

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Environment Committee

Meeting of October 9th 2019, 1:00 - 2:20 pm

Provost's Conference Room, Administration 407

Draft version 2 - 11/12/2019

Attendance: Thomas Wilson (Chair), Jeanne Charoy, Camila Morcos, Xinwei Mao, Shirley Lim, Frederick Walker, Gary Kaczmarczyk, Joanna Kaczorowska, Mona Ramonetti, Syeda Hasan, Malcom Bowman, Sharon Pochron, Paul Siegel, Dean Tufts, Kathleen Byington

Meeting called to order at 1:02 PM

Chair report. Started with the consideration of the minutes. Thomas entertained a motion to accept the minutes as offered. Mona motioned, Shirley seconded. Without any opposed, the minutes were accepted. Next, the new committee members were introduced: Joanna from Music, Syeda and Camila as undergraduate student representatives. Members from HSC and Fine Arts are still needed. Next month Kathleen (VP for Finance and Administration) and Thomas will discuss infrastructure at the Senate meeting.

Working groups review/report. Because new members were present, each group was reintroduced. Working groups are coordinated by members but anyone can volunteer.

Natural Environment and Preservation working group (coordinator: Thomas Wilson). Presented the Schiff resolution on Monday it passed unanimously in the University Senate. The next step on that is to talk with executives and the administration to see where things go from here (the Senate resolution is advisory only).

EHS's newsletter talks about precautions about going into wooded areas with ticks and mosquitoes. It may be good to add caution signs at the preserve kiosk. The Lake Brianna project is continuing, with the instrument in the water collecting data. Two student volunteers (one graduate and one undergraduate) are helping with this project. The measurements and pictures show that the level of the lake does fluctuate. There is some noise on the instrument, maybe due to temperature shifts: The group will see how the data looks and see if it is reasonably accurate. If it seems inaccurate, they may pursue funding to buy a new instrument (the current one was a gift).

Transportation working group (no coordinator at this date). A coordinator is needed for this group. Last year this group sent ideas for parking management to the Senate executives (e.g. alternatives to big garages).

Efficiency, recycling, and liveability (coordinator: Jeanne Charoy). This group conducted a couple of interesting projects last year, including a campus garden project (spear-headed by Sean Deery). Other ideas included creating a community garden and a program where campus

catering would rent dishes and silverware to campus event as a service (to avoid using one-time use plastic cutlery).

Pesticide group (this group is now merged with Efficiency, recycling and liveability). Last year this group sent a recommendation to amend the existing pesticide use policy to add a section about avoiding the use of neonicotinoid when possible. This is now part of a larger policy review on pesticides at EHS.

Research group (coordinator: Michelino Puopolo). This group is looking for members/volunteers to help dig up useful documents for the Committee's work (e.g. last year, this group found the map of the property boundaries on campus, which is very useful to see what the university owns). This group is also in charge of archiving information about SBU's environmental decisions (e.g. archiving the article about how campus dining is moving towards more compostable things).

New members Syeda and Camila decided to join the Research group.

Discussion with VP for Finance and Administration and VP for Facilities and Services.

Kathleen Byington (Finance and Administration) and Dean Tufts (Facilities and Services) were guests at this UEC meeting.

Kathleen explained her objectives for meeting with UEC: 1) learn more about what the committee cares about as a group and 2) receive input and feedback about what the Senate should care about hearing at their next meeting, where Kathleen and Thomas will talk about infrastructure.

Next, Kathleen presented a review of SBU's 5 years capital plan: Next week (10/14/19 - 10/18/19) there will be a ribbon ceremony for the new children's hospital - that was a 400+ million\$ project. Overall, there is a 700M\$ investments in our facilities which go into renovation and new building projects. One such project, the indoor practice facility for athletics and the student union, will reopen soon. This will be a one stop shop for all the things our students need to access. In addition, we have 3 major residence facilities project: West apartments (under construction), the Tabler Quad, and the university's first possibility to use public private partnership for facility. There is also work on research and academic facilities: the chemistry building needs to be renovated, especially the research floors. It's old and not up to standards. Plus, that is our highest energy using building on campus, so needs updates on its heating system in particular. Similarly, the Javits lecture hall is in dire need of an update (should have been done in 2008 but that project got put to the side). There is active planning for this right now. The problem is how to move the classrooms out of Javits (many classes are taken there). It's a bit of a challenge because it's a huge concrete structure and the building can't be occupied while work is underway.

Beyond these projects there is a list of urgent needs that have yet to be funded. Kathleen explained that they don't have funding for all the 700M\$ project either actually - while there are plans for how to get the money, it is not necessarily in hand yet. One issue is that the state only allocates funding on a one year basis - that makes it hard for construction project that may take longer. The list of urgent needs include: SoMAS and dentistry (both very old buildings on South campus), the Staller center's humidity and air control, Harriman hall (last of the original buildings on campus that hasn't been updated). There are many possible sources for funding. Many come from the State but they have restrictions and regulations, so philanthropy is projected to be a bigger part of the funding.

