

PUSC Meeting Minutes  
March 15, 2018

Attendees: Brittney Blokker, Isaac Green, Jeff Spoelstra, Josh Schultz, Laura Donders, Lu DeBoef, Chris Caprara, Fanny Hernandez, Tim Palmer, Jim Gilchrist, Frank Cordero, Paul Pancella, Caroline Webber, Pete Strazdas, Pooja Mandagere, Paul Farber, Sarah Hill, Jody Brylinsky, Maarten Vonhof, Cybelle Shattuck, Sarah Pratt, Sue Stapleton, Kahler Schuemann,

**Agenda:**

- Welcome and introductions
- Review and approval of agenda and previous meeting minutes
- Brief OfS updates
- Discussion with provost and vice-provost
- Next steps
- Adjourn by 5 pm

**Agenda and previous minutes approved**

**Brief OfS Updates:**

- The next Gibbs House potluck is coming up March 24, 2018.
- The NetPositive Enterprise Event (March 15) was unfortunately canceled.
- 5 new Gibbs Fellows have been announced to live in the Gibbs House.
- A new cohort of WeSustain interns will be announced soon, for Fall 2018.
- SSG grants will be decided upon soon, highest ever request amount this year (~55k).
- We have hit road blocks on the campus sustainability Key Performance Indicators effort, but today's meeting should direct that and future efforts of this group and the OfS.
  - This effort could include a new strategic plan for the OfS. This would/could/should link to The Gold Standard beyond 2020.
- OfS staff will be challenged to write a "rapid highlights report" of what has been going on at the OfS in the past year or so.

**Transcript of discussion with provost and vice-provost**

Sue Stapleton: WMU has made incredible strides physically, culturally, and educationally in sustainability. There is no lesser commitment to sustainability than there has been in the past. We have made a leadership change, Harold Glasser has returned to faculty and Jeff now manages the OfS office and activities. I am now asking for your help and advice as to what we do with the next leader/leadership of this office. We will work to define the vision for the future of this office and sustainability at WMU.

Paul Pancella: Are you looking for a faculty appointment or administrator?

Sue Stapleton: In the past, a faculty role is important for the students who use this figure for research/scholarly work, which might be a critical role for that position. But I'm looking for input, there is no restriction and it can go either way.

Sue Stapleton: This committee will continue reporting to the Provost rather than the President. The title of this committee is confusing, but this is the direction moving forward.

Laura Donders: Is there an opportunity for the student staff to have input for future leadership? It would be helpful to hear from the students who are currently working here and are the future of this office.

Sue Stapleton: Absolutely. Certainly, we want to hear from students. This group is an advisory group and needed to know about this transition but that does not mean we do not want to hear from undergraduate and graduate students.

Pete Strazdas: The next leader needs to be a collaborator. There have been great bridges all across campus especially facilities here at WMU, this person should continue to support these relationships. This office needs to continue to bridge partnerships and collaborations.

Sue Stapleton: We need someone who can talk the talk and walk the walk in terms of collaboration. They will be a partner in moving the university forward.

Caroline Webber: From a faculty standpoint, they need leadership qualities and need to lead from behind. Think more of a confederation. Consider not just what is going on in this office but all-around campus. Don't be isolated in this office.

Sue Stapleton: At a leadership level, we want to maximize our hires, build research, and scholar quality. Showcasing locally, community-wide, and globally impactful projects. The STARS report is a way to do this. We need to be able to continue demonstrating and showcasing ourselves as a competing university with the best of the best. Visibility needs to be there and we need to rally people all over campus.

Sarah Hill: There is a lot going on around campus that even I don't know about. There are holes in my awareness of what is going on around the university and maybe STARS is a way to fill in those gaps. There is no way this office can do everything, but having a tool/dashboard to show everything it would make it easier to see everything. In the days of our last STARS report I had a much better understanding of what was going on.

Sue Stapleton: Yes, and it is great when we have an office for sustainability but then people think that is the only place where "sustainability" happens. There needs to be a way to show everything that is happening around campus.

