

UofL Sustainability Council
December 3, 2025 Minutes

Attendees: Brent Fryrear (Chair), Justin Mog, Debra Anderson, Eli Mudd, Mo Early, Scott Campbell (Law rep), Michael Ortman, Sammie Holmes, Cassidy Polack, Andrew Hovekamp, Sajid Mian, David Deacon, Robin Frederick, Lissa McCracken, Pat Smith, Terri Holtze, Tyler Mahoney, Alarah Gillum, Cat Aiton, Karen Blake, Avery Kokers, Emma Beck

One Green Thing Introductions:

- Brent – shopping local for the holidays
- Deb Anderson – Cat Aiton presented to her class on Environmental issues and personal hygiene
- Scott Campbell – non-profit La Minga/EALS outing to plant garlic
- David Deacon – Music School transitioning out of paper coffee cups and using mugs
- Mo Early – purchased AA and AAA rechargeable batteries for holiday items that need batteries
- Alarah – making Christmas gifts this year or thrifting
- Sammie – locally sourcing a holiday tree this year – pick it out and decorate it in place and decorate and add family name
- Terri – Holiday decorations without lights this year
- Andrew Hovekamp – seed harvesting for planting in the Spring
- Tyler – Starting to bicycle, but this is a tough time of year
- Lissa – Locally sourced gifts and pledging to get through leftover paper/packaging
- Sajid – One time on campus, a stray kitty did not want him to move his car. They brought it in and played with the kitty, which was nice at work
- Eli - Shopping 100% local holiday which correlates with the Israel boycott
- Michael Ortman – composting his leaves and his neighbors leaves
- Cassidy – using old decorations instead of buying new ones
- Pat Smith – using recycled content holiday paper
- Justin – Proudly reviving the “Organic Matter Rescue Squad” – he and his wife rescue bagged leaves from the curb and haul them on bike trailer to mulch garden beds.

Committee Updates:

Operations (Sajid Mian)

- Winter came quickly, taking systems by storm! Physical Plant staff will work through Winter Break. Brent thanked him on behalf of the Council. There is going to be a large sign installed at Brook and University Blvd. Life Sciences is shutting down during break to begin renovation.
- Operations meets on first Tuesdays of every month at 2pm in person, alternating between SAC W107 and on-site for tours. Our planned meeting on December 2nd was cancelled due to snow closure. Our next meeting is at 2pm on Tuesday 1/13 when we will hear from Trane's Intelligent Services team.
- At our last meeting on 11/4, we toured the new Engineering Student Success & Research Building ([see photos](#)). The finishing touches are still being put on several of the labs and spaces in the upper floors and the building is still being commissioned, but it is likely to achieve LEED Gold certification. In addition to bike parking, ample daylighting, water bottle filling stations throughout, and active design with inviting, open stairwells, this building contains several firsts for UofL:
 1. This is the first building we've built with the intention of using the building itself to educate through "engineering on display."

2. This is the first time we've used quiet, high efficiency chilled beams in the ceiling to provide cooling and heating without forced air duct work.
3. The building contains UofL's first dedicated makerspace, accessible free to Speed School students and to anyone in the UofL community for a fee.
4. This is the first building on campus with purpose-built personal rooms for those in need of a quiet, private escape, as well as a wellness space and prayer room that includes foot washing facilities. This is UofL's second building (after our 2013 Student Rec Center) to use geothermal wells to tap into the constant temperature of the earth to provide the building's heating and cooling instead of fossil fuels. (The building has a backup cooling tower if needed for times of extreme heat.) The building is also the new home of UofL's Conn Center for Renewable Energy Research, with multiple dedicated labs for studying a future free of fossil fuels.

Education & Research (Tyler Mahoney)