Another important thing is the annual critical maintenance, i.e. making sure the buildings we have stay in good conditions. The last time a major assessment of maintenance of buildings was done was in 2011-2012. At the time, it was estimated that there was about a 1 billion worth of things that should be worked on/improved. At that time, SBU received in the upper 700M\$/year from the State for maintenance. But then the Economic crisis happened and we haven't been funded at that level, so the buildings are worsening. We advocate strongly every year to the Senate for more legislative funding. The risk is that the investment the Senate made in buildings will not last as long as it should.

Lastly, Kathleen talked about SBU's sustainability goals. SBU is the largest energy user in the state system. It represents 18% of all of SUNY's energy used. SBU has been aggressive in implementing energy saving practices and it is leading the pack in reducing usage. We are down 16% if you look at energy use per square foot. The current plan is for usage to go down by 20% by the end of 2020. There have been energy savings at the hospital.

We are working on using renewable energy strategy. The Cogen plan contract is under negotiation right now. Under the original contract, SBU is not allowed to use sustainable energy. Kathleen asked whether the UEC would be interested in participating in the new negotiations. Thomas asked when the existing contract expires. Dean said April 2023, but the goal is to have it renewed by the end of 2021. Malcom asked what Bean and Kathleen could tell us about the possible push back there could be. Kathleen said that after a first discussion with the contractor, they seem to recognize where the energy industry is going and that they will have to allow SBU to pursue sustainable solutions. Malcom noted that solar would be a good option for SBU given the numerous flat roofs and parking spaces. Kathleen answered that the plan is to work quickly towards these things once the handcuffs are off.

Kathleen then gave a short presentation on parking from Spring 2019. The parking inventory in Fall 2019 is about the same as Spring 2019. There are about 6000 parking places but demand for 8000 spaces on campus. This is the root of the parking issue. Only a small portion of these cars belong to visitors, meaning there is little turn over. Some possible long term options include creating 600 additional parking spots or to rejigger unutilized spots (e.g. stadium area, Tabler quad...), adding lightning on the R&D parking to provide relief on East campus. It is in the contract of new staff at HSC that they must park at the R&D campus and

take shuttles. Another problem though, is that the Stony Brook Road is constrained and we can't add too much traffic to it. Medium term options are in discussion right now for implementation. We are aware of the impact these options can have (e.g. taking down trees) and we try to balance the need for parking with environmental and community impact. One such option would also be to use diagonal parking in the South P, Health center and garage overflow lots.

Malcom and Thomas interjected that there is a plan right now to add new beds yet not new parking space. Kathleen answered that those numbers have changed since then - 300 undergrads beds have been taken out of the original numbers. Malcom asked whether there were any considerations for underground parking. Kathleen answered that that was not in the plans for the first phase because it is so expensive to build, but maybe at the second stage of the campus project. Shirley asked what kind of money there is to move SBU towards a non-mainly car campus, adding that the infrastructure on campus can be hostile to bicycles and pedestrians. Kathleen agreed that ultimately this problem is about traffic demand, management and how we can change our culture about cars. We are not in an urban environment so solutions that work there may not be good for us, but ride sharing, alternative transportation modes, etc..our students may be interested in that, so we want to get them involved. Paul asked whether faculty and staff still have free parking in their contract. Kathleen answered that yes and that we need to change incentives. Right now it is inexpensive to bring cars to campus and so we do.

Thomas asked whether UEC could be part of the parking working group and Kathleen confirmed. The transportation working group in particular should be involved. Dean asked that the representative of the transportation group contact them. Frederick asked whether anyone knew who built the parking garage at the Huntington station - if we could get the LIRR to build a structure that would release pressure on the surface lots. He also mentioned that we should follow the model of the University of Colorado where every employee gets a free bus pass/LIRR pass. Thomas added that the LIRR trains from NYC to campus are always full and that the LIRR should have more commute routes. In addition shuffle buses that leave from mall/shopping centers' parking lots could be an option.

We could also encourage people to auction their parking benefits and to practice carpooling. But Camila mentioned that she has a stadium pass that she paid for and it would never be worth it for her to sell/share it because of her busy schedule. She suggested that students who live on campus should have stricter rules about where they can park. Kathleen will share a copy of her presentation on parking with the UEC (it is all public information).

Switching to a new topic, Xinwei asked about the sewage treatment plan on campus (her research is on water treatment): as the campus population grows, this committee should look into the current sewage treatment plan and whether it can sustain/serve the population well. Kathleen said it would be great to start addressing this question. Dean added that one issue is that the sewage system is not SBU's and we can't build our own.

Dean confirmed that UEC can invite him to meetings and that based on his schedule he will try to attend as many as he can. All he heard at this meeting was aligned with what he thinks, but there is a matter of funding.

Old and new business. No old business. For new business Thomas suggested that we try to invite more experts to our meetings (e.g. LIRR representatives, campus dining representatives...).

Next meeting will be November 13th, 2019 at 1:00pm - 2:30 pm in the VP for Administration Conference Room, Administration Room 221

Thomas entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Camila moved. None opposed. The meeting adjourned at 2:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Charoy