Jody Brylinsky: I see these things happening all over campus. But when we collect STARS there are both gaps and areas of high interest. The lack of coordination of and for communication is bad, we need greater clarity. There is a uniqueness of all of our student opportunities here in this office that often get hidden or buried by the research. This seems to be the group that focuses on students, while other places on campus focus on students AND research. This is a place that should take more ownership of their responsibility to students which appears to be their main focus. The active programs here are all about engagement. Research happens everywhere on campus, but the extracurricular student opportunities here are very unique.

Pete Strazdas: Things like titles are confusing. Sustainability should happen everywhere. The new director should not make this the sustainability ivory tower, they should work to integrate it all over campus. Decentralized control needs to happen and sustainability needs to be everywhere. This could be the central hub for celebrating or transfer of information not the start/stop point. Take on a list of reasonable tasks that we can be successful at, not a long list of things we will fail at. Transfer information here, don't make this be a starting and ending point.

Jeff Spoelstra: I've seen offices like this as part of a communications or relations office elsewhere. This is because there are so many stories and things to promote around campus. That is what our students have been harping on for a while, they want to tell stories of what is happening. A communications specialist would be valuable in the next ED because this is what is important to students. STARS is also a good tool to use to keep track of what is going on, and I have seen this tool being updated regularly by institutions. Not just every three years, but continually every year.

Sue Stapleton: We have a lot of "best kept secrets", let's get rid of that and tell the world what's going on. In today's age, info becomes old news quick, so how are we communicating. This is absolutely important, the next person needs to rally people around sustainability by communicating the great work going on.

Laura Donders: Collaboration and communication make for a good leader, especially in sustainability. Particular attention should be paid on diversity and inclusion when searching for the next leader because that is part of our mission at the OfS and is a marker of a successful organization. We want to align with the D & I commitments of the whole University. Additionally, avoiding implicit biases and homogeneity is something to strive for.

Jorge Rodriguez: this office is dying to do a lot, the mission and goals of this office is a huge list. This new person needs to integrate more on campus and also redefine/revise the goals and missions of the OfS. Break down silos, collaboration. The list of goals, that's a big list. I look at this list, and that's a lot. All those resources, one characteristic for this new person; integration. 2<sup>nd</sup> comment, might be a good opportunity to look at goals and mission. At the same time, we shouldn't wait for a new leader to see where we are going. Once that person is in place, they can say, what about twisting here or there.

Sue Stapleton: revision of mission and goals goes through the strategic planning process which I hear is underway for this office. These were last updated in 2010 for this office. Do we align, does it fit? We have spent a lot of time learning about strategic planning, living it, let's ensure that they are integrated so that the college goals look like academic affairs, and vice versa. Otherwise we don't look like a cohesive unit.

Sarah Hill: A summary of what has been said so far – collaboration is absolutely the key for the next leader. Jody's comment about student work is absolutely unique. Communication is a feature of sustainability offices which is a constant vehicle of information. This is a complete suite of office works. This is more important than just graduating majors. These goals are laudable, but practically, how do we do this mission?

Jody Brylinsky: I would add an educational component. How to teach people on campus how they could collaborate, what are the possibilities? Look at this list of goals, let's prioritize, it took me to #6 to see the impetus.

Jeff Spoelstra: management here is a lot. We can have anywhere between 32-44 people on payroll. Gibbs fellows, interns, student workers, full time staff, that's a lot of people with diverse roles to manage. Waste reduction is a definable piece, heavy on logistical work, but it's moving towards opportunity for human behavior research. Pete has said "it comes down to humans," how do we do this. The fee funds all student jobs, many of our projects, the survey (open now) and the Gibbs site/house (underfunded, rental rate only income). If we invest in here what are we not investing in. 3<sup>rd</sup> piece of budget comes from general fund, academic affairs, supports the people who manage this whole thing, 7000 square foot building, etc. Those

3 pieces come together and fund the place, define our set of responsibilities etc. Occasionally there is a grant, and with that more challenges and opportunities. Echo and emphasize management. Endless opportunity, sustainability as journey, not a destination.

