

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CSAC Sustainability Integration Project

Interim Report to the Chancellor in preparation for October 23 CSAC Meeting

BACKGROUND

A proposal to create a 4-year Sustainability Integration Action Plan was brought to CSAC and refined by the full committee over the course of several spring 2017 meetings. In April the proposal was approved unanimously by the committee and funding was committed to the project by senior personnel from four units¹.

A CSAC Sustainability Integration Taskforce² has been working since May on its charge to 1) reach out to CSAC members and other key stakeholders to identify opportunities for sustainability integration; 2) bring this set of potential initiatives back to CSAC in September 2017 for committee review and prioritization; 3) discuss the resulting CSAC-endorsed priorities with you in mid-October (this upcoming Monday meeting); and, with your approval, 4) seek CLC endorsement in early December of a four-year sustainability integration action plan.

OUR GOALS FOR 10/23 MEETING

- Briefly review how CSAC identified and selected high-impact initiatives.
- Get your perspective on our Top 6 initiatives (any missing? any red flags? do any stand out?)
Each one, we believe, contributes to the university's mission and to CLC's strategic objectives; all require integration between 2 or more campus units.
- Discover what further preparation you recommend before we seek CLC's endorsement of a four-year integration action plan.

One purpose of a 4-year integration plan is to make clearer to campus units and stakeholders the value proposition of collaboration across units, departments and vice chancelleries. We have many notable sustainability successes to our credit; as we now move into this next phase, we want to use these achievements as a springboard to even greater visibility for the Commonwealth's Flagship campus. **Our premise: Integrating campus-wide sustainability activities will have an overall impact greater than the sum of the individual parts.**

OUR APPROACH

The Taskforce designed a 4-phase approach:

1. Identify and review university sustainability-related documents since 2002, and campus strategic planning documents since 2012.
2. Conduct interviews in a "1000 cups of coffee" approach, holding individual discussions with 25+ people (CSAC committee members plus a dozen others at senior levels of responsibility across the university).
3. Survey CSAC committee members to inventory current sustainability activities and capture their big ideas for possible projects over next 4 years. Gather and distill down all ideas.
4. From the distilled list of >30 ideas, each CSAC member individually votes for their Top 10. In final step, each CSAC member applies a set of 6 agreed upon (consistent) criteria to the collective Top 10.

¹ Physical Plant; Campus Planning; College of Natural Sciences; Auxiliary Enterprises

² Craig Nicolson (chair); Bill Bean '72, '78G (consultant); Ezra Small; Ludmilla Gillham Pavlova

(criteria listed on following page)

The Criteria are:

- a. **Alignment** with the Chancellor's and University's stated mission and objectives.
 - b. Likelihood of **achieving a #1 status** or exceptional level of success
 - c. **Credibility of such a claim** (is it the conclusion of a recognized and respected source like Princeton Review? do we have solid and credible data to back it up?)
 - d. **Newsworthiness**
 - e. Ability to be **achieved in 4 years** (and with visible results by at least yr 2 or 3?)
 - f. Acceptable **hard (\$\$) & soft (non-financial) returns** to warrant investment.
5. Sustainability issues matter to students, so we also tested whether CSAC's collective sense of the highest priorities for the campus might be out of step with student interests in any way. To do this, we designed and distributed a survey to both undergraduate and graduate students to gauge their interest in each of the collective CSAC Top 10 priorities.

Results from each of these steps above are documented in a virtual project Box folder.

WHAT WE LEARNED

The collective CSAC Top 10 opportunities shortlisted from among the 30+ ideas were:

1. Develop a **bold campus emissions reduction plan**
2. Create **unified campus-level market messaging for sustainability**: identify the most important target audiences, and tell our story to them.
3. Propose a Gen Ed revision that includes teaches systems thinking skills and educates students about key 21st century sustainability issues.
4. Develop a **campus resiliency plan** (climate risks, hazards, drought etc.)
5. Become the **first certified "zero" waste university**
6. Take up the challenge to become a **paperless university** by some target date
7. Raise awareness with all incoming freshmen about our sustainability ethos/standards
8. Significantly expand opportunities for **hands-on real-world sustainability learning**
9. **Increase food security** within our university community
10. Set up new matrix structures to coordinate sustainability functions across the org chart

The six highest ranking CSAC priorities from Step 4 above are underlined and in bold.

One unresolved issue is that the ultimate strategic campus-wide integration positioning may be in integrating **sustainability** with **diversity**.

- a. We found several times in our interviews that there is not yet a clear campus understanding and support beyond CSAC that sustainability includes a **triple** bottom line of Environmental, Economic, and Social factors. Discussions with Associate Chancellor Anna Branch however, make it very clear that the many people DO see the social aspect as critical to sustainability and that the urban population has both the greatest need for programs (such as cost efficient energy and access to healthy food) and the greatest population numbers for impact.
- b. In addition, and possibly even more importantly, many universities are addressing both sustainability and diversity independently but, to our knowledge at this time, no one has made the declaration of a direct connection between the two. If done effectively, UMass may be able to; 1) reframe this definition, 2) preemptively

capture that strategic positioning, first in our plan (before we even implement it) and then in our actions and 3) use that innovative approach in this project help move advance overall university positioning.

NEXT STEPS

At this stage in our planning process, we have outlined only a brief thumbnail sketch for each of the 10 opportunities. These thumbnail sketch for each integration opportunity include:

- What the idea is, in plain language
- What implementing this opportunity will get us, and by when
- What it might cost to implement
- Sample action steps

Following the 10/23 meeting we will have a richer understanding of your perspective on these various priorities and we will also know whether there are other priorities we ought to be considering more carefully as we build out our 4-year action plan and seek CLC endorsement.

In light of what we learn on Monday, CSAC subcommittees will plan out the action plan steps in more detail (start dates, stop dates, key milestones, metrics for success, funding strategies etc).

WHAT WE WOULD LIKE FROM YOU in the October 23rd meeting

- Your endorsement of the process to date.
- Your feedback on the Top 6 Integration priorities. *Which would likely gain strongest CLC commitment? Are there any missing ideas?*
- Any thoughts on how many of the priorities we could have commitment to pursue from the start?
- Some indication if possible of funding that might be available for top priorities
- Likelihood and suggestions for preparation and presentation of this project to the CLC

Thank you for your time interest in these important University sustainability activities. We look forward to gaining your insight on Monday.

Craig Nicolson
Director: UMass Integrated Sustainability Project.

on behalf of the CSAC Sustainability Integration Taskforce