

Institutionalization of Change: A History of Emory University's Office of Sustainability Initiatives

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Introduction

As planet Earth and its inhabitants face an increasingly uncertain and problematic future, a dialogue has evolved around the human actions that can either perpetuate or reverse patterns of unsustainability at various scales from the individual to the global. Large institutions have become important facilitators for positive change, as they often have multiple inner communities, functions, structures, and access to a numerous and diverse population of people. As places where new ideas can grow, institutions of higher education are no exception and share the responsibility of action and innovation in economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

Over the past fifteen years, universities across the US have started to develop formal commitments and offices dedicated to sustainability, and in 2006 the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) was launched to support campus sustainability across the country (AASHE 2017). It is important for institutions of higher education to reflect on their histories, experiences, and progress in order to better determine best practices and innovate in sustainability on campus and beyond. With this in mind, combined with the fact that organized sustainability initiatives are a relatively new phenomenon on college campuses, an Anthropology class in Emory College set out to collect, write, and share the history of sustainability at Emory University. This report, a product of the semester-long class, is a review of the institutionalization of sustainability at Emory. It includes an account of the formation, growth, and programs of Emory's Office of Sustainability Initiatives (OSI) as well as the university's visioning documents.

Among Tier-One research universities in the United States, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education currently ranks Emory third in terms of overall comprehensive sustainability program, behind only Stanford and, very recently, the University of Washington (AASHE 2017). It comes without surprise that Emory's success in the sustainability world is a point of pride for many members of the university community; however, it did not happen overnight. The story of sustainability at Emory is one of entirely new beginnings and dreams, creative processes, innovative ideas, community bonding, and lots of persistence.

Although Emory has made strides in multiple realms of sustainability, the journey toward sustainable infrastructure and policy, community behavior change and programming, university paradigm shift, and ultimately toward a new culture of sustainability, is ongoing. Sustainable progress at Emory has grown both independently and along with the Office of Sustainability Initiatives and its development. Thanks to the office as well as groups and individuals across all units of the university, old and once seemingly far-off visions have become a reality and new visions gleam in the distance—an image of economic viability, environmental protection, and social equity.

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Methods

This Report was written in spring of 2017 as a part of Dr. Peggy Barlett’s course entitled, “Writing Emory’s Sustainability History” (ANT 385W). It builds on four Reports completed in 2008:

- The Sparks of Sustainable Energy: Sustainable History at Emory (Mona Patel)
- Constructing a Movement, One Building at a Time: The History of Green Buildings at Emory University (Micah Hahn)
- Alternative Transportation (Andrew M. Foote)
- “Going Into a Place of Beauty”: Forest Preservation and Restoration (Whitney Easton)

The primary function of this Report is to present a historical account of Emory’s Office of Sustainability Initiatives (OSI) through incorporation of multiple perspectives and documented resources. This narrative also serves to document both the transformation of sustainability paradigms and the constantly changing institutionalized presence of sustainability at Emory since the office first started. It is one of eight papers written for the aforementioned course that together form a cohesive narrative of Emory’s Sustainability

History. The seven other topics are:

- Teaching the Future of Environmentalism: Academic Infusion of Sustainability at Emory (Meggie Stewart)
- Carbon, Climate and Co-Generation: A History of Emory's Energy and Climate Commitments (Katelyn Boisvert)
- Greenspace at Emory: Finding the Balance (Orli Hendler)
- Sustainability in Campus Life: The Changing of Behavior (Jamie Nadler)
- Sustainable Healthcare at Emory University (Lauren Balotin)
- Emory's History of Waste Diversion and Recycling (Amelia Howell)
- Stormwater Management and Water Conservation at Emory University (Kelly Endres)

