

UofL Sustainability Council
September 24, 2025 Minutes

Attendees: Brent Fryrear (Chair), Justin Mog, Debra Anderson, Sherri Brown (CEHD rep), Mary Brydon-Miller, Wade Fleming, Tami Harbolt, Sammie Holmes, Scott LaJoie, Sajid Mian, Eli Mudd, Rick Serfass, Kelly Green, Mo Early, Emma Beck, Asma Addarrat-Edwards, Katina Kulow, Vince Proco, Emily Rasmussen

Health Sciences Simulation Center and Collaboration Hub (Brandy Barry, UPDC and Guests: Douglas Pierce, Emily Hill, David Toda, Tony Layne, Cara Prosser, Paul Graves)

- They have all been involved in the design process as they pursue LEED Gold and Net Zero Ready, in collaboration and constant consultation with our on-campus stakeholders.
- This new 250,000sf building on Preston between Chestnut and Gray will bring together all of the Schools at HSC in one interprofessional setting. Will provide best-in-class simulation and teaching space on a vacant site (formerly Med-Dent Apartments).
- The common mission of all these schools is Health and First, do no harm...could this project reflect that mission? The vision includes: "With health as the inspiration, the building and site will serve as a sustainable living laboratory to promote health and wellbeing."
- UofL has some great Sustainability goals that they are looking closely at throughout the project.
- Project goals: Resilient foundation; Iconic destination, Leader in innovation; Holistic health, Sense of belonging; One ecosystem.
- They are thinking about health at all levels – individual, community, and ecological. They are encouraging movement, using materials that reflect healing, encouraging connection to nature, etc.
- They've conducted daylight analysis so they can design with solar and shading in mind. Things that don't need daylight (restrooms, elevators, mechanical rooms) are on the east side against the parking garage.
- They are also thinking about the connection to nearby LOUMED Commons that is being built right now – trying to address the "concrete jungle."
- The building will have a very pedestrian-friendly front on the west, north and south ends (with service from the east).
- Using an efficient layout that is elevated to pull people in and up while allowing for greenspace at ground level, with native and adapted pollinator habitat and an urban micro-forest; and bird-safe glazing and envelope.
- When you enter, you'll be invited up wide, daylit stairs for active design. There will be a total of four stairwells with three emergency life-safety stairwells on the east side.
- The upper floors will be wrapped in a screen to reduce solar heat gain, control glare, and make it bird safe. This will perform better than exterior shade fins.
- It'll be Net Zero Energy ready, with all the conduits and engineering to allow for PV panels on the roof – hoping to include this in the initial build, not as a phase 2.
- Will use low embodied-carbon concrete mixes and other low-impact materials.
- Rainwater will be harvested off roof and from runoff on-site to flush toilets and irrigation after filtration. Excess stormwater that cannot be used on site will enter an infiltration system to percolate down into the groundwater. Irrigation will mostly be needed during first couple years of establishment.
- Will utilize next-generation, high-performance geothermal wells (aquifer heat exchange – no water exchange with aquifer).

- Transportation: Using a model of Complete Streets to ensure the site is accessible by all modes and pleasant for all, incorporating ecological services. Conducted traffic and walkability studies, and bike and transit network analysis.
- UofL's 2024 Landscape Master Plan dives deep into sustainability and how landscape is pivotal to that. It focuses on tackling urban heat island, protecting water and air quality, biodiversity, and well-being. Conducted an ecological study – what would the site have been prior to human settlement (compared to Charlestown State Park) and how does its current condition compare. What's the target for this site after the project? They propose moving from current 10% to 36% of the ecological functions of a natural ecosystem. There's currently just a couple trees on site and they plan to plant 103 trees in layers like a deciduous forest. This will provide habitat and shade to cool the site.
- Water reduction strategies will be employed with low-flow fixtures and no cooling towers. This will reduce water use by 50%, saving 2 million gallons/year.
- Energy Modeling: They've calculated the proposed Energy Use Intensity (EUI) of 29 kBtu/sf/yr, which is low because of reduced HVAC loads through smart design (HVAC accounts for 63% of total building energy use, with cooling accounting for 20% of total energy use over a year). Peer buildings have EUI of 65, so this building will be 55% better. To be LEED, it has to be EUI of 41, so we're well ahead.
- There will be no on-site natural gas consumption because it's an inefficient way to heat the space, compared to using heat pumps.
- Materials: Focused on health, so will select materials that do not emit VOCs and do not contain embodied toxins. Using Health Product Declarations to compare environmental score cards for various materials. Perkins & Will has developed a Precautionary List of materials to avoid because of their negative health impacts. VOCs, PFAS, and other toxins are often found in conventional ceiling tiles, wood binders, paints, flame retardants, fabrics, antimicrobials, and PVC.
- Indoor Air Quality will be enhanced to ensure cognitive function is not negatively impacted by the building. This means increased ventilation, active dehumidification, no VOCs, and enhanced filtration. They are decoupling thermal comfort from ventilation as much as possible.
- Will you use light-harvesting ballasts? Yes, though with LEDs, we won't need ballasts – they will automatically dim as the sun comes in. But there will also be extensive lighting controls throughout to ensure lights won't be left on in unused spaces.
- Are there plans for shared workspaces or primarily offices for each faculty/researcher/staff? That is still being determined. It will be the primary home for Public Health, Nursing, and Anesthesia.
- Timeline? Demolition of KDP will start around the end of this year and deep foundations will be laid in the spring.

