



**2020 Climate Action Plan Committee  
October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
University Crossing 492**

**DRAFT Minutes**

**Attendees**

- Tyler Arrigo, Office of Sustainability
- Mark Barron, Facilities Operations and Services
- James Kohl, Student Affairs
- Tom Miliano, Co-Chair, Administrative Services
- Chris Niezrecki, Co-Chair, Francis College of Engineering
- Gary Nolan, Procurement Services
- Ruairi O'Mahony, Office of Sustainability
- Erik Pettaway, Student Government Association
- Juliette Rooney-Varga, Kennedy College of Sciences
- Rich Trubey, Mesoamerican Development Institute – Guest Presenter
- Mary Usovicz, Emerging Energy Innovation (E2I) – Guest Presenter

**Not in Attendance:** Ed Brennen, Brent Morgan

*The meeting was called to order at 1:06 pm.*

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Co-Chairs, Tom Miliano and Chris Niezrecki, welcomed attendees. Committee members and invited guests in attendance introduced themselves.

Tom Miliano informed the committee that Lori Weeden is unable to participate on the CAP committee due to other commitments.

**2. Review and Approve Minutes of the 04/20/2018 CAP Steering Committee Meeting**

The minutes were approved as written by the committee.

*Ruairi O'Mahony, Motioned  
Mark Barron, Seconded  
Unanimously Approved*

**3. Climate Action Plan Structure—Update**

Tom Miliano outlined an approach that the Co-Chairs developed in preparation for this meeting that could serve as the future focus of the CAP. Three key areas were identified for discussion:

- Renewable/Efficiency Project Identification
- Corporate Partnerships & Engagement
- Carbon Offset Approach

Ruairi O'Mahony noted how a new approach was necessary given the changes at UMass Lowell since the original CAP was adopted in 2012. The focus areas outlined by the Co-Chairs present a good opportunity to formalize discussions where existing committees do not exist. Ruairi outlined an example using Transportation. The university already has a parking and transportation committee, so, we do not need to replicate the work of this committee as part of the CAP structure.

Tom noted he wants the CAP Steering Committee and its subcommittees to be active in pursuit of the CAP goals. He asked the members if there was anything else they thought was missing or if these were the correct focus areas.

The members agreed on the importance of these initial focus areas, but also discussed adding a subcommittee that could focus on Behavioral Change, Outreach & Communication.

During this discussion James Kohl mentioned that Kerry Donohoe (Dean of Academic Services) and Kerri Johnston (Associate Dean of Enrollment & Director of Undergraduate Admissions) are leading an effort to review the student onboarding process (orientation, registration, etc.). James noted how this could potentially open up an opportunity for the CAP Steering Committee, or appointed sub-committee, to work with that group to consider making sustainability and climate education a component of that onboarding process.

Tom and Ruairi stated that they will reach out to Kerri Johnston and Kerry Donohoe and report back to the committee.

#### **4. Presentation – Francis College of Engineering Energy Initiatives**

Mary Usovicz provided an overview of the consulting services she is providing to the university. Working with Chris Niezrecki, the efforts are primarily focused on the energy sector and increasing engagement with corporate and research partners. Recent examples included Greentown Labs, Avangrid, ENEL GreenPower, Columbia Gas, and National Grid.

Mary discussed UMass Lowell's new partnership with Greentown Labs in depth and outlined the numerous benefits to both the university and Greentown Labs as a result of the partnership.

Finally, Mary discussed a number of upcoming conferences being held on campus with a focus on blockchain technology and energy efficiency for the emerging cannabis industry in Massachusetts.

## **5. Presentation – Carbon Offsets and Trading**

Rich Trubey of the Mesoamerican Development Institute (MDI) provided a presentation on the unique model of coffee production MDI has developed. The model, Integrated Open Canopy (IOC), has been heavily informed based on a fifteen-year partnership with the University of Massachusetts. IOC counters the traditional clear-cutting methods employed by most coffee producers. Through the IOC production model, coffee yields are higher, the biodiversity of regions is protected and enhanced, and watersheds are preserved and forest buffers are established. A cleaner, more sustainable coffee bean drying process emits less carbon than traditional coffee growing and processing operations.

Because of this unique model, the MDI is able to sell carbon credits as a byproduct of the coffee production. To date, MDI has sold over \$100,000 of unverified carbon credits through its existing coffee distribution network. In order to sell carbon credits on the open market, the credits that are generated from the IOC production model need to be verified through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Accreditation Program for Greenhouse Gas Validation. ANSI requires two validators, one could be the university and the other would need to be an independent third-party agency not affiliated with the university or MDI.

The potential global market for carbon credits is enormous, the committee recognized there could be a financial benefit to UMass Lowell to expand upon our existing relationship with MDI and engage in this process. Provided the carbon credits can be validated through ANSI, the university could engage in trading of said credits to receive a direct financial benefit, and also to potentially offset some of our emissions. Ruairi O'Mahony highlighted business and study abroad air travel offsets as a potential area of focus. The approximate cost to become verified carbon credit seller with ANSI requires an initial \$20,000 investment with an annual cost of approximately \$10,000.

Discussion ensued amongst the committee. While agreeing on principal that there was potential to this approach, some concerns were also noted. One specific example being from Juliette Rooney-Varga on current issues with bio-fuels as a renewable/clean fuel. Juliette offered to speak about this in more detail at the next CAP meeting, based on a recent research project she has collaborated on:

<http://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/aaa512/pdf>

The committee recognizes that any recommendation to engage in the carbon credit process would require a broader discussion outside of the committee including executive cabinet review and approval.

A motion was put forth to have the Carbon Offset Subcommittee investigate and report back to the CAP Steering Committee on the benefits and drawbacks to the university in pursuing the ANSI Certification process in collaboration with MDI.

*Ruairi O'Mahony Motioned  
Tyler Arrigo Seconded  
Unanimously Approved*

**6. UMass Lowell Transportation Master Plan Update**

Ruairi provided a short update on the Transportation Master Plan Update. He outlined the collaborative nature of the planning process with a significant focus on engagement with city and regional partners.

Ruairi requested that interested parties review the draft plan and provide any comments/suggestions. The draft plan can be found at:

<https://www.uml.edu/facilities/planning/parking-transportation/>

**The comment period closes on November 9<sup>th</sup>.**

***Note: Due to time constraints the Energy Project Updates and the FY18 GHG Analysis was moved to the next committee meeting.***

*The meeting adjourned at 2:33 pm.*