Sustainability Forum – Meeting Notes

Meeting held: 8th February – 13:30 – 15:00 - TEAMS

Attendance & Apologies

Attendees: P Cruz - Chair (Sustainability Officer), K Campbell (Arc), M Daly (Strategy & Planning), Y Dempsie (SHLS), Helwig, K (SCEBE/UCU – Green Rep.), G Hunter (SHLS), Y McVey (Facilities Services Manager), Sheikh, S (GSBS), D Wyllie (Student Comms), J Mavileth (GCU Students Association), A Ratcliffe (BaxterStorey).

Apologies: J Adair, C Baird, D Chalmers, D Halliday, N Healy, S Martin, R McAvoy, S Campbell-Perry, S MacLean, G O'Donnell, T Fraser

Notes from the previous meeting

Notes from previous meeting – Approved

Updates – Sustainability Officer

The SO noted that in January he had been invited to provide a brief to the new Principal/VC on the University's sustainability initiatives, risks and opportunities.

Authorisation has been granted to recruit a role to support the University's sustainability function. More information and an update will be provided in due course.

Biodiversity Plan (BP) was in development with a consultation on proposed measures running until the end of January. High level of support and good feedback. Final BP should be ready for consideration by EB at the end of February.

The Fairtrade Working Group met in January to review progress, set out actions and plan for Fairtrade Fortnight with the University's catering partners leading on that.

SO attended EAUC's annual conference in Loughborough in November where he participated in a paned on greenhouse gas reporting. The SO also planned to attend the Scottish annual conference with a number of colleagues from the University.

The annual EcoCampus/ISO14001 internal audit was completed at the end of January. All documentation was up-to-date and there was one opportunity for improvement. It was proposed that as a result, the University's Environmental Policy be signed.

Due to changes in the Estates Team the SO noted that he was temporarily overseeing the University's utility bills and forecasting. This is quite an onerous process and it was hoped that the function would be returned to colleagues in an operational roles once they had a chance to settle in.

Regarding the University's Sustainable Travel Plan, the following updates were provided:

- Travel Survey carried out in October 2022. The high level of responses (>1000) meant responses were statistically significant. Analysis underway and an update will be provided in due course.

- Six Travel Advisors were deployed at the start of Trimester A during freshers week and engaged with 1089 individuals. TA would be deployed during Re-Freshers in Feb 2023.
- The University worked with Glasgow City Council to host a consultation event on proposed redevelopments for Dobbies Loan and Cowcaddens Rd. as part of the Avenues programme.
- SO recently learned that OvoBike had removed the 50% discount for students in Glasgow. SO had met with OvoBike to understand what options might be available, but the cost was prohibitive (over 75% of the current Sustainability Budget) and no information on usage of subscribers with GCU emails.
- Cycling Scotland renewed the University's Cycle Friendly Campus Accreditation.

As part of the University's Circular Economy Plan a re-useable cup library was established with Yoyo Cups. Usage levels were not as high as anticipated and Baxter Storey had been asked to develop proposals to increase use rate.

A global engineering specialist has been engaged to develop energy saving opportunities identified earlier in the academic year and which might be funded by SFC's Financial Transactions programme. Discussions were also underway with colleagues in SCEBE around the digitisation and twinning of plant to help optimise use.

The SO was working some students to conduct a desktop survey of the University's suppliers' position on the Climate Emergency. It is hoped that this survey will be used to engage with suppliers and foster action on the Climate Emergency as partial data suggests that only 10% have carbon neutrality targets.

The SO reported that, as part of an early stage student and staff engagement plan, that he had arranged for a GCU Learn Sustainability Community to be set up with the intention of key information (e.g. inductions) being hosted there. As part of the wider engagement the SO also reported that he was working with colleagues in SCEBE to develop a recycling game, which unfortunately was discontinued due to dynamics in student dynamics. The SO will revisit the project with the next programme cohort.

The University's position in the People & Planet University League and GreenMetric, where it rose to 51 in the UK in 2022 (from 63) and 120 (out of 1050) in the wold in 2022 (from 135 out of 956). The SO is reviewing the respective methodologies to understand whether there are any opportunities for improvement.

Finally, the SO reported on progress with grant funding: the work to replace bathroom taps in the Sir Alex Fergusson Library, supported by a £10,000 grant from Business Stream has been completed. The University has also secured £1,800 from Cycling Scotland to support the Campus' Cycle Friendly Campus Award.

Updates – Other
- M Daly noted that the THE Impact Ranking an announcement has been delayed.
- G Hunter/Y Dempsie – Further to the successful student LEAF project, students in have an introduction to sustainability at the start of the programme and are encouraged to include a reflective paragraph about sustainability in their programme/work. They are also assisting the University's Procurement Team complete the "From Now To 2030" questionnaires. Y Dempsie and G Hunter have also been asked by HoD to develop a sustainability workshop

(Research Celebration 18/5/2023) to cover the changes resulting from the experience with LEAF.

- A Ratcliffe - Exploring how to encourage greater usage of Yoyo Cups and planning for Fairtrade Fortnight (27/2-12/3/2023). Baxter Storey also working towards recertifying Food for Life Served Here.

Planned Activity
Covered above.

AOCB
None

Date of Next Meeting
TBC