Committee Updates:

Operations (Sajid Mian)

- Operations meets on first Tuesdays of every month 2pm, in person (in SAC W107, or on-site for tours). Next meeting is delayed a week to October 7th at 2pm in SAC W107.
- For our last meeting on September 9th, we toured energy efficiency initiatives and major renovations at J.B. Speed and Natural Sciences. [See photos](#). Improvements include:

NATURAL SCIENCE

- Approximately 90,000 square feet of space, the renovation allows it to continue being used.
- New boiler, high efficiency (98%) 1500 MBH for dehumidifying the building in early spring/late fall.

- New reheat chiller 72 tons, for dehumidifying the building in summer. It has a variable flow for increased efficiency.
- Six (6) New VAV air handling units, 84,500 cfm total
- High efficiency direct drive ECM fan arrays.
- No belts to service and no belt dust in airstream.
- High efficiency MERV 13 filters to remove dust from the air.
- CO2 outside air control.
- Designed for low water flow rates, 18-degree delta T, and low heating water temperature to improve heating efficiencies.
- All new chilled and hot water piping to increase reliability.
- All new ductwork to increase fan efficiency and improve indoor air quality.
- All new LED lighting (52% better than code).
- New electrical switchgear with metering to measure building usage.
- Complete new roof, meeting modern efficiency requirements with insulation.
- New triple-pane windows, more efficient than code, with high Sound rating to minimize distractions from planes.
- New drinking fountains to minimize single-use water bottles.
- New corridor wall painting and flooring to brighten up the spaces.

JB SPEED

- Approximately 30,000 square feet of new HVAC on floors 1,2, and 3 (Basement was previously renovated).
- Removed all steam radiators and window air conditioners.
- New reheat chiller, 48 tons, for dehumidifying the building in summer. It has a variable flow for increased efficiency.
- Six (7) New VAV air handling units, 31,000 cfm total
- High efficiency direct drive fan arrays.
- No belts to service and no belt dust in airstream.
- High efficiency MERV 13 filters to remove dust from the air.
- CO2 outside air control.
- Designed for low water flow rates, 18-degree delta T, and low heating water temperature to improve heating efficiencies.
- All new chilled and hot water piping to increase reliability.
- All new ductwork to increase fan efficiency and improve indoor air quality.
- New electrical switchgear with metering to measure usage.

Education & Research (Tyler Mahoney)

- This semester, E&R meets on third Fridays at 2pm on Teams. Last met on September 19th and discussed:
- Introductions and updates:
 - May: Helped MUP students put together a mini-park today for [Park\(ing\) Day](#), Friday, Sept. 19th, downtown and in parking lot across from The Ville Grill.
 - Lisa: Consider this great event: Policy on a Plate: A Farm Bill Story. Note – this information has been uploaded to the shared Outlook Calendar. [Register here](#).
 - Rachel: It would be good to have a contact (for Consortium small grant program for paper making) in sustainability and or a partner in the community.
- Reopen the floor to discuss the sustainability round table

