President's Commission on Carbon Neutrality

Commission Meeting #9 9/27

27 September 2019 /1:30 PM/ NORTH CONFERENCE ROOM, GRAHAM

ATTENDEES

Andrew Berki, Steve Forrest, Austin Glass, Jennifer Haverkamp, Brandon Hofmeister, Andrew Horning, Greg Keoleian, Larissa Larsen, Jonathan Overpeck, Camilo Serna, Anna Stefanopoulou, Logan Vear, Lisa Wozniak

Regrets:

Liz Barry, Hank Baier, Anthony Denton, Barry Rabe, Missy Stults

General Updates

University Climate Change Coalition

Following the Commission's recommendation, UM has officially signed on to the University Climate Change Coalition (UC3), and established the four required liaisons (Executive, Operations, Research and Communications) who have since participated in an onboarding call. UM plans to partner with the City of Ann Arbor to host a "Town-Gown" community engagement event in the late fall as its first deliverable as a UC3 member.

Ivy +/Listening Post Group

UM is a member of Ivy Plus/Listening Post, a group of sustainability representatives from various universities across the United States that come together to discuss sustainability progress and programs. UM has agreed to participate in a 2-year proxy carbon tax study spearheaded by Smith College and Princeton. The purpose of the study is to provide information to create a catalog of real-world case studies that could inform and guide future policy decisions.

Communications

UM's Office of the Vice President for Communications is hiring a new staffer to focus exclusively on university level sustainability communications, with a significant part of that effort being dedicated to the work of the Commission.

Faculty Advisory Panel

The Commission Co Chairs are working to identify leadership for the advisory panel, who will then help to shape the mission and membership of the panel.

Fall Progress Report Outline

The Commission is actively working on putting together the mandated Fall Progress Report. The report will be released this fall, and will detail the work the Commission has completed thus far and what the Commission's work will entail looking forward.

Community Forum Reflections

The Commission's most recent Community Forum event took place on September 25 in the Rackham Amphitheater and Assembly Hall. For the recording and slides presented, click here.

In response to the comments and questions received during the forum, the Commission will develop a frequently asked questions document, which will be accessible to community members on the website.

In addition to these public events, the Commission and analysis teams will seek opportunities to engage with preexisting groups across campus who may not usually engage with such topics as carbon neutrality at UM.

There was also discussion of ongoing concerns in some circles regarding accountability, and in particular, whether the administration will ultimately accept Commission recommendations. The consensus was that the Commission needs to focus first on developing robust analyses that inform compelling recommendations. Decisions on whether recommendations are accepted reside with the President and the Regents, but the Commission will keep university leaders up to date on our progress and pathway to ensure decision makers are well informed throughout the process.

Fleet Electrification

A concept was presented for an Electric Bus Pilot on the U-M campus that aligns with an active faculty-led research proposal (see slides). The Commission supports the pursuit of this pilot study and hopes it will inform potential recommendations for fleet electrification. A sub group is working to iron out logistical details associated with the pilot program in anticipation of a state-run funding opportunity later this fall.

Electric Utility Fuel Mix Projections

Consumers Energy presented information on their current plan for moving toward decarbonization. Find Consumers' 2019 Climate Assessment Report here.

DTE Energy presented information on their current plan for moving toward decarbonization (see slides).