Background

In Spring 2017 Vice President of Administration & Finance Joyce Lopes and Provost Alex Enyedi established the HSU Advisory Committee on Sustainability (HACS) to engage stakeholders and to make recommendations to the Administration for further implementing sustainability into the core focus areas of campus operations, academics, infrastructure and engagement. Since its inception, the committee’s student, faculty and staff members have continued to meet once a month, with additional sub-committee work outside of regular meetings, to discuss and take action on the tasks set forth in the committee’s charge1.

The committee bases its work on the following definition: **Sustainability is the recognition that humanity is a part of the natural world, not separate from it, and that healthy social and economic systems depend on the health and resilience of ecological systems.**

The purpose of this annual report is to update the Chief of Staff, Provost and the Vice President of Administration & Finance on committee accomplishments in the 2020-21 academic year, to specify goals and activities for the 2021-22 academic year, and to summarize specific recommendations to further sustainability into the core focus areas of the campus.

2020-2021 Members

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<tr>
<th>Co-chairs</th>
<th>Staff Appointments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Kerry Byrne</td>
<td>Amanda Nelson</td>
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<td>Morgan King</td>
<td>Athletics Compliance Coordinator</td>
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<td><strong>Student Appointments</strong></td>
<td>Lynda Henderson</td>
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<td>Josefina Barrantes</td>
<td>Housing Buyer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sofia Borgeson</td>
<td>Frank Herrera</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rachel Ostrander</td>
<td>SJEIC Coordinator</td>
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<td><strong>Faculty Appointments</strong></td>
<td>Melanie Bettenhausen</td>
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<td>Dr. Jim Graham</td>
<td>Dining Services Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Laura Levy</td>
<td>Katie Koscielak</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Sintana Vergara</td>
<td>Sustainability Analyst</td>
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<td>Jennifer Ortega, M.A.</td>
<td>Patrick Orona</td>
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1 Go to the HSU Advisory Committee on Sustainability webpage for more information.
Deliverables

HACS completed the following activities in the 2020-21 academic year:

1. **Sustainability Dashboard.** The HACS publicly launched this online visualization tool in the fall of 2020, which tracks and displays HSU’s key sustainability performance indicators, helps make transparent HSU’s progress towards meeting its sustainability goals, and provides current and prospective students a deeper look at HSU’s sustainability initiatives.

2. **Sustainability in the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan.** Members of the committee contributed to the IDEAS Index for Strategic Planning, and provided information and direct feedback to the Resources Stewardship & Sustainability working group during Phases 1-2 to advocate for the integration of sustainability throughout the Plan.

3. **Feedback to Polytechnic Self Study Working Groups.** HACS members shared information with working groups on current sustainability activities on campus, as well as how sustainability might be further integrated into the culture, operations and academics of the campus following a Polytechnic designation.

4. **Special Meeting with Provost Capps and Interim Vice President Gordon.** This meeting took place in December 2020. Discussion revolved around how the Provost and Vice President are able to engage with the HACS moving forward, as well as a brainstorm on topics for HACS to consider. These topics include:
   - Supporting effort to achieve STARS Platinum;
   - Building a culture of sustainability, through staff orientation, professional development and other forms of engagement;
   - Advising policy development, including Strategic Plan and Climate Action Plan update, and
   - Community engagement.

5. **Formation of Working Groups.** The committee established three working groups to identify and work on projects within the context of their focus areas:
   - Policy Working Group: developed update to the HACS charge;
   - Food Working Group: supported development work on the edible landscape mapping initiative, and
   - Academics & Research Working Group: drafted proposal and secured funding for a faculty professional development offering on teaching sustainability.

Goals and Activities for AY 2021-22

1. Gain designation as an advisory committee to the Office of the President.
2. Adopt updated charge, which includes specific tasks as well as the addition of a community member and at-large student to the committee.
3. Continue to support the development of a 2021-2026 Strategic Plan and Academic Roadmap that includes sustainability within its core institutional goals.
4. Participate in next steps to formalizing a polytechnic designation for HSU, including the review of any sustainability-related proposals.
5. Support the work of - and closely collaborate with - the Sustainability Fellow.
6. Continue the Policy, Food, and Academics & Research working groups:
a. Policy Group: Continue to advise on Strategic Plan, Polytechnic Self Study and Climate Action Plan update;
b. Food Group: Complete Edible Landscape mapping initiative, and
c. Academics & Research Group: Secure stakeholder buy-in and additional funding to deploy faculty professional development offering.

7. Participate in aligning repopulation planning with sustainability goals (e.g., telecommuting policy)
8. Support the update of the HSU Climate Action Plan, which will include a plan to build resilience to climate change and a goal to achieve climate neutrality by 2045.
9. Further seek synergies with other established groups on campus and in the community, and represent interests of sustainability on other committees.
10. Continue to receive reports from the Office of Sustainability, faculty, and students on sustainability-focused initiatives, policies and programs, and provide advice and support to further the integration of sustainability into the core focus areas of campus.
11. Hold a minimum of one informational meeting per semester with the Chief of Staff, Provost and the Vice President of Administration & Finance.

Conclusion

The HACS strongly urges campus leadership to make sustainability a strategic priority of the university, so that all major decisions, including the development of the Strategic Plan 2021-2026 and the Polytechnic vision, are crafted with consideration of their social, environmental and economic impacts to student success, campus operations, infrastructure and community partnerships. The COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder of the vulnerability of our campus and the broader society to global scale threats. Sustainability can be a lens through which HSU transitions towards decarbonized and climate-resilient operations, and to a curriculum renowned for preparing students with the skills and knowledge to build resilient and socially just communities. We look forward to supporting this effort.