- Will have schedule finalized in a couple weeks, just two events this semester – in October and November. Will do 4 roundtables in Spring, with one reserved for PhD students. First one in October will be with Angela and she hasn't sent final details yet. It'll be on Fridays.
- Justin will include info about RT and link to invite speakers in the next Sustainability newsletter.
- May asked Justin if he could send out Microsoft form to recruit speakers.
- We will invite UofL research admin folks to our next meeting (associate deans of research, grant finders, EVPRI staff). Discussion regarding what we want to ask these folks
 - Andrea Gaughn will attend and will invite Associate Dean from Speed and EVPRI reps.
 - What questions do we have for this conversation?
 - How do we manage interdisciplinary teams – how do we deal with administrative challenges to record the work of faculty/staff and manage students across departments? How do we break down the silos?
 - Are we collecting info about canceled/rescinded grants and what are alternatives to federal funding? (Tyler and Lauren lost EPA funding; we lost our Fulbright Scholar in Residence.)
 - How can we facilitate Campus As A Living Lab projects? (Luz: For example environmental health and disaster preparedness of young people on campus – which can be politically challenging because of connection to climate change; and more general concern about not wanting to over-study our students.
 - Reducing single-use plastics consumption would be another great topic! Mark: An Engineering faculty member has a patent on plastics recycling and there are industries looking at reducing use, including GE. Justin: New Makerspace in the new Engineering building is a great living lab space for pursuing zero waste with student researchers, including capstone projects there, and the director, Sean, is very interested in this topic.)
 - One of those capstone programs at the Business School: <https://positiveleadership.louisville.edu/the-center-launches-an-18-hour-two-semester-experiential-l...>
 - How can we make sure our commitment to sustainability is reflected in the next Strategic Plan? (beyond the narrow focus on green energy that's already mentioned?)
- Revisiting topics for E&R meetings
 - Check-in for Campus As A Living Lab
 - Daniel: How to deal with international students wanting to study social equity (fear of getting deported = fear of publishing)? Justin: Not just international students – we are all next! We have to publicly resist authoritarianism and defend our right to study and speak.
- Formation of Masters of Sustainability subcommittee
 - Perhaps a small committee of folks experienced in the history can get together first and help the broader committee figure out what to do next? Volunteers: Lisa, Justin, May, and Tyler or Mary, and let's invite Brent Fryrear.
 - May: A&S has been internally pushing to relaunch the Masters. Andrea is involved and will keep us posted.
 - Lisa: Yes, Cara was tasked last spring with being the lead person to develop the Masters and she seemed to think that the department chairs with an interest would take the lead, rather than convening a committee.
 - Mary: So maybe we just need to invite Cara to one of our meetings?

Planning & Administration (Pat Smith)

- P&A last met August 21st and will next meet on Oct. 3rd at 1:30pm on Teams.

Engagement (Brian Barnes)

- The committee meets during the academic year at 11am on last Fridays before EcoReps Workshops. Our next meeting will be this Friday 9/26 at 11am at the Center for Belonging, Access & Engagement (as well as on Teams).
- EcoReps Workshops: Our monthly vegetarian Lunch & Learn workshops continue on last Fridays at noon at the Center for Belonging, Access & Engagement (Belknap Village North room 176) or virtually via [Microsoft Teams Meeting](#):

Aug. 29 – [Civic Engagement: Jean Christensen with Citizens' Climate Lobby](#) ([watch recording](#))

Sept. 26 – [Food Recovery: Meghan Kontic with Glean KY](#)

Oct. 31 – [Industrial Composting: Laura Veldman with Smith Creek](#)

Nov. 21 – [Addressing Climate Chaos: Sarah Lynn Cunningham with Louisville Climate Action Network](#)

- The Engagement committee last met 8/29 and discussed:
 - Bombas Socks: Patty Payette has led the charge to get socks distributed. Let her know if you have ideas for a distribution project. We can put a new order for socks in this November.
 - EcoReps: Makenzie and Brian have created a new framework for becoming an EcoRep and earning some recognition and swag based on service hours in our four standing sustainability volunteer opportunities: Composting, Free Store, Garden, and Cardinal Cupboard. Upper level EcoReps would be expected to organize some kind of educational/advocacy event.
 - Staff Engagement: Green Office Certification: Patty, Brian and Justin have been developing the framework of this program to train and engage staff in sustainability at the office. There's a checklist under development with about 30 tasks that'll be tied to 30 short training videos. There would be someone in each office who is designated the Sustainability Ambassador and they'd be expected to come to at least one of three gatherings per year at which we would recognize offices and offer more training and support. We already have two offices interested in "test driving" this as a pilot program. It's heavy on processes like green purchasing, zero waste, energy conservation.
 - Can Labs participate? Yes! The language is inclusive enough for any setting.
 - We want to include any space that has more than one person in it.
 - Community Engagement through Papermaking (Rachel Singel): She's done fun outreach with public through the Portland Museum and Bernheim around making paper and doing printmaking with invasive species and local fibers. It's easier to bring people to her studio in Schneider Hall. It's a nice gateway to teach people about nature and recycling. She'd appreciate any connections where this might be appropriate. Ideally the participants would go out and harvest the invasives themselves, then we clean and process the fiber and mix in recycled paper with a blender and then pour into molds. Harvesting and cleaning takes the longest – only one day needed if already prepped.
 - Alarah: This could be a great weekend project with invasive species removal!
 - Justin: Perhaps Rachel could lead a paper-making workshop as one of our future Garden Workshops.
 - **Fall Garden Gatherings 2025**
 - Mondays, 3pm at the Urban & Public Affairs Garden (426 W. Bloom St., behind Bettie Johnson Hall)*
 - Thursdays, noon at the Garden Commons (northeast of the Baptist Center)*
 - Fall 2025 Garden Workshops (all at Garden Commons next to Baptist Center):
 - Saturday, Aug. 16th, 2pm - [Salsa Party!](#)
 - RESCHEDULED FROM SEPT. FOR: Thursday, Oct. 16th, noon - [Victory Gardening Then and Now](#)