Pete Strazdas: Experiential learning opportunities, let's pull out of silos – why can't we pool resources and create more opportunities for students and learning programs. Clearing house of information should be the goal. Shared data. STARS is without a doubt the platform to use. This is a great opportunity to have more shared information, we all need to take responsibility for this. I love what Jeff said about getting more stories out. We have so many missed opportunities and now we can do something bigger and grander. Engage more students, more experiential learning, more shared platforms. I'm willing to contribute to this.

Paul Pancella: We haven't heard much from President Montgomery about sustainability. Can you (Sue) share anything from conversations about his stance. Our origin is the "presidents'" committee.

Sue Stapleton: We need to make the case. His commitment to sustainability is there, the questions is how does it fit with the vision for this university as it moves forward. We need to write that story. This office does work that aligns with Pres. 6 measures of success. There are also opportunities to diversify some of our funding, can we partner with businesses, industry? It links in many ways to becoming a university of choice and promoting ourselves as a university that values sustainability. How do we market, communicate, leverage this resource for our institution? HG and I met with Pres. early on (fall 17). His commitment is there, but how does it fit with our direction? That's the story we need to figure out.

Paul Pancella: Does he see it as a vehicle for increasing enrollment and developing resources?

Sue Stapleton: Those direct questions haven't been asked, but providing opportunities for learning and engagement, yes.

Jody Brylinsky: Gold standard, social sustainability, let's maximize community partnerships.

Goal 5: sustainable stewardship, 5.3. WMU will be a national leader in community leadership.

Pres. M arrived at these 6 super priorities by reading this, so that's some prioritization.

President Dunn made a very clear statement about what sustainability meant for the university. This committee was originally for GHG emissions, student engagement led us to the fee. I think it's time we ask the new president what is the charge for sustainability now? Do we change our primary focus, keep doing what we are doing? This group needs to now ask that and get more clarity on what he wants us to do.

Jeff Spoelstra: office can help navigate those commitments. Where we are, where it slowed down. We are ready to launch. Community resilience planning needs to be integrated back into our CAP 2012.

Jody Brylinsky: It's been 6 years, lots of stuff has happened, how has that been communicated. Where are you (office) headed. So many things, haven't been able to capture and tell the story. Here is how we contribute to the grander picture.

Isaac Green: there is a discrepancy between what the students think we should do, in terms of whether we provide opportunities for research, services, or a learning hub, and what we do and what our mission and goals state. We keep bouncing around to different projects. More clarity from top down would be incredible, so we can know what we are to do and not to do.

Laura Donders: And having that information accessible. We need clarity here. Language is not clear.

Sue Stapleton: easy to understand, but also so people can see themselves involved.

Pete Strazdas: That's one of the fundamental challenges between centralized and decentralized. Take a look at the gold standard – lots about sustainability, but where does the responsibility lie? Not just here! It's on all of us. decentralize authority and responsibility to sustainability. The culture has to be cross-sectional and a clearinghouse hub here. Need to remove the attitude that sustainability happens 'here' – WRONG. We need to re-imagine this interaction.

Grace McElhone: I agree with decentralizing! It can't just happen here and if it does we need to tell people and invite them in. Our responsibility to students is so important! I am so involved at the office and that has been transformational to my academic and personal goals and life. We need more students to understand sustainability to get them on board, which is how we get people to care and then have an impact. My time as a student here, both as intern and fellow, has been transformational and important to my academic and personal development. STUDENTS!!!

Sarah Hill: There will be real work in transforming the culture of the university towards sustainability. First time students need to be able to see themselves in this work. The more we have this culture the more we will all have to be prepared to help engage people. Not only do we need to decentralize, but it isn't an elite project. Everyone has a part. The more we have a culture of sustainability, the more we can collaborate and engage. Not only decentralize, and make it less elite, make it so everybody engage.

