

University Environment Committee - 2019-2020 Progress Report

Submitted by Thomas C. Wilson, Jr. University Environment Committee (UEC) Chair.
Rev. 2 - 15 May 2020.

I. Committee charge.

“This committee shall examine all aspects of the university environment, including but not limited to conservation of natural areas, ecological preserves and historic sites and artifacts; transportation, parking issues, infrastructure, facilities planning, human health issues, safety and security, energy efficiency, recycling, waste management, and general appearance of all university locations. It will consult with and advise the Vice-President for Facilities and Services.”

II. Membership.

The most recent committee membership is attached. At the first meeting of this academic year Thomas Wilson was re-elected Chair, and Jeanne Charoy was appointed as Recording Secretary.

Currently two of sixteen committee positions are open (one in Humanities, one in Health Sciences). Three members are coming to the end of their three year terms, with at least one standing for re-election. Current committee members will continue serving until such time as elections can be held.

III. Committee meetings and records.

Since the last Chairs' retreat on April 5th, 2019, the committee met twelve times: April 17th, May 8th, September 11th, October 9th, November 13th, and December 4th in 2019; January 29th, February 12th, March 11th, April 8th, May 6th, and June 10th in 2020. Meetings beginning on March 11th have been virtual.

In response to the challenges of the current pandemic, the committee has determined to continue meeting monthly through the summer, with the next meeting scheduled for July 8th from 3:00 - 4:30pm EDT. All members of the University community are welcomed to meetings and invited to volunteer for our Working Groups (see below).

The Chair will forward committee agendas, minutes, and approved reports to the Senate Executive for publication.

IV. University liaison and meetings with experts.

Assistant Vice President of Environmental Health & Safety Gary Kaczmarczyk has functioned as Administration liaison to UEC, with backup by EHS Safety, Training, & Environmental Compliance Manager Clifford Knee. Either Mr. Kaczmarczyk or Mr. Knee (or both) have attended all UEC meetings for productive discussion of agenda items and have provided referrals to others in University Administration. Members of the University Administration have been responsive to UEC communications and collaborative in their actions.

UEC has continued the practice of periodically inviting guest experts to meetings. Guests are invited to give a fifteen minute presentation on an area within the committee's charge, followed by an open discussion. Guest experts this year have included:

- April: John Fogarty, Director of Capital Planning, discussing the capital planning process.
- May: Sharon Pochron, Toxicologist and Lecturer in SoMAS Division of Sustainability, discussing pesticide use on campus and the Ashley Schiff Preserve.
- October: Kathleen Byington, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Dean Tufts, Vice President for Facilities and Services, discussing the University's five-year Capital Plan.
- November: Larry Swanson, Director of the Waste Reduction and Management Institute at SoMAS, discussing the wastewater treatment plant that serves the University.
- December: Michael Youdelman, Campus Recycling Manager, discussing the campus recycling program.
- January: Laura Osa, Coordinator of the Stony Brook Water Bottle Station Project, discussing reducing single use water bottles on campus.

V. Working groups.

Our four working groups greatly expand the amount of work the committee can accomplish, both by delegating projects and by incorporating volunteers from campus and community. The working groups, their coordinators, and representative current projects are listed below:

Transportation (Coordinator: Mona Ramonetti)

- Bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- Encouraging and increasing public and shared transportation.
- Campus Parking issues, short and long term solutions.

Ms. Ramonetti represents UEC and the University Senate on the University Administration's Campus Transportation Task force. The task force's mandate may pivot significantly going forward, but one silver lining of the pandemic could be the shift to remote work easing the traffic and parking crisis and helping the University meet carbon emission reduction targets mandated by New York State.

Natural Environment and Preservation (Coordinator: Thomas Wilson).

- Permanent preservation status for the Ashley Schiff Park Preserve. The committee prepared a resolution, passed by the University Senate in October 2019, calling for permanent formal preservation of the Ashley Schiff Park Preserve. When the current crisis eases, members of the Committee plan to meet with legislative staff to update draft language adding the Preserve to the State Park System, and request the Senate Executive ask incoming President McInnis for her endorsement of permanent formal protection for the Preserve.
- East Recharge Basin/Lake Briana. We are proceeding with a one-year scientific and engineering study, conducted by the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, to help answer if the basin can remain naturalized and potentially be developed as a research and educational resource. An instrument in the lake has collected water level every 15 minutes since October 2019. This will be correlated to rainfall as measured by three local weather stations to determine the ability of the basin to absorb rainfall from extreme weather events in its current naturalized state.

