ICAP Working Group

November 20, 2014

1:30 pm

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2015 iCAP 1st Draft

Let's begin with general discussion. What are your big picture reactions to the first draft? There are many details we could go through, but what about top level concerns.

As a whole very well written, organized well.

Discussion on the no increase in gross square feet. Somewhat ambiguous, don't want to leave too many loopholes for people to get through. Is the plan to not have any additional square feet, or is the goal to reduce overall energy requirement of campus?

The policy in draft form, includes a variance procedure. Proposing to include a form that emphasizes no new space. For new space, people need a really solid foundation for why they need it.

If the policy can't or won't be enforced, then perhaps it should not be included in this document. The policy could be really hard to enforce. Many have the perception that we don't have enough space to support the programs that we have. Need to be clear – is it no more building space or no increase in energy demand. What about the next time someone wants a building, and they say it will be net zero?

Even a net zero energy building increases the demand for energy. At some point, there will be a cap at which our physical assets will be able to provide energy. Space utilization on our campus is very low, maybe 25%.

Our culture wants more space all the time that no one else can use. People want space. There is emotion and territorial issues attached to space. There is a big difference between what we want and what we really need.

Not disagreeing with the intent. We are already talking about building in a variance process – but we don't want it to be easy to get a variance.

The policy must have substance, but allow flexibility for the unknowns.

Keven and Matthew agreed to work on alternative text for that section of the iCAP.

Objectives are what we are accountable to do, strategies are how we might get there. For space/square footage, maybe want to stay below the baseline, rather than pushing the envelope all the time.

Provost holds space in a square footage bank.

For objectives the language of 'campus will' is fine, but perhaps some wording changes in the strategy section.

Are there concerns about emissions from biomass burning? In principle, whatever is burned by plants, will be absorbed through the next planting. A little more information about this would be helpful to the lay person.

Agriculture emissions – needs some statement about the impact on livestock programs – this will not or should not have impact on your research. They might have to change the way they manage manure, and fertilize fields. Just one sentence, not too in-depth. Make sure readers realize we're not eliminating the south farms.

Chapter 2 - This is not a specific recommendation but a vision.

In chapter 2 – Nancy read it as a recommendation. It is just one potential scenario.

Worried about others seeing it that way – at each heading perhaps include – possible scenario…

It is important to demonstrate that it is actually doable. Chapter 2 is an illustration that it is possible to do. It can be done.

Nancy was totally caught up, and that's a good thing. Just keep reminding them that it is a possibility.

Drew – really liked the accelerated date of 2035, students would really be on board. Realizing that is 20 years from now.

Goals with dates seem more substantial. For example, in energy generation, they propose a clean energy plan with a due date – by FY16.

Other chapters should mirror the energy generation chapter with dates attached.

How did 2050 date get selected? The deadline was set by ACUPCC – middle of this century, and to achieve neutrality as soon as possible.

Cornell recently went to 2035. 2050 is kind of the end of the train, and maybe least ambitious. We don't want to be holding on to the rope hanging off the end of the caboose.

2035 requires buying carbon offsets. Right now they cost $2-3/ton. If we bought them for this year, it would be ~$1-1.5M. Clearly we, the university, must believe in the offsets we purchase.

Nancy agrees, and is comfortable with the 2035 deadline, especially if it is revisited every 5 years. Nancy read it as a goal, not an absolute.

If we don't set ambitious goals, it is too easy to kick the can down the road.

Change the word – commit or use achieve?

Lowa expressed concern about the cost of all this. Auxiliaries – billed for everything. The costs eventually land back on the students through fees, or tuition.

Do we know the cost of all of the lofty goals? No, but we have already made the commitment for 2050. The costs may increase the further you push it out.

Half in the area of conservation, half in the energy generation of renewable. Cost avoidance is not savings, it is not a savings account.

It might be very expensive by 2035, students think it's a good idea, Ben thinks it holds merit.

Rob – be realistic – understanding – counting on technologies that may not be in existence – we know it is going to be expensive. 2035 would be a goal, but can we hang our hats on it. Can we really say – YES we can do this? Not a real feel one way or the other.

The scenario given is reliant on existing technology. Emphasis – a lot of other plans depend on magic – Ben not optimistic that new technology will help.

What it really comes down to is the financial question. Are we willing to commit the funding necessary?

2050 is a deadline – 2035 can be seen as increasing the urgency. If we say 2050 – and we push to get it done sooner – then we can brag.

If we move it to 2035 – then if we don't make it – then you push it out.

35 years into the future is meaningless. 2035 is about the time that our current students will be sending their children to college. Students are paying more attention to this issue now than ever before.

Is it our role to determine financial feasibility, or perhaps it is the Sustainability Council?

Consider the impact on our departments, our students. Overall we have an issue with funding already. In 2035, we will have less money from the state, and even less in 2050.

2035 is foreseeable – but what does that mean financially.

Should we try to include cost estimates in each chapter? If we don't include it now, the Council will probably come back to us for this information anyway.

Nancy: some estimate will be very useful. If it's based on current technology, then we can use today's costs. Be sure to say it is in today's numbers when you put costs in there.

Maybe the date of 2035 vs 2050 is not as big of a deal, but it is a huge motivating factor. Let's find creative ways to finance this. If we say we have 35 years to do it, then, it does not seem urgent.

Imagine the questions from Provost and Chancellor. It will behoove us to come up with some estimates.

There were two chapters that included additional staff – there is no-one working in those areas; waste and transportation. Also the one on energy conservation. There might be additional staff needed for a number of these initiatives.

Chapter 8 ALUFS – carbon sequestration definition – found that very useful – might be useful in other areas as well. What is the steam trap program? Maybe just a sentence for the lay reader to help understand, may even be helpful for members of the Sustainability Council.

Nancy will send us a list of places where terminology needs clarified.

Some items identify a responsible party. Many do not. Should we try to identify responsible parties?

The iCAP Drafting Committee will fold in all the comments, and send it out to SWATeams. We owe it to them to share this work.

December 8 is the Sustainability Council meeting. Our aim is to send them a draft, but it needs to be fleshed out. Maybe we don't necessarily want them to read a draft, because they may not read the final version then. So, for Sustainability Council, maybe just present goals and objectives only?

According to Morgan, Al Stratman believes iCAP is a strategic plan for how our campus can be more sustainable. The 'will' terminology is a firm declaration. Objectives will be worded as 'will'. Strategies will be phrased as 'could/should'. This objective could be achieved by….. potential strategies.

We will need to communicate with responsible parties for these objectives. We also need to do some matching/mapping of objectives to strategies.

We will aim to send a revised draft with the iWG on December 1 or 2.

Thank you all.

3:00 pm adjournment.