 (2026-2036)

Sustainability Council Goals 2.0 (2026-2036) - Final Version for Council Vote

Sustainability Research & Scholarship: *Support an integrated network of interdisciplinary, sustainability research and scholarship that helps inform campus sustainability-related decision making and contributes to Maryland's biodiversity and conservation goals*

- Foster connectivity and coordination between sustainability researchers, scholars, students and staff across campus to advance these goals
- **Create an online searchable list of sustainability research going on across campus and the researchers to contact**
- Facilitate translation of UMD sustainability research and scholarship to support campus operations and environmental stewardship, and surrounding community sustainability initiatives
- Leverage the outputs and outcomes of major sustainability-related UMD research Centers, Institutes and Programs to drive measurable positive change on campus and in our surrounding communities
- Help students connect with sustainability researchers and scholars across campus

Culture of Sustainability in Research Operations: *Further understand and manage environmental and social impacts of UMD's technology and innovation ecosystems*

- Work to better define the environmental, social, economic and cultural impacts of UMD's research operations (positive and negative)
- Emphasize the development and deployment of innovative technologies to address sustainability challenges associated with research operations
- Devise strategies to build in positive environmental, social, economic and cultural choices in the ways that research is designed and conducted at UMD
- Strengthen participation in the SustainableUMD network from faculty, staff and students working in laboratories and other research facilities

- Foster faculty, staff and student education, outreach and discussion relating to climate change impacts, global biodiversity loss, native habitat declines, and ecological and carbon footprints associated with the use of new technologies
- Support environmental stewardship and social responsibility in decision making about generative AI use for research designs and operations

Community Partnership for Impact: *Prioritize connection and reciprocity in sustainability work with Maryland Communities*

- Empower students, faculty and staff to embrace and commit to community-engaged teaching, research, or service in support of local, community-led sustainability transitions outside of UMD
- Encourage campus units to prioritize cost-effective 'Do Good' initiatives that support high-impact progress on local, regional, state and global sustainability goals
- Continue to seek interdisciplinary opportunities for partnership with Prince George's County community groups and local governments to explore mutually beneficial sustainability projects and initiatives
- Recognize faculty and staff for community-engaged teaching, research, or service (through community boards and task forces) that addresses sustainability-related community needs

Food Resiliency, Access, & Education: *Advance a resilient, equitable, and sustainable campus food system that increases access to nutritious food, strengthens regional partnerships, and reduces environmental impact*

- Strengthen the campus community's understanding and comfort with nutritious, sustainable, and ecologically beneficial food choices
- Increase equitable access to nutritious, sustainably sourced food by strengthening and coordinating services across campus dining operations, the Campus Pantry, the Thrive Center for Essential Needs, and additional university partners involved in food access and support

- Increase awareness and utilization of existing resources for accessing food and other essential items through targeted outreach strategies
- Develop reciprocal relationships with certified Maryland farms, including some who are new to farming, underrepresented in agriculture, and/or utilizing regenerative agriculture practices beyond what is required by law (like rotational grazing, biochar, and application of composted manure)
- Implement creative food procurement strategies that symbiotically support both local sourcing and ecological resilience
- Improve the quality of post-consumer collected compostable materials to maximize food waste diversion

Experiential Learning: *Support faculty, students and staff to implement and engage in project-based learning and other types of learning experiences with problem solving and innovation to solve sustainability challenges*

- Create interactive opportunities – including peer-to-peer, in-person and digital – for Terps to gain critical thinking, systems thinking, collaboration, and eco-literacy skills
- Provide tools to help students, faculty and staff utilize the physical campus landscape, buildings and infrastructure for sustainability learning and teaching
- Recognize and reward sustainability mentoring by faculty, staff and students. Mentoring includes forming individual relationships, leadership opportunities and/ or communities of practice at UMD that focus on increasing participation in these university sustainability goals
- Expand professional development opportunities offered on campus to support faculty and staff in understanding, communicating and teaching about current sustainability concepts and practices
- Develop and communicate student pathways to complete General Education requirements while at the same time deepening sustainability literacy and skills

Sustainable Infrastructure & Campus Growth: *Position the university as a living model of sustainable urban systems and model leadership on the State's regulatory targets and sustainability goals*

- Showcase and encourage sustainable growth by adopting policies related to:
  - Infrastructure as a critical enabler of the University Strategic Plan, including support for predictive and preventative maintenance
  - High- performance, energy-efficient green buildings as guided by the Maryland High Performance Green Building Program for new construction and major renovations
  - Energy and water consumption improvements during major campus renovations and upgrades
  - Heat recovery from released exhaust, particularly in laboratories
  - Carbon cycle management through accounting for emissions, removals, and offsets
  - Biodiverse landscapes with strategically protected natural areas
  - Watershed protection structures and practices
  - Transportation options and incentives that reduce car dependence, single-occupancy vehicle trips and emissions among UMD community
  - Micromobility and pedestrian infrastructure with safe and reliable off-campus connectivity
  - Progress toward zero waste and circularity through responsible production, consumption and waste management
- Where feasible, incorporate clean energy technologies and other sustainability innovations developed at UMD into campus operations and education
- Implement and regularly (every 3-5 years) revise UMD's Climate Action Plan to achieve long-term targets for net-zero Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions
- Prioritize direct carbon emissions reduction and phase out purchasing of verified carbon reduction credits by 2035, limiting the use of carbon offsetting to residual emissions only with durable, verified removal credits and/or additional sequestration and removals on campus-owned or sponsored lands
- Proactively strive to comply with Maryland's climate change regulations, including the Maryland Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS)

Ecoregional Wisdom: *Cultivate opportunities for people to identify with and relate to the ecology, culture, bioregional aspects, and local ecological knowledge that contribute to a sense of place that is Maryland*

- Curate spaces and tools to support exploration of and reflection on the unique aspects of our region's ecology and history of human-environment interactions
- Recognize and celebrate stories of African-American and Native American led environmental stewardship and ecological knowledge in Maryland
- Honor the history and culture of the Piscataway people on UMD's campus by highlighting aspects related to sustainability
- Engage students, staff, and faculty in learning about unique aspects of Indigenous and African-American ways of knowing Maryland's ecology and foodways
- Experiment with incorporating indigenous science and technology into campus operations and experiences
- Use art and experiential learning to build community, strengthen place-based connections, and honor ecological and cultural narratives of the region's inhabitants