Efficiency, Recycling, and Liveability (Coordinator: Jeanne Charoy)

- Encouraging reusable water bottles, bottle friendly drinking fountains, carafes of water as the default for catering. Investigating rental of reusable china and silverware from campus food service as opposed to using disposables for campus events.

Research (Coordinator: Michelino Puopolo)

- Monitor the website of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE.org) and other resources. Report ideas and best practices to committee.

VI. COVID-19.

Out of what appeared at the time to be an abundance of caution, UEC opted to have their March 11th meeting online. Less than a month later, we were all meeting online.

Beginning with the March meeting, the UEC agenda has included a period of open discussion regarding the pandemic. Gary Kaczmarczyk and Clifford Knee have both been invaluable in informing the committee of the University's planning and response to a health and safety challenge unmatched in living memory. The committee has decided to continue meeting through the summer to offer what service and advice it can to the University Senate and the University.

On Thursday June 4th, UEC Chair Thomas Wilson was appointed by incoming President McInnis as a member of the Facilities Planning Working Group, one of seven such representatives of the University Senate to the University COVID-19 Task Force. This Senate "Group of Seven" has already met with University Senate President-elect Richard Larson and members have begun attending working group meetings.

Although the initial reopening plans were essentially completed before the Senate Executive's efforts to get representation were successful, the University Senate's active participation going forward will be important to channel input on where the plans need to be adjusted. Stony Brook does appear to be ahead of the rest of SUNY in terms of firming up plans, although there is wide recognition that things may pivot without notice. This realization (something we all have to recognize) will also be helpful to us as we advocate for appropriate refinements to plans and policies.

VII. Acknowledgements.

Thanks to:

- The University Administration for their communication and collaboration with the committee.
- The Senate Executive, especially two outgoing members: President Nancy Tomes for her support and Executive liaison Frederick Walter, who has been invaluable in teaching a greenhorn Chair "the ropes" over the past three years.
- Members, volunteers, and friends of the Committee for their hard work and dedication to the vision of helping build a better Stony Brook University community.

The current Chair's first three year term as a member of the University Environment Committee is due to end this year. The Chair hopes to be re-elected, but regardless of that outcome offers thanks for the opportunity and the honor it has been to serve the University Senate.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas Wilson
UEC Chair 2019-2020

UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

2019/2020

Updated: 2/7/2020

Charge: This committee shall examine all aspects of the university environment, including but not limited to conservation of natural areas, ecological preserves and historic sites and artifacts; transportation, parking issues, infrastructure, facilities planning, human health issues, safety and security, energy efficiency, recycling, waste management, and general appearance of all university locations. It will consult with and advise the Vice-President for Facilities and Services.

Chair: Thomas Wilson, Chair, elected 09/19.

Humanities and Fine Arts:

Joanna Kaczorowska	Music, 631-745-1679	violinjoanna@gmail.com	9/22
Open Position			

Social and Behavioral Sciences:

Shirley Lim	History, 2-7515	shirley.lim@stonybrook.edu	9/21
Christopher Sellers	History	christopher.sellers@stonybrook.edu	9/22

Natural Sciences:

Dmitri Tsybychev	Physics, 2=8106	Dmitri.tsybychev@stonybrook.edu	9/21
Malcolm Bowman	SoMAS, 2-8669	Malcolm.bowman@stonybrook.edu	9/22

Library:

Mona Ramonetti	Library, 2-1740	mona.ramonetti@stonybrook.edu	9/22
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College of Engineering:

Xinwei Mao	Civil Eng. 2-8718	xinwei.mao@stonybrook.edu	9/21
Matt Eisaman	Electrical & Computer Engineering	Matthew.eisaman@stonybrook.edu	9/20

Health Sciences Center:

Open position			
Michelino Puopolo	Anesthesiology	Michelino.puopolo@stonybrook.edu	9/20

Professionals:

Sarah Battaglia	Occup. Therapy, 4-2363	sarah.battaglia@stonybrook.edu	9/21
Thomas Wilson	SoMAS, 2-8706	Thomas.wilson@stonybrook.edu	9/20

Students:

Graduate Student (1): Jeanne Charoy (Jeanne.Charoy@stonybrook.edu)

Undergraduate Students (2): James Pizaro <james.pizaro@stonybrook.edu>,
Shakeb Zia <shakeb.zia@stonybrook.edu>

Ex officio members: Gary Kaczmarczyk, Assistant Vice President of Environmental Health & Safety

Cognate Administrator: Vice President for Facilities and Services.

Facilities and Services Supporting Staff: John Fogarty and Terence Harrigan

Executive Committee Liaison: Frederick Walter