To inform this report, resources included a review of quantitative data from surveys, qualitative interviews, Office of Sustainability documents including university visions and policies, Office of Sustainability ranking data reports, committee reports, The Emory Wheel, The Emory Report, The Emory Magazine, the Office of Sustainability website, and class meeting notes. Interviews were scheduled via email and structure the paper, and in the revision process interviewees were given the chance to review the document and provide feedback. We are especially grateful to interviewees for sharing their time and insights with us, and also to Ciannat Howett and other members of the Office of Sustainability for their generous help in constructing these histories. The individuals interviewed for this report are listed below in alphabetical order with the date of interview:

1. Matthew Early, Vice President for Campus Services (2/22/17)
2. J. William Eley, School of Medicine Executive Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs, Graduate Medical Education, and Continuing Medical Education (2/28/17)
3. Ciannat Howett, Director of Sustainability Initiatives (2/24/17)
4. Michael Mandl, Former Executive Vice President of Business and Administration of Emory University (3/29/17)
5. Carol Newsom, Charles Howard Candler Professor of Old Testament at Candler School of Theology and senior fellow at Emory's Center for the Study of Law and Religion (2/09/17)
6. Thomas D. Rogers, Department of History Associate Professor of Modern Latin American History and Director of Graduate Studies (2/24/17)
7. James Wagner, President Emeritus of Emory University (3/27/17)
8. Joy Wasson, Department of Religion Academic Degree Program Coordinator (2/10/17)
9. Erica Weaver, School of Medicine MD/PhD Program Coordinator (2/21/17)
10. Kelly Weisinger, Assistant Director of Sustainability Initiatives (2/28/17)

The Original Vision Sustainability Committee: Formal Recognition of Sustainability at Emory and a Grand Vision

If you're not going to do different things in a university, where will you? How will you move forward? It's our job. We're supposed to do things differently.

We're supposed to bring up new thoughts and see which ones actually stick. Emory is a very diverse place with a lot of diverse ideas and has a very vibrant sustainability movement. Twenty years ago, you could not have predicted any of this. So I'm proud that we have moved forward. This university has done a lot of great things.

--J. William Eley (2017)

When Emory's Office of Sustainability started as an outgrowth of the university's strategic plan for 2005-2015, it was among the early group of newly-sprouted university sustainability offices across the country with formal commitments to sustainability. Although such offices have since become widespread among institutions of higher education, Emory remains a national leader. Sustainability initiatives have contributed to Emory's role as a model for good leadership, best practices in higher education, and strong community ties.

Conceptually, sustainability is a relatively new term and therefore is a new phenomenon not only on college campuses but also in the world. Before Emory developed its Office of Sustainability, sustainable action and passion presented itself either more discreetly or through formal yet less unified initiatives within the campus community. Dr. J. William Eley, Executive Associate Dean of the Emory School of Medicine, recounted his early days as an Emory undergraduate student:

My history at Emory started as an undergrad back in 1975... I was part of Emory Outdoors, and we always had sensibilities that we didn't know were sustainability then. We were growing up out of the sixties saying what are we going to do, long-term? The word sustainability had not been coined at that time, but it came out of the science classes, it came out of logical thinking. For us it was more about considering resources, the earth, and how we could be good citizens of it... Although our roots are sometimes fairly traditional, in [1966] this is the place where one of our philosophy teachers said, 'God is Dead,' and made the front page of [*Time* magazine], and it was Emory. So there's this great history here of societal dissent, some of which is with progress" (2017)

According to Ciannat Howett, Director of the Office of Sustainability Initiatives (OSI), there was a lot of activity already happening with sustainability prior to the establishment of the office. OSI faculty liaison Dr. Peggy Barlett had spent some time stirring faculty, staff, and student participation on a variety of sustainability issues. There was also the Committee on the Environment (a standing committee of the University Senate), an Ad Hoc Committee on Environmental Stewardship, and an abundance of student clubs as university members began to organize around issues of environmental protection, social justice, and overall sustainability. For five to ten years before Howett was hired as director in 2006, efforts surrounding recycling, campus forest protection, alternative transportation, green purchasing, and sustainability in the curriculum were already at play (OSI History 2017). Thanks to this longstanding grassroots community and good leadership, sustainability became identified as an important principle in 2004 when the university

began to develop its strategic plan under the new leadership of President James Wagner. It had emerged in the strategic planning exercise as one of twelve possible nodes of growth for the university, and in the selection process for the final six chosen, was shifted to a fundamental principle of the university, similar to equity and inclusion (OSI History 2017, Steering Committee 2005).

