

Questions from Faculty submitted to Faculty Senate Office, December 2019

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

1. Is another organizational structure possible so that faculty involvement, input, and research can be optimized? Most faculty have no idea what ESAC is. Many of those few faculty members who are involved in ESAC are frustrated by what they perceive as a lack of responsiveness on the part of the administration relative to faculty input. The current organizational structure does not result in faculty buy-in.
2. Are the reports and any other work products of the ESAC committees available to the faculty? If so, how can we get them? If not, why not?
3. Can you identify and specify studies that might be done by Penn students, suitably supervised by faculty, which if done well would be materially useful to designing details of the climate and sustainability plan going forward? What do you think of this idea?
4. Many on the faculty feel that it is difficult to communicate concerns, ideas, and proposals to higher levels of the administration. Is it time to create a “sustainability officer” position in the provost or president’s office to open the lines of communication?

WELLNESS / CLIMATE ANXIETY

5. Under the heading Outreach and Engagement, the CSAP 3.0 formulates the goal of student wellness as follows: *Incorporate sustainability as a formal component of the Wellness at Penn Initiative*. Could you please explain what that means? The climate despair and eco-anxiety manifesting among students is not primarily related to sustainability, but rather to the climate emergency and their feeling of lack of agency for themselves and lack of adequate response in institutions of learning, knowledge, and government.
6. Could Penn make a contribution -- through both research and our provision of evidence-based student mental health services – to understanding the emerging epidemic of climate anxiety, particularly among youth and young adults

CARBON OFFSETS

7. Is Penn committed to actual reductions by 2042, not just carbon offsets or credits?
8. The current plan relies heavily on renewable energy credits and, generally, carbon offsets. What are your assumptions about the prices or costs of these offsets during the next 5 years, 10 years?
9. How would a \$50/ton CO2 price affect Penn’s operations and budget? What configuration changes would be needed? \$100? \$150?

AIR POLLUTION / EMISSIONS / FOSSIL FUELS

10. By how much will Penn’s GHG emissions decline over the next five years? (Not counting offsets)
11. Penn owns or operates a number of vehicles powered by fossil fuels. Are you willing to monitor and publish the amounts of fossil fuels (gasoline, diesel, propane, etc.) used by Penn vehicles (whether owned or leased or subcontracted)? If not, why not? How will consumption of these fuels in 2020 compare with 2019. What will it be in 2024? What consideration is being given to replacing these vehicles with battery electric vehicles, hybrids, hydrogen fuel cell vehicles?
12. A large portion of the energy Penn uses is for heat (which drives both heating and cooling of buildings). The heat source is largely provided by natural gas. What are the plans to find a green (largely not emitting GHG) source of heat to replace the heat generated by natural gas?

13. Is air quality on the Penn campus, including inside buildings, being monitored? Is PM 2.5 being monitored? If monitoring is occurring, can the data be made public? If monitoring is not occurring, why not?
14. Given that Penn is an urban campus with heavily used roads running through it and near it, what can be done to minimize air pollution on campus, especially PM 2.5?
15. CSAP 3.0 claims that “48% of faculty and staff who participate in a commuter program commute select sustainable options by cycling, carpooling, or using mass transit.” The graph the claim relies on shows that trends in sustainable transportation (including carpooling) have been stagnant over the last three years. The flipside of the claim is that more than 50% of Penn commuters drive to work in a single occupant car in a city with a robust public transportation system and it’s not improving. Shouldn’t we be introducing stronger negative and positive incentives? Can we also look at student transportation usage? Can students be issued free Zone 1 Septa passes in order to counter over-reliance on Uber and Lyft?

AIR TRAVEL

16. To its credit, CSAP 3.0 does mention the need to address the carbon footprint of Penn-supported air travel, but it is short on specifics. What options are being considered, who is considering them, and what needs to be done to make progress in this area?
17. How should Penn think – at an institutional level – about the climate impact of faculty and staff air travel for research or other university business?
18. Air travel was already on the radar in CAP 1.0. It received no attention in CAP 2.0. In the meantime, the share of the carbon footprint claimed by university sponsored air travel is almost 20%. The goal listed in CSAP 3.0 is stated as: “Evaluating mechanisms to reduce or offset emissions from Penn-sponsored air travel.” That seems like very little progress in ten years. Can we move more decisively and holistically on reducing our carbon footprint from air travel?

MISC.

19. Will CSAP3.0 meet Penn’s share of responsibility under the Paris Agreement (as for example Philadelphia has pledged to do by becoming a C40 city)? If yes, how? If not, why not?
20. Project Drawdown (see Drawdown, Hawken, ed., and <https://www.drawdown.org/>) makes it clear that two of the top “bang for your buck” climate actions are reducing food waste and moving as far in the direction of plant-based diet as possible. What will the plan do in these two areas? If nothing, why nothing?
21. CSAP 3.0 makes clear that Penn has moved to single-stream recycling and is relying on it to reduce landfill waste (page 26 and environs). Then why is Penn using multiple-stream waste collection? Isn’t this dishonest and misleading? If it is too expensive to replace the existing trash bins, why not put sticker signs on them telling the truth, viz. that all the waste is mixed together when collected?
22. Is water quality on the Penn campus being monitored, especially for lead and other health impactful substances? If so, can the data be made available? If not, why not? What is known about the water quality for off-campus student housing?
23. Why LEED silver? Why not platinum? Net-zero?

Submitted after deadline and not shared with presenters:

- * what is Penn's current total carbon footprint, how does it compare to comparable private universities, and how has it changed over recent years? In what year does Penn currently plan to be carbon neutral?
- * under what conditions are Penn faculty requested or required to purchase carbon offsets to cover professional travel, and does the University reimburse the cost of those offsets?
- * what active efforts are underway or being considered to reduce Penn's carbon footprint via reducing faculty and staff airplane travel, such as by incentivizing Penn-funded seminars/lecture series to invite local speakers, coordinate with nearby universities to avoid duplicative travel, or host virtual seminars or satellite versions of professional conferences?
- * has Penn recently partnered with external consultants to identify ways to reduce its carbon footprint, or launched other efforts to educate and redirect the efforts of faculty, staff, and students?
- * what requirements does Penn place on all food vendors that operate on the campus or on Penn-owned land to reduce food waste and other forms of waste? Can Penn provide advantages to firms on and off-campus which take steps to reduce food and other forms of waste?
- * what steps can be taken to reduce the airplane travel of students, such as by providing programming on campus during breaks?