Pete Strazdas: Universities are about sharing of information and knowledge. STARS can be a living platform where students can have access to live data in this major hub. I hope the leader of this office can move us in that direction. (More GHG stuff to choke a horse.) Students can study this data, real data!

Josh Schultz: the hub of information is really critical, we can do more and better, and tell those stories better. This can also be a place to help make connections around campus. The leader here needs to be willing to go out around campus to know what's going on to direct and forge further connections. Someone is already doing most projects on campus, we need a leader than can make connections and hook people up. Maybe the OfS won't even be involved, but making bridges.

Jody Brylinsky: Area that is not communicated well is community outreach. Bob Miller's office, they came up with a provisional plan for outreach. "shared gold"- same idea, how can we better provide an avenue for connections, maximize the networks that have been created towards these topics.

Jorge Rodriguez: We should ask the president what we want to be, define the charge of this group. Plenty of ideas here already, let's indicate what we *want to be*. What do you want us to do, is not the appropriate way.

Sue Stapleton: I think the president is leaving a lot of room for groups to define their own purpose. It is exciting the idea of working across units across campus. This is something we have not yet put into our own toolbox. The power of this office can drive where we do. We do need a leader who can take us to that next level with faculty, staff, students, university community, and larger communities. Working across units, this whole idea is incredibly exciting. Utilize the power of the people we already have, let's put this into our toolboxes and have deliberate conversations around this.

Jeff Spoelstra: No one we hire will know everything about sustainability and if they say they do they are lying. This committee will fill in the gaps of their knowledge so this is a valuable group. This committee itself has bridges to almost every college, let's utilize this!

Laura Donders: a good leader of this office should be committed to building lasting, mutual supporting relationships around the community. There are groups and organizations (Lewis Walker Center, ERACCE) literally right across the street that are doing work that crosses over with the work we do but we never collaborate. This is a missed opportunity to strengthen our community.

Jim Gilchrist: it seems to me that you are interested in the office being more of a leader than a manager. A leader is more of a facilitator, collaborator, and communicator; this is all done around a clear vision and mission, rather than a single plan of action (which would be a manager). That's something we could write into a job description. What I haven't heard yet which we do need to decide is should it be a faculty person as (not an administrator) and should this be an internal search or advertise beyond. I have an opinion on both but that is probably not important. We have so many great people, leaders, on campus that it would surprise me if we needed to do an external search. We have an incredibly rich talent pool at Western right now. Our habit in searches is to include one or two students in the search committee, it's not just that they get input today but they would be right on the search committee. They then have the same voting right as every other member. Potential candidate doesn't just include members from the environmental institute, we could recruit from anywhere in our rich pool, right now.

Jody B: Jeff do you know of any other offices that are not faculty led? I know of one through a family relationship, but others?

---: Cornell is not led by a faculty member in their sustainability office. We do not know what the typical status of sustainability office leadership is.

Laura Donders: there are many offices around the country that do not follow our model that are extremely successful. It is possible to have a successful office that is not led by a faculty member.

(See support materials for data on this topic)

Pete Strazdas: From my experience, they are diverse. It would be dangerous to say this type of person resides in this type of office or that type of office. I would advise us NOT to define a certain type of population while doing this search. Let's not limit ourselves by segregating the pool.

Jeff Spoelstra: I can comment on trends. A lot of offices have been started in business and finance or facilities to work on infrastructure because sustainability has previously meant energy and greenhouse gases. Now those offices are traveling around campuses as we think about human behavior and shifting understandings and priorities of sustainability on campuses.

Sue Stapleton: If the primary mission is to engage students and projects, someone still needs to sign off on their papers. It may not have to be the director or leader of this office. That is just something to think about as we move along. The mission of the academic piece is important to think about from a prestige standpoint.

Jody Brylinsky: There are some practical and baseline requirements. Terminal degree?

Experience in the field? How quickly are we trying to go through this? We can't move forward without this basic understanding.