Shortly after in 2005, Wagner created a Sustainability Committee (referred to here as the “original visioning committee”), to clarify what that principled commitment meant and to set goals and deliverables for action over the next decade. According to Wagner, “the agenda that presented itself was to... move [sustainability] from a moral preference to a moral obligation. That is, to incorporate sustainability as one of the principles of the university, moving from an aspiration to a commitment. When you do that, sustainability or any ethical principle becomes a value” (2017). Thus, a formal vision for Emory’s future grounded in sustainability emerged. Co-chaired by Barlett and Michael Mandl, Executive Vice President of Business and Administration, the visioning committee was composed of carefully selected individuals including faculty and administrators from various sectors of the university, ranging from Rollins School of Public Health, the Law School, the School of Medicine, and Candler School of Theology to Vice President for Campus Services. Between a two-day retreat and a consultation, approval, and revision process, the vision slowly developed into a final cohesive document spelling out Emory’s goals and recommended action steps within various units of sustainability for the years 2005-2015 (Original Vision Sustainability Committee 2005; Eley 2017).

An initial point of concern for the group was the idea of sustainability itself. Eley, a member of the committee, remembers that each member discussed what he or she thought was important in defining sustainability, culminating in a big discussion about what to include and where to cluster goals. While there were not yet many metrics, there was a group consensus about what to include. First, the group was concerned with spaces on Emory’s campus, including Lullwater Preserve and other areas with rare species that warranted preservation and clean-up. According to Eley, “there was something about space that we all thought was sacred.” Greenspace was not the committee’s only concern, however. “Peggy really opened our eyes to sustainability, because she was a leader... She schooled us on this new term sustainability and what it could mean for Emory. We all got together, and it was an audacious plan” (2017). The document, formally titled “Sustainability Vision for Emory” and last revised in August of 2006, outlined visions not only for a “Healthy Ecosystem Context” at Emory, but also for a “Healthy University Function in the Built Environment,” “Healthy University Structures, Leadership, and Participation,” a “Healthy Living-Learning-Working Community,” and “Education and Research” (Original Vision Sustainability Committee 2005).

Howett believes that the vision document’s definition of sustainability is one of its highlights. Although sustainability was a semi-foreign term to some back in 2005, the document provides a broad definition referencing the quality of life in a community and assessment of economic, environmental, and social systems at Emory to ensure the institution provides a healthy, productive, and meaningful life for all community members both present and future. According to Howett, “the strategic plan and the sustainability

vision that grew out of the strategic plan imagined an Office of Sustainability that would bring together different themes, highlight them, make people aware of what's going on, coordinate them, and ultimately create a more institutionalized presence and part of the administration, which gave people the sense that this wasn't going away—that the institution saw it as a fundamental principle and that it would be here long after they left Emory.... It brings in the concept of inter-generational equity” (2017).

The process of creating the document was one that committee members reflect upon fondly. Barlett remarked that Mandl, her former committee co-chair, inspired the committee to set concrete and specific goals: “we did that because you [Mandl] said to me, ‘I need deliverables. I need things that I can hold people accountable for.’ And I think if we hadn't had that request from you, the committee, being mostly academics, would have come up with a lot of fluff and not something concrete that we can hold people accountable for” (Interview with Michael Mandl 2017). Likewise, Eley lauded the participation and ingenuity of Bob Hascall, then Vice President of Campus Services, who started the Emory shuttle service. He described that Hascall was “a man who could make things happen. Not only has he saved an enormous amount of energy, but also improved the lives of our students and staff, and the faculty who use those buses” (2017).