- This semester, E&R met on third Fridays at 2pm on Teams. Our final meeting of the year was held November 21st and we discussed:
 - Sustainability Roundtable: We are looking for speakers for the spring Sustainability Roundtable series: [Share Your Work at the Sustainability Roundtable Series – Fill out form](#)
 - Sustainability Research: We invited heads of research from the colleges/schools to begin a conversation about how we can advance interdisciplinary research and grant-writing. What strategies would they recommend? What opportunities are out there? What challenges have been identified (especially with federal funding, e.g. we worked so hard to host a visiting Fulbright Scholar and then the funding got pulled at the last minute)?
 - Kevin (Speed): He's been at UofL 45 years, averaging about \$700k/yr in research funding. Speed has grown research budget from \$8-20M. Bringing on a data analyst in research office was key. In the past, no one really knew how much money was coming in at the unit level, and what was all the research happening across the unit. They spend about \$15k/yr on external grant-writing services offered to the faculty, which has a 100x ROI!! Also focused a lot on helping new faculty get funding and all the services they need. He recommends we work with EVPRI since they offer support, especially for interdisciplinary work. And he recommends we present to the Council of Research Deans (CORD), which meets monthly. He agrees that the federal funding environment is grim and discouraging – it's starting to impact Speed. But they are trying to reinvigorate the Conn Center for Renewable Energy Research, with new directors, Mark McGinley and Josh Spurgeon, and now consolidated under one roof in a new, state of the art building.
 - Lauren (Envirome): Has been applying for some sustainability funding when possible, e.g. through KYTC; also some potential funding for vector-borne diseases. Trager Microforest was through private philanthropy.
 - Andrea (A&S): There's a little momentum at UofL, especially out of Envirome, to think about nature-based solutions. It might be worth inviting Ted to speak to this group about the [GreenPrint Project](#). Angela Storey (Anthropology) has grant about nature-based solutions that is complementary. Another group is working on a project around urban heat, with a micro-net to study distribution of heat around Louisville. Justin: Another A&S group is doing a lot of work with private philanthropy to develop our Horner property in Oldham county into a biological research station.
 - University-level KY Center for Digital Innovation has three arms (cybersecurity, AI, digital transformation) and there could be potential there for sustainability research around cultural aspects, as well as environmental impact. They should be at the table.
 - With the change in the federal landscape, there's actually more people working with the Foundation on private philanthropy/funding.

- Kaleb (CEHD): Has been forced to look at foundation and non-traditional funding, as CEHD federal funding has been cut down to just 20% of their budget. They've had success partnering with nonprofits and letting them be the lead working with funders. CEHD has five really unique departments doing different kinds of things, so they have to be really intentional about bringing all those people together to talk about what they do and share it. You'd be surprised how many people are already doing related or complimentary work. CEHD offers internal grants and they are required to present their work at the end of the year – this provided lots of great silo-busting opportunities.
- What do you think the new Strategic Plan will mean for this work?
 - Kevin thinks it reflects Speed's work well and was glad to see sustainability mentioned. Plans are good, but what really matters is commitment of resources. He recommends an REU program in Sustainability (e.g. Nanotech program supports about 10 students from outside UofL each summer – brings in about \$350k/yr) or a Research Experience for Teachers. Speed's Dean got a Canadian company to donate solar panels, as part of a larger microgrid project. Will Metcalf just got \$4M for a federal DOD "Onramp" project that will involve lots of seminars and workforce development and renovating space downtown.
 - Andrea: Still hasn't seen a full draft of the Strategic Plan, so she's unclear about whether sustainability is explicitly built-in, especially in the Discover pillar, which has portions of both foundational research and innovation (explicitly tied to economic growth and AI innovation) – it has a goal specifically about prioritizing interdisciplinary STEM and Humanities work. Another goal is about advancing health and wellbeing.
- How do we secure support for pursuing interdisciplinary sustainability grants? Kevin thinks EVPRI's office can provide support. Kaleb sees sustainability having a direct impact on all four pillars of the strategic plan and we have to have resources to make this work – you have to spend some money to make some money! Kevin's surprised the university hasn't put resources behind sustainability given how impactful it is – but if we want to ask for more funding, we need to be really clear about what we're asking for. Mary: Takes the point that we need to be more clear and articulate about what we're asking for. Lauren: Envirome is very collaborative and brings in all kinds of people from across the university to go after grants. Kaleb: Every unit has a very different research office, structured in various ways...they all have different kinds of skills and knowledge and strengths and weaknesses.
- Other schools with good models? Brent: FSU and UT-Dallas both offer millions each year for internal sustainability research grants (these are president's office initiatives, and they avoid using language that wouldn't fly in red states).

Planning & Administration (Pat Smith)

- P&A held its last meeting of the year on Nov. 13th and discussed:
- Provost Charge:
 - PA-3: Institutional Governance - engage campus and community stakeholders in governance
 - Pat thinks we meet the standards for internal participation, but community stakeholders is a stretch – i.e. Does the institution have one or more ongoing bodies through which local community-based organizations not affiliated with the institution can democratically participate in its governance? The Office of Community Engagement has a community stakeholders board and the President's Council (formerly the Board of Overseers) has community stakeholders:
<https://louisville.edu/president/boards-and-commissions/presidents-council>
 - It would be interesting to know if STARS has any examples of this and if we can push UofL forward in this respect?
 - Emma: Historically, UofL was a city institution before added to the state system, so it has deep roots in community governance. Pat: Now the state legislature seems to think of us as having to serve a land-grant state-wide mission without land grant resources.

