



**University Sustainability Coalition Meeting**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
**May 17, 2023**  
**10am – 11am**

The University Sustainability Coalition was formed in 2021 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. By sharing challenges and solutions, members of this coalition can influence others in moving toward a more sustainable future.

Current University Sustainability Coalition members represent the following universities and colleges: Dillard University, Grambling State University, Louisiana State University, Loyola University, McNeese 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, Fletcher Technical Community College, and Centenary College.

**Attending:** 14 Individuals, 8 Universities

Keep Louisiana Beautiful: Cabell Mouton (Facilitator), Patty Ferrell, Melissa Kenyon

LSU: Jerrod Penn (Chair)

Tulane University: Jordan Stewart (Co-Chair)

Northwestern: Jennifer Kelly

Nicholls State: Mary (Mitzi) Jackson, Billie Babin Richard

UNO: Carol Lunn

UL Lafayette: Blair Begnaud, Jonathan Brown, Tiff Segura (AmeriCorps)

River Parishes Community College: Esperanza Zenon

Xavier University: Helena Robinson

**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 virtual meeting

of the year. The Coalition will have its next meeting at the Keep Louisiana Beautiful State Conference that will be held in Baton Rouge on October 11 & 12. This will be an in-person meeting so be sure to mark your calendar and save the dates. At this meeting, we will determine the dates and topics for the upcoming academic year. Each university is encouraged to Adopt-a-Meeting and present a topic of their choice. We all learn from one another and benefit from sharing ideas, successes, and failures. It is no easy task, but we must start somewhere and strive to move the needle forward for a more sustainable future.

Cabell reminded the group that applications to become a University Affiliate would be accepted in early fall, and that information about the application process would be forthcoming.

Instead of a formal presentation, each university was given time to share their spring activities, what worked, what didn't work and to inspire others to participate in activities that will make a difference on their campus and/or in their community.

KLB - Cabell got things started by talking about Love the Boot and what a huge success it was with 547 events in all 64 parishes and 313 tons of litter picked up. Melissa and Cabell expressed their thanks to all who participated in the statewide effort to clean up Louisiana. Looking forward, it is hoped this event will continue to grow both in number of events and litter removed.

UL Lafayette – Jonathan talked about the success of Earth Week with multiple , capped off with their premier event, FeteDe La Terre. The focus of Earth Week centered on student engagement, litter pick up and education. Also held a clean-up event after Mardi Gras. Jonathan talked about the University Affiliate Grant from KLB that was used to purchase promotional items for students and members that participate in affiliate programs and activities. Also, purchased recycle bins and educated others on proper waste disposal and recycling practices. There is a lot of activity on campus, and everyone is doing good work. Hope to increase outreach and engage more students and faculty in sustainability efforts on campus. Tiff Segura (AmeriCorps) has been working side by side with Jonathan and Blair during these events and joined our meeting in hopes of getting new ideas from coalition members.

Tulane – Jordan stated they participated in Recycle Dat and was happy to see that KLB was also part of that initiative. It was a powerful event with both collection stations and people out in the crowd collecting litter. Tulane also has a partnership with Glass Half Full for glass recycling. There are 8 sites on campus dedicated to glass recycling. This is a new program that has its challenges but so far is going well. A group of environmental studies students conducted a recycling audit. The audit was built in as part of the class curriculum and Jordan thought this created a good model for service learning and for integration of activities. Conducted a collection/donation day for move out which once again was a success. This year the Trash to Treasure event was paired with local partners who picked up all the stuff that did not sell. Hope to continue to expand the scope of this event. Students conducted a composting event, CrawFest Day which showcased the Water Monster which is a giant water cooler with spickets aimed at reducing the number of plastic water bottles disposed of at outdoor events. Jerrod mentioned public perception is important as many prefer bottled water. Jordan mentioned that the Water Monster was filled using 5-gallon jugs of Kentwood water.

Nicholls – Mitzi said the University Grant funds received from KLB were used for water bottle refill stations and they had a water bottle give a way to discourage the use of SUD's. Students are using the water bottles and the refilling stations have had a positive impact on campus. In April, there was a cleanup event on the street leading to campus. Jerrod and his wife participated in the event and 190 lbs. of debris was removed. For their Love the Boot Week event, a native plant installation was completed. Partnered with a marketing class for a social media campaign aimed at educating students/community on recycling.

Xavier – Helena has been dealing with various issues that have limited her activities this year. Xavier University and Keep Louisiana Beautiful hosted Dr. Mark Benefield of Louisiana State University who gave a lecture on Plastic Pollution and Microplastics. The lecture was well attended and very informative. The Student Environmental Club has grown thanks to the efforts of a student intern. One of the biggest challenges has been getting students to participate in various events and activities.

UNO – Improvements were made to the park with the installation of benches, bike racks and all native plants. The university received a trash receptacle grant and has installed all 10 receptacles. A student intern is currently working on the litter assessment so that the final report can be submitted. Installed a water bottle refill station and based on student feedback, the Administration has agreed to purchase 10 more for next year to be installed in the academic buildings. Along with this project, students have been given re-usable water bottles. UNO was also awarded Tree Campus certification this year. For Love the Boot Week, students participated in manning tables and picking up litter around campus. One faculty member made this cleanup event an actual class for his students. There were several student driven events for Earth Day. The Healthy Community Grant funds received from KLB were used to map and mark storm drains and educate the public on stormwater runoff.

Northwestern – Jennifer is new to the University Coalition and just wanted to listen to get ideas from others in the group. The biggest challenge is recycling as there is nothing in the local area.

A common theme was centered around the power of students. Many students are taking the initiative to do things on their own. Ideas originating from the student body seem to carry a lot of weight with fellow students and with faculty/staff of the university.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.