According to Eley, between Hascall's impressive strides in the realm of transportation and Barlett's leadership, committee members developed a dynamic that proved to be vital for the visioning process—one of collegiality, respect for people's opinions, and an ambitious conception of sustainability at Emory that would never have seen fruition had the committee become caught up on the “can't-do's.” During their two-day retreat, committee members sat in a small conference room and talked the vision out. Bob Hascall failed to be dissuaded by potential hardships or challenges that came with lofty goals—in fact, he could not be dissuaded by anything other than logic. A pragmatist and grounding force within the group, he had already seen success in his endeavors and served as an inspiration to both Eley and other members of the committee. Each member had his or her own valuable contributions to make. In addition to members such as Hascall, “there was John [Wegner], just sort of a fervent tree hugger, who took things out of control in a great way. He's a voice.”

And with regard to the process in general, Eley recalls the following:

There are always things you wish had gone better or faster, and yes, there were goals that we didn't push out farther because if we did, we thought we'd get shot down, but that's compromise. That's the marriage of your desires and what is possible. I try to focus on the things that have gone well. I think people were appropriately passionate about what they were passionate about, but I can tell you—I don't remember a single argument. To me, it is one of the bright stars in faculty engagement and interaction. It was wonderful. It was an idyllic situation where people came together and people listened... I think Emory, like any institution, at times can get mired in the processes and not really the forward motion. And it was pleasantly surprising to see people empowered to change things, and to take advantage

of this in a positive way. It's about environment, it's about people that are committed, and it's about that can-do attitude. This has turned into one of Emory's real highlights. It's developed into something we're known for nationally, maybe internationally (2017).

Office Early Days: The Institutionalization of Sustainability at Emory

There was something very exciting about those days... there was no roadmap and no blueprint. We were a startup and we were creating something new.

--Ciannat Howett



Figure 1. Emory Office of Sustainability Initiatives logo (Source: OSI Website 2017)

In 2016, the Office of Sustainability Initiatives sent out a sustainability literacy survey to all graduate and undergraduate Emory students. The survey documents changing knowledge, attitudes, and behavior in the student body. Of over 1,000 student responses, 42% believed their “sustainability-related behavior” increased a “moderate amount” since starting at Emory, (3 on a 5 point scale), and 26% indicated that their sustainability-related behavior has increased more than that (4 and 5 on a 5 point scale). Additionally, 24.5% of respondents indicated that their “knowledge of sustainability issues has grown” moderately since starting at Emory (3 on a 5 point scale), with 25% indicating 4 on a 5 point scale and 26% indicating that their knowledge of sustainability issues has “completely” grown (5 on a 5 point scale) (OSI Sustainability Literacy Survey 2016). This survey is the first kind of evidence of Emory's evolving sustainability culture: one of education and behavioral action across a variety of sustainability areas. The campus culture change that such statistics embody could not have happened without the hard work and dedication of Emory's Office of Sustainability Initiatives.

The Office of Sustainability Initiatives began in 2006 thanks to Executive Vice President of Business and Administration, Michael Mandl. Over a decade later, when asked if the office went where he expected it to go, Mandl responded, “it went further; it went beyond” (2017). Of the Office's creation, he recalls the following:

When I came [in 2003], Emory was known as a leader in sustainability. It wasn't like we were starting from behind—it was more like, “How are we going to stay ahead when others are going to catch up?” And pass you, potentially, because they've figured out it's important. It was important to have a position full time, and so I started to think about that, and that required resources... Where does that money come from? I had to give that careful thought, and knowing that that was going to be hard to do through the ongoing operating budget. I had funds at my discretion, and I short-circuited everything. I took a big chunk of resources that I could have used for other

things, and said,” Look, this is important. If we’re going to do it, let’s do it right.” And then we did a search and found this sort-of ideal candidate. So that’s [a] change—establishing [the office], having someone dedicated to the work full time, [and] having performance plans include measurable goals (Mandl 2017).

