

# STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY SENATE

## University Environment Committee

Meeting of November 20, 2024, 12:30-2:00 pm

Virtual meeting on Zoom.

Attending: Jennifer Gilday, Timothy Gonzalez, Angela Gupta, Peter Joyce, Joanna Kacz, Gary Kaczmarczyk, Erin Kluge, Clifford Knee, Tom Lanzilotta, Samuel Lavin, Christopher Percival, Giacinto Piacquadio, Sian Piret, Michelino Puopolo, Mona Ramonetti (co-chair), Christopher Sellers, Peg Spitzer, John True, Frederick Walter, Tom Wilson

1. Co-Chair Ramonetti called the meeting to order and welcomed new committee member Angela Gupta from Pharmacology. All attendees were invited to introduce themselves.
2. Consideration of draft minutes from the meeting of October 9, 2024. Gilday moved and Percival seconded to accept the minutes as presented. The motion passed with no objection.
3. Report on and discussion of Sustainability Office work; response to 2023 UEC clean energy proposals. Sellers introduced Tom Lanzilotta, the campus sustainability and energy manager and invited him to present an update on where the office is going as regards campus energy planning. Lanzilotta introduced Erin Kluge, the new sustainability coordinator.

Lanzilotta:

- a) Carter Strickland, the sustainability and energy officer for SUNY, visited campus last week.
- b) The solar array by building 17 was sidelined by Procurement because of ROI issues but appears to be back on track again.
- c) Proposal is almost signed for preparing an electric vehicle (EV) fleet master plan.
- d) As construction proceeds, conduits are being placed in anticipation of future EV charging stations.
- e) VP Bill Hermann is working on funding for energy projects.

Kluge:

- f) Working to bring campus together on sustainability, working with Collaborative for the Earth (C4E).
- g) Working on report to Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) to raise SBU sustainability score.
- h) AASHE gives ranking from bronze to platinum, our goal is to get to Gold.
- i) Report to be published in 2025.

Lanzilotta:

We will use report to AASHE as a framework. Erin and interns are working on multiple projects. We are excited and hopeful about future.

Questions:

- j) Gilday: Is there a rubric on how we are graded by AASHE. Kluge: there is a point system with different categories but it is not completely public. AASHE will provide feedback on how we can approve low scoring project.
- k) Piacquadio: What is the status of other onsite solar projects? Lanzilotta: because of increase in cost we couldn't move forward on some, steel cost made canopy solar unaffordable, New engineering building will have solar canopy and ground source heat pump.
- l) Sellers: Carport solar out totally because of steel cost? Lanzilotta: Energy savings is not sufficient to justify steel costs so we need up front funding. Focusing on the 1.5 megawatts on building 17 and moving forward on that.
- m) Piacquadio: what changed to make the solar projects unaffordable? Lanzilotta: increased steel costs, lower natural gas prices, delay in construction. Original estimated savings of \$1 million over 20 years were wiped away.
- n) Piacquadio: How about Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) savings? Lanzilotta: could not take full

advantage of full IRA funding.

- o) Sellers: Is Bill Herrmann looking for funding through IRA, and will IRA last? Lanzilotta: Herrmann looking for capital funds.
- p) Piacquadio: Question about ROI versus natural gas. Lanzilotta: solar \$0.17-\$0.18/kwh, competing with CoGen which is very cheap.
- q) Sellers: Elephant in the room, is there any plan to phase out CoGen? Lanzilotta: CoGen helps us, we are cleaner than the PSEG grid. No clue as to how to reduce or eliminate GoGen. If we can we will reduce temperature for heating so we can use heat pumps. All new buildings will have heat pumps. We are looking to introduce a small fraction of hydrogen to substitute for methane.
- r) True: Current hydrogen comes from methane. Lanzilotta: there is no green hydrogen at present.
- s) Walter: Is the SUNY goal of 40% greenhouse gas reduction energy by 2030 realistic for SBU? Lanzilotta: Not sure, depends on funding.
- t) Walter: Will there be pressure from SUNY to meet this goal? Lanzilotta: yes but campuses are pushing back, but impossible without funding.
- u) Piacquadio: Solar is cost competitive with PSEG but not with GoGen. Shouldn't we get a start on solar projects regardless? Lanzilotta: agreed, we will keep on pushing solar projects but even if we covered every building and parking lot with solar we only meet 40% of campus energy needs.
- v) Percival: What is SUNY's plan to meet State level mandates? Impression was that we would use energy vouchers. Lanzilotta: That is one strategy but renewable energy credits are increasingly expensive.
- w) Sellers: Limited out years were used in payback calculations, this stacks the deck against renewables. Lanzilotta: this may be changing, we can't do quick paybacks anymore, already have done this. What is the payback/ROI on energy efficient buildings.
- x) Sellers: you are working with transportation. Transportation is doing a lot along these lines. Lanzilotta: yes we are, working with two people from Mobility and Parking Services (MAPS) to electrify the fleet.
- y) Lanzilotta: Capturing refrigerants are important. Kaczmarczyk: there are policies to capture refrigerants.
- z) Piacquadio: Need to increase energy monitoring in buildings and laboratories. Lanzilotta: We are working on that.
- aa) Spitzer: What are other universities doing? Lanzilotta: UC Davis does it well but has a team 15 times our size.
- bb) Sellers: What can we do to help you get additional resources? Lanzilotta: please pass along ideas.  
Sellers: Thanks for the report and all you are doing with the resources that you have.

