

Sustainability Forum – Meeting Notes

Held on: 1st of November 2023 – 13:00 – 15:00 - TEAMS

Attendance & Apologies

Attendees: Paulo Cruz (Chair – Head of Operational Sustainability), Kärt Tori (Sustainability Coordinator), David Halliday (Head of Security & Business Resilience), Therese Fraser (Head of Campus Services), Richard McAvoy (Head of E&FM Safety and Performance), Yvonne McVey (Campus Services), Alan Chim (Head of Asset Management), Alan Ratcliffe (BaxterStorey), Mary Daly (Strategy & Planning), Yvonne Dempsie (School of Health and Life Sciences), Wilfred Obi (GCU Students Association), Greg O`Donnell (Conference & Events), Derry Wyllie (Student Comms), Sara MacLean (GCU Students Association).

Apologies: Gillian Hunter, Kathleen Campbell, Karin Helwig, Stuart Martin, Nicholas Healy.

Notes from the previous meeting

Available from the University`s [sustainability pages](#).

Updates – Head of Operational Sustainability (HOS)

1. Reported on helping new Sustainability Coordinator (started on 26th of June 2023) to settle into the role.
2. Reported on sustainability spend for 2022-23 (£124,581). Spend is classed as sustainability if it is additional to what the University would have spent. A significant part of this was on the work with the on-going project with a global engineering consultancy.
3. The project with the global engineering consultancy (an Investment Grade Audit) is nearing its term with discussions focusing on the detail of the proposals, pricing and contractual elements. It is hoped that the University will be in a position to decide on next steps later this week.
4. Reviewing People & Planet (PP) University League initial score and appealing where PP did not identify the most appropriate evidence. Outcome of appeals will only be known 3/11/2023 with final score available when PP University League is published in December (date unknown).
5. At the last SF meeting it was noted that the University was working with Circular Communities Scotland to pilot the use of re-furbished white goods. The pilot is part of the University's Circular Economy Plan (CEP) and was incorporated into the refurbishment of 12 flats at Caledonian Court and has resulted in some important learnings, mainly around range and availability of stock and user (University) expectations. The pilot will continue with a

focus now on evaluating quality of goods supplied. HOS will be doing a presentation on the experience at EAUC-S next Waste Topic Support Network.

6. We have also working with colleagues and students in SCEBE to develop a recycling game that will be used to help GCU students and staff recycle more/better. The game is a deliverable in the University's CEP.
7. The University has completed a mini-tendering exercise and appointed two new providers for mobile bike mechanic service (Dr. Bike). Dr. Bike sessions are offered throughout the University's Sustainable Travel Plan (STP) and the intention is to offer at least 17 sessions throughout the academic year. The University has also hosted a couple of pop-up bike shops with a couple of refurbished bike providers. Additionally, Police Scotland have been on campus providing security bike marking.
8. Linked to the STP we successfully bid (internally) for funding (£44,000) to fund the installation of 4 fast charging points. The charge points will enable the electrification of the University fleet and will be installed in the car-park between the Arc and North Hanover Building. Preparatory work for the installation of the charge points has begun and it is anticipated that they will be in place before the end of the year.
9. At the end of the last academic year we were also successful in another (internal) bid to fund and install 37 energy efficient hand-dryers (cost £40,000), with the work complete. This will be reflected in the 2023-24 spend summary.
10. We have also prepared a draft Sustainability Student & Staff Engagement Plan (S3EP) which was circulated with the meeting invite. S3EP complements and coordinates engagement activity from existing action plans which monitoring data indicates a lack of awareness is potentially curtailing their full potential. The S3EP is split into three strands: (a) Reporting environmental performance (i.e. telling our story); (b) raising awareness of environmental initiatives; and (c) furthering sustainability literacy. Feedback on the S3EP is welcomed (by email/verbally to HOS). One element is a sustainability fund to enable students and staff to apply for funding to deliver sustainability projects. Currently being piloted with GCU Students Association.
11. As an off-shoot of the S3EP we're also having conversations with colleagues about how we might deliver Carbon Literacy Training at scale at the University. To date conversation have focused on understanding experience, delivery scale and potential delivery models at the University.
12. We are currently finalising our annual carbon footprint report (which we anticipate will be completed by the end of November). Early data indicates that emissions have fully rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, due to both an increase in activity and a deterioration of emission factors.