- PA-11: Health, Safety and Wellbeing - support and foster a holistic approach to student and employee health, safety, and wellbeing.
- Robin's been struggling to get data about:
 - Does the institution have an institution-wide health and safety committee or network of committees that brings together workers and management in the development and review of workplace health and safety policies and procedures?
 - Does the institution have a campus safety committee that brings together students from vulnerable groups and management in the development and review of policies and procedures related to student safety and violence prevention?
 - PA-13: Pay Equity and Living Wage - working to ensure that employees are equitably compensated and that all campus workers receive a living wage:
 - Are the pay equity assessment(s) inclusive of both academic and non-academic staff?
 - Do the pay equity assessment(s) explicitly address pay equity by gender identity?
 - Do the pay equity assessment(s) explicitly address internal pay equity by racial, ethnic, and/or Indigenous identity?
 - Does the institution publish the results of its internal pay equity assessments? (required)
- If Yes, at least one of the following two fields is also required:
 - Published results of the institution's most recently finalized internal pay equity assessment (Online resource where the results of the institution's internal pay equity assessments are available)
 - Optional: Has the institution made a formal commitment to pay a living wage?
 - What's the pathway for us to push for living wages? For contractors, it would be part of the contract language development, but we really need to commit to living wages for our own employees first and the best avenue there may be through the Work pillar of the [Strategic Plan](#).
- Plan, Mission, Vision, Principles update:
 - Draft VISION Statement: "...responsible stewards of knowledge, resources and sustainability – driving transformative progress in health outcomes and societal well-being."
 - Draft revised CARDINAL principles: CARDS, S = "Sustainability: We honor our sacred trust – the stewardship of knowledge, potential, and a better world – by making bold, responsible choices that serve people, the planet, and future generations. Sustainability isn't just an initiative; it's how we operate, invest, and lead with a deep commitment to leave our institution, and the world it serves, stronger than we found it."
 - Pat: There's lots of feedback being compiled about the CARDS principles. Unfortunately, he thinks we're going back to the CARDINAL principles (he doesn't know why, he's just seen an email that it needs to be "CARDINAL") but he thinks sustainability will be included.
- Focus for us in the Spring?
 - Perhaps we can invite UCW to discuss initiatives around living wages and health/safety/wellbeing?
 - Perhaps we develop concrete proposals around tapping into the resources that go along with the Strategic Plan?

Engagement (Brian Barnes)

- The committee meets during the academic year at 11am on last Fridays before EcoReps Workshops. Our next meeting will be Friday 1/30 at 11am at the Center for Belonging, Access & Engagement (as well as on Teams).
- The Engagement committee last met on 11/21 prior to our EcoReps Workshop on [Addressing Climate Chaos: Monique Tilford with Louisville Climate Action Network](#) ([watch recording](#)) and discussed:
- Climbing Wall: SRC folks are very much interested.

- Bombas (Patty): Patty reached out to several potential partners. Americana said they would like some socks. She also got contact at Home of the Innocents because we have lots of small sizes. We submitted a request for more socks/underwear/undershirts in 2026 – should hear back soon.
- Green Office Certification: Brian, Patty & Justin have co-developed a checklist and point system. We're open to more ideas for actions, especially in the areas of Advocacy and Outreach. We'll post it to Teams channel before winter break, with the idea of launching a pilot in January.
- OCM (Tony): If you ever have a story with a hook, please reach out. He covered our UofL Arbor Day celebration last Friday, which had a good turnout as we planted 2 new apple trees at Garden Commons.
- Community Engagement Symposium (Henry): This is scheduled for March 20th out at Shelby Campus and there will again be a sustainability track, so please get the word out to anyone doing engaged scholarship work as we seek proposals. Proposals are peer reviewed. We are not just encouraging faculty, but staff and students doing work in the community to submit a proposal. Call for proposals will go out after Thanksgiving and deadline will be end of January.
 - Justin, Patty & Brian have presented at this in the past about Forward Radio.
 - Henry would welcome proposals about any kind of community engagement, including tree planting, and work with Bombas.
 - Henry will share the call for proposals prior to our December 2nd Green Threads Faculty Reunion.
 - There will be a keynote speaker.
 - There will also be a call out for Community Engagement Awards to be given at this event, including our Josh Smith Memorial Sustainability Award (Brian will get Henry a blurb about nominations for that!).
- Ecolympics: Will run for 8 weeks around dates of CR2ZW (which is basically all of Feb and March).
 - Please send any ideas for engagement to Justin for promotion during Ecolympics.
 - We also need 8 weekly prize baskets, so please help us ask around at local businesses or organizations.
 - We will also do our month-long E-waste Drive. Justin interviewed for his radio show a representative from Human-I-T, which collects used tech, wipes and restores it give to people in need. Perhaps we could partner with them in 2026?
 - Patty suggests we do a push before the Winter Break to encourage people to collect e-waste and batteries over the holidays for the E-Waste Drive.
- Sustainability Town Hall: Henry's Office has been considering doing an event where people can have a conversation about our work in sustainability. We love that idea!
- EcoReps: We are already recruiting spring workshop leaders, including someone from the American Compost Council who Brian has already reached out to. The spring workshops will be January 30th, Feb. 27th, March 27th, and April 17th (our annual Pancake Party featuring UofL maple syrup and honey with presentations about that!). Ruth will look into reserving our room in the Center for BAE.

