



**University Sustainability Coalition
Virtual Meeting
March 27, 2024
10 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.**

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 education sustainability. By sharing challenges and solutions, members of this coalition can influence others to move toward a more sustainable future.

Current sustainability coalition members represent 17 universities from Centenary College, Dillard University, Fletcher Community College, Grambling State University, LA Tech, Louisiana State University, Loyola University, McNeese University, Nicholls State University, Northwestern State University, River Parishes Community College, Tulane University, Xavier University, UL Monroe, UL Lafayette, and University of New Orleans.

Attending: 16 Individuals, 8 Universities

Keep Louisiana Beautiful: Cabell Mouton, Patty Ferrell

Dillard: Kem Opperman-Torres

Loyola University: Mark Tobler

Nicholls State University: Mitzi Jackson

River Parishes Community College: Esperanza Zenon

Tulane University: Jordan Stewart (Co-Chair)

UL Lafayette: Gretchen Vanicor, Jonathan R. Brown (Co-Chair), Blair Begnaud, Tiff Segura

UL Monroe: Andrew Hardee

Xavier University: Helena Robinson, Aliyah Bell, Pamela Waldren-Moore, Dr. Syed Adeel Ahmed

Meeting Opened: 10:00 a.m.

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 education institutions.

This is the last virtual meeting of the academic year. In conjunction with the Louisiana Sustainability Summit, the Coalition will meet in person on April 11 at 1:30. Cabell Mouton opened the meeting with a recap of the proposed institutionalization of sustainability across all state universities. Since the October meeting when this

was first discussed, there have been some developments such as the election of a new governor, potential changes to ESG in public institutions and funding cuts so the Coalition is taking a step back and will not put forth a plan to the Board of Regents. Gowing forward, the Coalition will continue to share best practices and conduct a sustainability assessment to gather information and data for a baseline to assist in identifying needs. Gretchen Vanicor explained that she played a role in the push for state level policies for a climate action plan and other sustainability issues. Louisiana does have a Climate Action Plan but there is less certainty with how it will play out going forward. Until then, we need to determine where each university stands now and identify needs for the future.

Jonathan Brown gave an overview of the inaugural Louisiana Sustainability Summit to be held in Lafayette on April 10-12. The summit is sponsored by the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Office of Sustainability and Keep Louisiana Beautiful. The Summit will focus on resources and advancements in sustainability-focused work across the state. There will be sessions on renewable energy, data driven decision making, coastal restoration, waste management and community engagement. Jonathan encouraged everyone to attend and reviewed ticket prices and lodging accommodations. If you are interested in attending, details can be found at [Louisiana Sustainability Summit 2024](#). Jonathan also mentioned that University Affiliates are not required to buy a ticket. Cabell also made the **University Affiliates** aware of a \$450 [stipend](#) that is available with receipts to offset travel expenses. The Coalition meeting is scheduled for 1:30 on April 11 so please plan to attend.

Co-Chair's Jordan and Jonathan then discussed a survey that is in development to assess progress towards sustainability at institutions of higher education throughout the state. It is a collaborative model designed to create a snapshot of where our institutions are now and identify opportunities for growth and support the coalition. This is useful because each university is different, but all have a common mission for a more sustainable future. Many of the questions align with AASHE STARS data points and only require a yes/no answer. Gretchen mentioned linking the form to Qualtrics and committed to provide access to the raw data for all. The University of Lafayette team indicated they support securing IRB approval for the survey so that the resulting data would be suitable for research with intent to publish. All information is valuable and opens research opportunities. Gathering these data points will also allow for comparison to other states to see where we align, excel, and have growth potential. Jordan invited members to join a working group to further develop the survey questions to serve the goals of our coalition. Gretchen, Mitzi, and Mark offered to participate in this effort. Others are welcome.

Cabell provided an overview of the University Library Cleanup Supply Program. This program provides cleanup supplies to the university library which in turn checks out these supplies for local cleanup activities. The program is open to all interested universities. For more information on this program, please contact Jessie Chappuis, jchappuis@keeplouisianabeautiful.org.

KLB will be hosting three regional meetings on May 22, June 11 and June 18 and all University Affiliates are welcome to attend. Additional meeting information is available on the [University Affiliate Resource Center](#). Password: *staybeautiful*.

Cabell also reminded everyone to participate in Love the Boot Week and extended an invitation to attend the [2024 Love the Boot Week Kickoff](#) on April 19.

Please be reminded that a webpage has been created for the University Sustainability Coalition to find all meeting dates, agendas, presentations, and contact information for coalition members: <https://keeplouisianabeautiful.org/universitysustainabilitycoalition/>.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.