



University Sustainability Coalition Meeting

May 17, 2022

10am - 11am

Virtual Meeting

The University Sustainability Coalition was formed with one goal: To increase higher education sustainability efforts in Louisiana.

The idea of forming the university sustainability coalition was born from a steering committee of university representatives developing the university affiliate program as part of an EPA Trash Free Waters Grant with UL Lafayette and Keep Louisiana Beautiful. There are no fees associated with being a part of the coalition, just a seat at the table with your peers to communicate and is open to anyone in higher ed sustainability. Current sustainability coalition members represent universities from Dillard University, Grambling State University, Louisiana State University, Loyola University, Nicholls State University, Northwestern State University, Tulane University, River Parishes Community College, Xavier University, UL Monroe, UL Lafayette, University of New Orleans, Louisiana Tech, and Fletcher Technical Community College.

Attending: 14 Individuals, 8 Universities

Keep Louisiana Beautiful: Cabell Mouton, Patty Ferrell

Nicholls State: Mitzi Jackson

UL Lafayette: Gretchen Vanicor, Blair Begnaud

Tulane University: Jordan Stewart, Liz Davey

UNO: Sam Pallas

Xavier University: Helena Robinson, Sara Good-Chanmugam

LSU: Jerrod Penn, Laiba Iqbal

River Parish Community College: Esperanza Zenon

Grambling University: Casey Byrd

Meeting Opened: 10:00 am

Introductions were made.

Report:

The University Sustainability Coalition was formed to provide a platform to discuss sustainability challenges and solutions that are common across higher ed institutions. Today's meeting will be the last meeting for this academic year. The next meeting will be in September with both the date and time to be determined. The October meeting will be an in-person meeting held in conjunction with the Annual State Conference. This year's conference will be on October 11 – 12 at the Hilton Conference Center in Baton Rouge so be sure to

save this date. At this meeting, coalition members will elect a new chairperson, discuss leadership roles, update the vision, and establish meeting dates and topics for the new year. By sharing challenges and solutions, members of this coalition can influence others in moving toward a more sustainable future.

OZZI sustainable solutions was today's discussion topic and three universities shared how the program is working on their campus. Presenters were Jordan Stewart, Assistant Director, Office of Sustainability at Tulane University; Gretchen Vanicor, Director of Sustainability at University of LA – Lafayette; and Laiba Iqbal, Student at LSU.

At Tulane, the OZZI program was implemented in phases. The initial program began in 2014 with only one take-out venue located among housing with distribution and collection in one place. The program was set up in the main dining hall for students with meal plans and OZZI was the only container. Phase 1 followed in 2015 adding a made-to-order healthy choice option but was still associated with meal plans and was located among housing. In 2017, Phase 2 expanded the program to other areas on campus which were farther away from housing and the food venues offered other containers creating competition for the OZZI containers. A dining overhaul in Fall of 2019 resulted in the OZZI program getting "lost in the shuffle". The OZZI system was not part of the planning for the new dining venue. Through all phases of the program, getting students to return the OZZI container was one of the biggest challenges. The program seemed to work best when located near housing, paired with a meal plan and OZZI containers were the only option.

The pandemic created an opportunity for University of LA at Lafayette to implement a campus wide program called Good To Geaux. After a cost benefit analysis between disposable containers and reusable containers, it was decided that the OZZI reusable system was the best fit both financially and environmentally. The program was launched in the Spring of 2021 in campus dining halls and each student with a meal plan was given an OZZI container to start the process. As the containers were returned, students received a token to be used for future meals. By designing the program to be as simple as possible and to not be punitive to the students, the program is well supported by the students and there have been very few complaints. The OZZI program is now part of the move-in process, and this has proven to be successful.

The pilot program at LSU kicked off in the fall of 2021. The initial funding of \$9,000 was provided by the Student Sustainability Fund. With limited funding, the program started on a small scale with 1,000 containers and one drop box. Tokens were provided free of charge to about 500 students. The program is off to a slow start as student outreach has been limited so not many students know about the program. The students who do participate, like the program but only seeing 20 – 30 containers per week. It is also a challenge to manually track the containers going in and out. Although Faculty is on board with the program, there are challenges with getting Operations on board with the program. As a student trying to implement this new program, there are conflicting priorities which limit the time available to be spent promoting the program on campus. To be successful, the program needs more dedication from all parties involved in the process as well as strong leadership to promote the program and its benefits.

For your reference, a copy of each presentation is included with the minutes.

As a reminder, the university affiliate certification program will conclude in May at which time the seven universities currently participating will become certified affiliates. Applications for the next group of affiliate universities may be submitted in June.

Dates/Topics for upcoming meetings:

Break for Summer – June, July, and August

September 2022 (date and time to be determined)

October 11 -12, Annual State Conference in Baton Rouge

Meeting adjourned at 11:00pm