When Ciannat Howett was hired as first Director in September 2006, it was a new office with no other employees and no history to look back on, just Howett, a vision, and a mission (OSI History 2017, Howett 2017). There were a few immediate gaps to fill. One was to hire an Administrative Assistant. The next was to put in place some vital components of any initiative: a logo, a branding exercise, a website, and structures of governance. While seemingly straightforward, this required a great amount of feedback from various groups to ensure branding, language, and visuals were compelling to all different sectors of the Emory community and beyond, speaking to everyone regardless of background. Howett had to catalogue what was already happening and meet those who were already involved. According to Howett, the Office of Sustainability at Emory is not just for students, nor is it just for the Emory community. It is for students, faculty, staff, surrounding community members, DeKalb County and the state of Georgia, other higher education institutions, and so on. Sitting at her desk in her office and recounting the early days, Howett stressed the importance of community help during this time:

Having something that has such a huge mission, and such a huge *vision*, be so thinly administered, we were heavily reliant on volunteers to be able to mobilize people, cajole people, and get that energy from people who already had day jobs. That’s been challenging. One of the things that I think is a challenge in sustainability work is that you’re trying to influence without authority... The work is *all*, you know, “Are you interested in this? Can we plug you into that? Would you please do this?” I completely give credit of the success of our sustainability initiatives to our community, because once the structures were in place, people filled those roles. Wonderful volunteers stepped forward and really have been what has made this all happen. A lot of it was smoke and mirrors, because we wanted to appear to be *The Office of Sustainability Initiatives*, as if we were this big entity happening at Emory, when truth be told we had to be in ninety-nine places at once (2017).

Although there was no blueprint for a higher education office of sustainability, there emerged a peer network among new sustainability offices during the early years. This created what Howett described as:

A wonderful and generous spirit of sharing among sustainability officers at other higher education institutes.... Some of those leaders are still dear friends of mine, because in those days when there were only about eleven of us, we would come together and meet and be able to share stories and help each other.... We were creating it as we went, and that spirit of camaraderie, exploration, and newness was exciting. We were on the ground floor of a whole new aspect of working in higher education. To have a whole new sector

develop is a pretty unusual thing, so I'm proud Emory was on the forefront of that work nationally (2017).

With a new office and no roadmap, Howett could mold it to fit her vision for sustainability at Emory. One of her priorities was to make sure that the office, and sustainability at Emory in general, was not greenwashing. For this, she worked with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 office along with Emory's senior leadership and the Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHSO) at Emory to confirm and ensure that Emory was in compliance with all major environmental statutes. Between 2006 and 2007, Georgia independent schools audited each other with an external auditor to check for violations. While Emory did not have any, there were a few spaces that, although compliant with regulations, were not in line with best practices. This examination process enabled Howett to get her "house in order" and subsequently begin to think about what the office and community would do next, beyond mere compliance with the law (Howett 2017).

When it was finally time to make those vital next steps, Howett kept in mind some fundamental wisdom: "You go where the energy is. Where we went was where there were good people in place, a lot of excitement and energy, and where we knew we could make progress. Beyond compliance, we had to find the momentum... and then get some easy wins... because people love stories and their imaginations are captured by stories" (2017).

What were some of these easy wins? Where was that initial momentum? Early projects were simple but efficient, such as lighting retrofits, which have a great return on investment. Such projects led to quick and positive results and served as inspiring examples of success that spurred yet more people into action (Howett 2017).