Friday, Oct. 17th, 5pm - [Zero Waste Pumpkin Carving!](#)

Thursday, Nov. 20th, noon - [Holiday Wreath Making Workshop](#)

- [Cards Commuter Challenge](#) **August 25 - September 30, 2025.**

Monday, 8/25, 1pm, Microsoft Teams - [HRTalks Wellness: Move Sustainably](#) ([watch video recording](#))

Thursday 8/28, 11am, Meetup at SAC Starbucks - Bus Trip to [UofL Day at the Gray Street Farmers Market](#)

Wednesday 9/3, 3-5pm, outside Free Store at Honors House - [CYCLE September Kick-off](#) with free bike tune ups and **5pm ride to Iroquois Park**

Thursday 9/11, 4pm, Meetup outside the Ville Grill - [WALK to Old Louisville Coffee Co-op](#) with the Student Sustainability Coalition (bring your UofL ID for a 10% student discount!)

Wednesday 9/17, 5:45pm, Meetup outside the Ville Grill - [CARPOOL to Waterfront](#)

[Wednesday](#) free concert at Waterfront Park featuring [Joy Oladokun](#), [Uwade](#), and [Maggie Halfman](#).

Friday, 9/19, all day, Parking lot across from the Ville Grill - [Park\(ing\) Day](#) - *Bring your bike from 5-7pm, when the UofL Sustainability Council will be providing free bike tune-ups and stickers!*

Wednesday 9/24, 4:30-5:30pm, Humanities Quad - [SKATE Night](#) - bring wheels for your feet for a chill afternoon skating together and enjoying prizes.

Monday 9/30 - Sunday 10/5 - [National Week Without Driving](#)- Ditch your car for the week or just for a day and share your story on socials, invite others to join, write an Op-Ed about your experience. [Learn more](#).

- [Community-Based Learning courses](#): Office of Community Engagement offers a three-day institute every summer, but will be adding shorter 45-minute monthly workshops to help faculty integrate CBL. They'll be virtual during lunch hour, starting next month.

Bottled water proposal next steps (Scott LaJoie)

- No response yet from the administration on our updated budget request for installing enough filling stations on all three campuses to ensure basic coverage – we identified need for about 35 stations and the grand total was about \$180k.
- The committee continues to meet alternate Fridays at 10:15am on Teams. We last met 9/12 to discuss opportunities for grant funding and partnership with Louisville Water Company. Our next meeting is this Friday 9/26 at 10:15am on Teams to address the renegotiation of the Pouring Rights contract with Pepsi.
- A grant is being submitted tomorrow to fund the purchase of Fill It Forward water bottle stickers.
- Another effort is to gather letters of support for our plan to add more refill stations - these will go to the Provost office.
- Lastly, a plan is forming for a Drink Tap from Durable water bottles education fair in the Spring.

Staff Sustainability Training (Brian Barnes)

- Brian has drafted an outline (shared last month) for the UofL Green Office Certification and Sustainability Ambassadors Program.
- He is working on developing the content and piloting the program.

Kroger Zero Hunger | Zero Waste Scholars update (Justin Mog)

- This is the 5th year of this program funded by Kroger to support 20 undergraduate students willing to work on zero hunger | zero waste projects with \$4000 awards. Mentorship and management of the program fell in the lap of Justin Mog and the Center for Engaged Learning.

- All 20 awardees have been notified and were asked to attend our orientation meeting on September 10th. They are working now to identify projects and partners.
- If anyone has ideas for specific projects these students could be involved in researching, developing, and implementing, please let Justin know!

Athletics (Andrew McClung)

- No rep present.

Dining

- No rep present.