Sue Stapleton: I'm surprised you didn't jump on the fact that if they are supervising students they need to be a degree level higher. From an accrediting standpoint we have that restriction too.

Jeff Spoelstra: Infusion into the curriculum is what we call the StART initiative. The STARS report shows that there is momentum there already. Something unique about our office in physical form but also financing is the Student Sustainability Fee. That allows us to pay our student workers, most of our workers are not working for credit they are getting paid. There are a few at any given time, but not most. This is our current model, they could change though.

Sue Stapleton: Please feel free to email anything you would like to add. We do value everything you have all said today.

Pooja: are the investors or people representing the university advertise our sustainability efforts and the fact that we are among the best?

Isaac Green: There was a video right on the homepage about sustainability, our office materials are used for promotion all over the place, so I am inclined to say yes.

Sue Stapleton: As someone with the opportunity to speak to many individuals in the past and now in my new role, I can assure you it was part of my shtick, so yes!

Grace McElhone: As a student, it could be better which is true about everything. I think not only for incoming students but for freshmen when they get here, there should be a greater effort to advertise the office and campus sustainability in general.

Sue Stapleton: A cool thing happening right now will address this in the fall. One of the transformational initiatives, Success@WMU, we will have peer mentors that will be connected to every new student regardless of type. Every mentor will go through sustainability training through essential studies and learning outcomes for the university so every new student will be aware of sustainability on campus. So yes! It will happen!

Pete Strazdas: It's terribly important for this group to see the leadership happening today in this very meeting. All of us need to recognize your leadership and vision for where this is going.

Paul Pancella: Timeline for the director?

Sue Stapleton: Yesterday, which is my standard answer for everything. The timeline for the new director is contingent upon what we are looking for. It'll be faster for internal search rather than an external search. We will need to move quickly on developing a search committee, and think about what we can do during the summer. We want someone new by fall if possible.

Laura Donders: I would like to note how well Lu and Jeff have done at holding down the fort here so far.

Jeff Spoelstra: Let's move along with the agenda then. Paul, anything to add?

Paul Pancella: Yes, it appears a revision for the OfS mission and goals is due. This is something that I think is in our purview. I don't know how to get it done exactly, a subcommittee would be appropriate, but with such diverse representation on this committee it is hard to form those adequately. I'm open to suggestions on how to proceed with our/the office strategic plan.

Sarah Hill: It makes sense to me to wait until the new director begins to launch the strategic plan. It is challenging not knowing the timeline of that.

Jody Brylinsky: The strategic plan you will write needs to be aligned with the Gold Standard. I don't know how any group that meets four times a year works, but the more pressing thing is that this group needs to meet again soon to talk about your strengths and vision to make a recommendation to the president about what you want in your next leader. There is an

immediate need for this group to stay connected and come up with core issues, funding, needs, desires for a leader. And do this sooner rather than later so they can make a job description.

Paul Pancella: We need to separate this office from this committee. This committee has an advisory role. Is academic affairs seeking our advice on the next leader of this office? (Sue Stapleton: Yes, I am.) Ok, so then it makes sense for us to meet soon.

Jody Brylinsky: It makes sense for the office to develop a draft for this group to react to. There should already be a start.

Paul Pancella: Should we just use this time slot?

Jeff Spoelstra: We can meet here at the same time on March 29, which is 2 weeks away. The point of this meeting is to provide input to academic affairs about the next director of the OfS.

Jody Brylinsky: I would again suggest Jeff and his staff to draft what the minimum qualifications are, related experience, what the strengths for the office are or should be, high investment areas and projects, and some leadership/office focuses (collaboration, communication), so people can react to this and expedite the process. Only if this is possible.

Paul Pancella: Input on faculty/non-faculty and internal/external of course will be discussed at this next meeting.

Jeff Spoelstra: Other thoughts or should we close out?

Paul Pancella: I think this is good for now, thank you everyone for coming.

Meeting adjourned.