Bottled water phase out committee (Brent Fryrear)

- The new filling station in Grawemeyer Hall is installed – which was a good thing – it shows our new Provost that we can get things done!
- The committee has been meeting on alternate Fridays at 10:15am on Teams. Our final meeting of the year was on 11/7 and we discussed:
- Still haven't heard about Snowy Owl grant for Fill It Forward campaign, but Scott thinks we'll know by January for sure.
- LWC is doing free public tours of their historic Water Tower this month. The first is this Sunday 12-5pm.

- 5 New Filling Stations (with \$25k from Provost): Our plumber will install first one at Grawemeyer later today or tomorrow. Then he'll move on to the next one. We only have two plumbers on Belknap. The plumber at HSC is already installing the filler at CTR! Rick thinks we'll be under budget if we can keep the labor in-house!
- We reviewed our top 35 priority list and selected 5 additional priority locations for new fillers if there's funding left over: SAC, Red Barn, Chemistry, Lion's Eye, HSC Exercise Facility
- We should do a story and celebratory glass-raising at the new filler in Grawemeyer with the Provost (and President, if possible, since we're add an S for Sustainability to UofL's Vision statement!). Probably not until January. Chris will submit it to the OCM content team and try to wrangle the President's schedule.
- UPDC projects underway (Karen): These are funded using each project's budget:
 - MITC 1st floor is getting a new filler;
 - Playhouse is getting a new fountain and filler through ADA update; and
 - Replacing traditional water stations in Life Sciences and Humanities with water bottle filling stations as part of our AP projects.
- Justin notes that the new Engineering building opened with fillers all over the place and they are a model he hasn't seen on campus: very simple push-button Oasis model with no filters or counters.
- Chris wonders if we could connect with GHN's hydration challenge to use data from fillers about bottles saved as a motivator?
- Decided to just meet once more in 2025: on December 5th (already scheduled) and then Brent will set up monthly meetings in 2026.

Staff Sustainability Training (Brian Barnes)

- Brian, Patty, and Justin have drafted a Green Office Certification & Sustainability Ambassador's checklist. We're imagining rolling the program out in January. We have four departments that have signed up to be pilots.
- Patty sent the following to the Engagement Committee on Monday: "We are inviting you to review & give feedback/suggestions for the new Green Certification program we drafted for offices/depts on campus to engage in to foster their "green" practices at work. You might remember this meeting minute item from our November mtg: "Green Office Certification: Brian, Patty & Justin have co-developed a checklist and point system. We're open to more ideas for actions, especially in the areas of Advocacy and Outreach. We'll post it to Teams channel before winter break, with the idea of launching a pilot in January." I have now posted our mature draft of this doc to TEAMS and we welcome your input between now and December 10, please. Please access it here and embed your

comments, suggestions directly:  [Green Certification description & checklist draft 112525.docx](#)
We aren't sure how the point system will "translate" to the scoring you see there and we welcome your ideas on that, too.

Athletics (Michael Ortman)

- Home football season is now over and they collected 20 cubic yards of aluminum after Saturday's UofL-UK game! Tri-Arrows is getting a count for the season together and it is expected to be over 180 cubic yards.
- Looking into pallet recycling.

Dining

- No rep present.

Students

- None.

Housing

- No reps present.

Sustainability in the media

- The following UofL Sustainability stories were released since our October meeting:

[**2026 Grawemeyer world order award winner explores the connection between climate change and security**](#) (UofL News, Dec. 2, 2025)

[**UofL earns silver-level Bicycle Friendly University status from the League of American Bicyclists**](#) (UofL Sustainability News, Nov. 23, 2025)

[**Cards vs. Cats Challenge returns to tackle food insecurity**](#) (UofL News, Nov. 21, 2025)

[**UofL joins LOUMED, partners to open new public green space in the heart of Louisville**](#) (UofL News, Nov. 19, 2025)

[**UofL's Green Heart Louisville Project earns prestigious national recognition**](#) (UofL News, Nov. 18, 2025)

[**Buzzing success: UofL's beekeeping intern's passion promotes sustainability**](#) (Spectrum News, Nov. 4, 2025)

Announcements

- Our annual Green Threads Reunion was cancelled due to snow yesterday and it should get rescheduled.
- We'd like to bid farewell to Avery Kplers who has faithfully served on the Council (and chaired some of its subcommittees) since its founding in 2008 and he's now moving on UT-Knoxville. We wish him well!
- Brent thanked all the Council members for their passion and participation and wished them a happy, healthy holiday where they could relax, recharge and renew.
- Next meeting is January 28, 2026 at 10am on Teams.