Students

- None.

Sustainability in the media

- The following UofL Sustainability stories were released since our August meeting:
[Interview: Dr. Natasha DeJarnett, UofL's Envirome Institute](#) (Sustainability Now!, Forward Radio 106.5fm, Sept. 22, 2025)
[UofL community experiences "Road Joy" with Cards Commuter Challenge & Cycle September!](#) (UofL Sustainability News, Sept. 17, 2025)
[UofL Speed School opens \\$90M Student Success & Research Building](#) (UofL News, Sept. 4, 2025)
[Win prizes staying sustainable with the Cards Commuter Challenge](#) (The Louisville Cardinal, Sept. 2, 2025)
[Sustainability Roundtable Relaunches Fall 2025 - Call for Proposals](#) (UofL Sustainability News, Sept. 2, 2025)

Housing (Cahterine Wibbels)

- No reps present.

History of the UofL Sustainability Council (Justin Mog)

- Our Council was formed in 2008 under Provost Willinghamz who was a champion for sustainability. It grew out of some initial efforts by the A&S Green (Budget Rescue) Team to advocate for investments in infrastructure and processes that would help UofL reduce waste and save money.
- In their first year, the Council developed the Green Threads program and a \$1.5M plan for a Sustainability Center. The only thing that came out of that request was the creation of Justin's position, the Assistant to the Provost for Sustainability Initiatives, which is unusual in the field as it requires a PhD and it direct-reports to the Provost. Justin was hired and started in August 2009. No additional sustainability professionals have been hired though the most recent AASHE Sustainability Staffing Report shows that a school our size has on average 4-5 full-time sustainability professionals.
- 2008 was also the year UofL first signed onto the national Carbon Commitment to achieve net neutrality. All permanent UofL Presidents since then have re-signed the Carbon Commitment. It requires us to publicly report our annual carbon emissions and develop a Climate Action Plan, which the Council first released in 2010. When that first plan was approved by the administration, they awarded us about \$180,000/year for implementation and we plowed most of that funding into addressing commuting because no one else is doing anything to encourage people to drive less. That allowed us to run our AASHE-award-winning [Earn-A-Bike Program](#) for six years.

- With new leadership and another “financial crisis” in 2017, all of our Climate Action Plan funding was pulled and the program was abruptly suspended. We eventually clawed back to an annual budget of about \$46,000 but that is all the funding the Council gets from UofL (besides Justin’s salary and x-pay for the Council Chair). We use it to cover UofL’s memberships in AASHE and the Carbon Commitment, pay for Cardinal Directions and our four Building Dashboards in the residence halls, and hire student interns.
- The way we measure progress in campus sustainability is with AASHE’s Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS), and our Council has always been structured around STARS, with standing committees around the four main categories of STARS. UofL was the 10th school in the world to submit data to the new STARS framework back in 2011. We achieved a Silver rating then and UofL has consistently improved its overall STARS score over the years, with our most recent [STARS Gold rating \(68.45%\)](#) in May of 2022, documenting a 2.21% improvement over our [2019 STARS Gold rating \(66.24%\)](#). This was the fifth STARS report we submitted since 2011 and we continue to increase our score each time. UofL is proud to have consistently maintained the **highest STARS rating of any school in Kentucky**, and we rank 4th among our official Benchmark Institutions. UofL has also remained in the **top 100 most sustainable schools on the planet!**
- To reflect the past decade of experience and set new goals, during 2021-22, UofL's Sustainability Council worked to produce a revised Climate Action Plan as a component of our new [UofL Sustainability Plan: Pathway to Platinum](#), which is a comprehensive plan for moving us toward STARS Platinum. The new Climate Action Plan is a comprehensive roadmap for reducing our emissions down to net zero. It was shared with the campus population for comment in January 2022 and a final draft was submitted to the administration on May 27, 2022. While it has never been formally adopted, this revised Climate Action Plan was integrated into the first comprehensive [Campus Master Planning](#) effort the university has conducted in 15 years. The Sustainability Council coordinates UofL's Climate Action Planning as well as the reporting of our greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Council has never been formally institutionalized with formal bylaws or a seat at the table for shared governance. This has advantages and disadvantages. In 2017-18, at the suggestion of the Interim Provost at the time, we went through the process of developing bylaws and submitted a request that the Council be elevated to a president’s Commission on Sustainability with a seat at the table, akin to CODRE and COSW. That proposal has been rejected repeatedly by leadership in the past and up to today when even the existing Commissions were dissolved.

Announcements

- Next meeting – October 29th at 10am on Teams.