Updates – Sustainability Coordinator (SC)

13. Reported on starting in her role in the end of June 2023 and have been learning and helping out with the Environmental Management Procedures (EMS). Additionally, SC is currently helping with the internal audit process for EMS.
14. Reported on helping with the organising of Travel Advisor (TA) programme by training new TA's and organising their activities to give out travel related information to students/staff members such as money-saving tips, sustainable travel modes and most optimal routes for

- travelling to the University. TA's also participated in the Freshers week which was very successful as they managed to speak to almost 300 people over the duration of 2 days.
15. Updated the Sustainability department's newsletter format so that it is aligned with the University's (website) design guide.
 16. Process for the Fairtrade (FT) recertification has been started. Current University's FT status (1-star University) will expire in 30th of June 2024 and the new recertification evidence has to be submitted by 22nd of April 2024.
 17. Reported on participating and helping to organise Glasgow Goes Green (GGG) 2024 event with the aim of increasing the capacity of holding GGG events at the University compared to previous years.
 18. Helping out with the S3EP by producing the Environmental Facts & Figures document which will be used to report and communicate about the University's Environmental performance to staff and students.

Updates – Others

19. Mary Daly (Strategy & Planning) reported that data is currently being gathered for the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Ranking 2024 submission which is due Friday 10th of November 2023. The University was ranked among top 200 Universities in 2023.
20. Alan Chim (Head of Asset Management) reported working on the energy efficiency project with the global engineering company to observe, control and eventually reduce the University buildings energy use as well as carbon footprint. The project would involve increasing the building's energy efficiency by installing insulation and energy monitoring systems.
21. Alan Chim also noted that systems are in place for replacing high-energy consumption items with low-carbon footprint items such as LED's and installing double glazing in the University buildings and adopting Enefit standards is currently being looked into for future refurbishing projects.
22. Alan Chim - An article was published in Connected regarding on carbon capturing paintwork being done in the Student Life Desk area with the paint provided to the University by Santander. The article can be found [here](#). Additionally, assets are being reused whenever possible and a good example of that is the Annie Lennox building refurbishments where reusing existing furniture was made a priority.
23. Alan Ratcliffe (BaxterStorey) reported working on finalising the Food for Life Served Here (FfLSH) audit process for the Bronze Level Standard. The future focus will be on achieving the Silver Level standard. Suggestions for menu changes to reduce waste are welcomed.
24. Greg O'Donnell (Conference & Events) noted that the Green Tourism Award accreditation is in progress for the Events department.
25. Sara MacLean (GCU Student Association) reported that the Student Communications department has successfully recruited an Ethical & Environmental Officer whose area of expertise will cover topics such as Circular Economy, Food Sustainability, Wildlife Conservation etc.

26. Sara MacLean also noted that the GCU Student Association is in the process of applying for the Green Impact accreditation.
27. Therese Fraser (Head of Campus Services) reported that the Caledonian Court is in the process of applying for the Green Business Tourism Award.

Planned Activity – HOS

28. Working on the EMS internal audit that is coming up in November. External audit will take place in January 2024 which will be a full recertification audit over 3 days with 1 or 2 auditors on site.
29. Presentations coming up in November – SHLS Biology department Sustainability Event, white goods trial at the Caledonian Court for the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education (EAUC), panel on talking about the single-use cup alternatives for the Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS), Yoyo cup initiatives.
30. Planning the GGG event in mid-February 2024 (mainly SC) – aiming to be more engaged in 2024 with more events organised at the University. People are encouraged to get in contact with ideas about organising events for GGG.

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31. Mary Daly – asked if the information on the University's energy efficiency projects are available on the University's website. Alan Chim noted that at the moment the information is not up on the website.
32. Sara MacLean – asked does the University's carbon footprint calculations capture/manage per person related emissions (taking into consideration that the University plans to increase student numbers). Due to the accuracy of the data feeding into the University's carbon footprint, the HOS does not feel it would be appropriate to use intensity factors (e.g. per capita emissions) when referring to the University's total carbon footprint. However, where reference is made to specific constituents of the University's carbon footprint (e.g. water or waste) then per capita intensity factors could be useful (and are used).
33. Wilfred Obi – asked that how soon the criteria for the Sustainability Fund would be openly available for students. S. MacLean promised to look into it and mentioned that currently a portal is being built for this purpose which will be launched at the end of this trimester (Dec 2023).

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday –31st of January 2024.