4. Report on 11/13 meeting with SUNY Sustainability Officer Carter Strickland to review [draft of 2025-2030 SUNY-wide Sustainability Action Plan](#)

- a) Sellers: Meeting with Carter Strickland. Percival and Gilday were there. Any additional items to report. Percival: Liked hearing from admin folks that we do not hear from very often. Ana Topolovik talked about solar for vets home, bike path on Nicholls. Keep the town hall idea going, do meetings twice a year. Erin Kluge may organize.
- b) Gilday: Communication is not widespread, these town halls would help to spread news on what SBU is doing. C4E encourages faculty and staff to get involved with us and suggest projects and initiatives. Heather Lynch brought up plastic use on campus.
- c) Walter: Food trucks are using generators. Piacquadio: USB should allow food trucks to connect to the grid.
- d) Wilson: Every RV park in the world has power hookups, why not provide these for food trucks?
- e) Kaczmarczyk: Ana Topolovik is working on crosswalks and roadway safety. Will try to get someone to come to December meetings. Can reach out to Auxiliary Services regarding food trucks.
- f) Ramonetti: Did the committee examine single use plastics in years past? Wilson: Yes. I believe there is also a SUNY policy, new in the last year, to phase out single use plastics. Gilday: Yes there is a ne

- policy but it does not appear to be in effect on this campus. Kaczmarczyk: This comes under Auxiliary Services, we can invite them to a future meeting. Gilday: will start putting together a list of questions.
- g) Joyce: Students have been working with Auxiliary Services (ASA) to quantify food waste. Have gone into dining halls and get food waste data. Environment Club has been taking food waste data. Have spoken to ASA about single use plastic ban, they are aware but have no concrete plans. What do other universities do to make cleaning recyclables easy?
  - h) Sellers: Form ASA working group. Jennifer, perhaps someone from ASA could join the interest group.
5. Review and vote on Bike Paths report: Christopher Percival, Fred Walter, Sian Piret.
- a) Percival: Have incorporated suggestions from HSC Environment Committee.
  - b) Percival: Moves to approve report. Gilday seconds. Approved without dissent.
  - c) Wilson will copy the videos to UEC shared Google Drive and update links in the report.
6. Ashley Schiff preservation update.
- a) Wilson: Eighteen months after President McInnis's 2023 Earthstock pledge, the only thing that is certain is that a chunk of the Preserve has been sliced off the southern boundary by the "updated" survey.
  - b) Wilson: Despite multiple requests, we have never gotten the text of the SB Council resolutions and the SUNY Trustees resolution simply names the preserve without saying a word about formal and permanent preservation. In my opinion, this is neither in compliance with McInnis' pledge, nor is it good faith shared governance as championed by Interim President McCormick.
  - c) Wilson: My proposal is to make a final request to the Administration through the Senate Exec for clarification, consultation, and appropriate action regarding formal and permanent protection for Ashley Schiff. We should simultaneously request time on the February agenda to make a status report to the full Senate. If necessary, we let everyone know how they have fallen short and call for renewed action on the issue.
  - d) Wilson: Setting a deadline to get answers and action may spur the Administration to actually complete the process as opposed to stopping one step short of the finish line. After discussion, I would entertain a motion to authorize me to request this action from the Senate Exec.
  - e) Percival: hat kind of a deadline are we talking about? Wilson: deadline is to report to the Senate if questions are not answered to the committee's satisfaction.
  - f) Sellers: Write out a set of questions, have co-chairs approve, then send to executive for action.
- Piret moves to authorize the effort, Piret seconds. Approved without dissent.
7. SBU socially responsible investment initiative:
- a) Sellers: [Review letter](#) (anyone can sign this Google Doc) and offer any feedback to be passed along to authors. Suggest members look at and potentially support this effort.
8. Follow Ups and status reports:
- a) New "Limits to/Smart Growth" (may want to rename) working group: Tiffany Freidman, Tom Wilson, Fred Walter, John True. [First meeting report and follow up](#).
- Walter: Group met and laid out a number of issues regarding growth. Did not decide on what to do next. Senate Exec and UUP have met with the President within the last week, he has acknowledged most of these challenges. McCormick has gone to Chancellor, 4 new buildings are needed in addition to the new Chemistry building. We had a nice gripe session and will meet again.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:01 pm by the co-chairs.

Respectfully submitted,  
Thomas Wilson.