With more people on board, the office was able to utilize a personal rhetoric. Howett created a sustainability pledge, involving a personal commitment to various actions that could protect the environment, along with a unique glass-half-full environmental impact calculator. At the time, online calculators to indicate environmental impact were often used as scare tactics, presenting virtual users with frightening statistics about their consumption and the current state of the planet, its resources, and its systems. Rather than allow people to get deflated by a doomsday paradigm surrounding sustainability, the office created a new calculator that gives statistics about positive change that occurs based on a given action, such as "turning off the water when you brush your teeth can save 10 gallons of water each morning," enabling people to see positive impacts (Office of Sustainability Initiatives Website 2017). This ethos of positivity and accompanying logos behind statistically validated benefits inspires behavior change. As Howett puts it,

I would call it aligning incentives for sustainable behavior.... When deans saw how much [energy] we were using and how much it was costing us, they were incentivized to reduce. We were ready with answers. For example, we told them to turn down their buildings evenings and weekends. When we first started, it was the culture at Emory that in the middle of the night, if you had a brilliant idea you could come to Emory's campus and the building would be

perfectly acclimated for you. It wasn't so easy because it was a big culture change for many people, but it saved a huge amount of energy and a huge amount of money. It's that kind of behavioral change that can be a real "aha!" moment for people who weren't even conscious of how their behavior was impacting the world (Howett 2017).

However, Howett did not spearhead this office or all of these first steps alone. Shortly after becoming director, she hired Erica Weaver as her first Administrative Assistant, who was a great help during the office's early days. In addition to managing Howett's calendar, she served as a representative at various sustainability tables around campus, including Emory's Food Fair, Staff Fest, and Earth Week events. She also sometimes passed out information and material as it related to sustainability, informed the community of sustainability developments as they occurred, scheduled locations and times for teams and sub-committees to meet, and used her connections to bring Emory closer to a number of outside organizations. According to Howett, it was "all hands on deck," for the small office. "You can't have any pride if you do this job. You have to be willing to have your arms in the compost bin sorting stuff out, schlep banners around, and do the most grunt-work you could ever possibly imagine, because there was sometimes just nobody else" (2017). Although the small size of the office warranted such efforts, it also facilitated the creation of new intra-university ties. The job enabled Weaver to meet a lot of people on this campus with whom she is still in contact today. She remembers that "Ciannat was interacting with everybody, and I mean *everybody* within a lot of departments on this campus. I probably learned about departments I never would have known about otherwise, and met some people I never would have met otherwise" (Weaver 2017).

Growing the Website

Another one of the initial tasks in those early days with Howett and Weaver was to develop a website for the office. Outside of the website, the office has utilized physical visuals to set the sustainability tone on campus, such as lamppost banners and small events, but a virtual presence was essential. Research on sustainability at Emory has shown that beyond peer pressure, a vital and transformative aspect of behavior change and adaption within the community is the tone and culture set by the institution itself (Hegtvedt and Johnson 2012). The task of setting the tone and molding the culture around sustainability falls within the office's jurisdiction, a task that requires action beyond the creation of physical visuals. This means that virtual presence is critically important for an institution to convey its values to the surrounding community. Another important aspect of sustainability work within communities is feedback and transparency. Thus, the website also had to function as a platform for feedback and a means with which Emory community members could see real progress toward goals, which would enable them to better understand the roles they play. Finally, interactivity was vital in development of the website. Beyond simply conveying information, interactivity enables the office to engage the audience and consequently extend its reach, which a more static website would not as greatly achieve.

With these necessary functions in mind, the website design chosen contains various features. In addition to the sustainability pledge and calculator, it has information about

energy use, water conservation, climate action, and other initiatives within different subject matters for viewers to read about. It also has a system for giving updates—there is a button that says, “How are we doing?” Clicking it leads virtual users to a dashboard that tracks energy usage, water usage, recycling by building, the number of commuters sustainably commuting, the number of faculty participating in the Piedmont Project, and so on. Users then have the option to give feedback on key areas of sustainability on campus (Howett 2017). Another well-received feature of the website is its interactive sustainability map, developed under a grant from the Urban Land Institute, which shows where all the green buildings on campus are located. One can do a self-guided tour of green buildings, a civil rights tour, a tour of specimen trees on campus, art installations, and fitness walks, to name a few.

The sustainability website undergoes frequent changes and is not the same as it once was in its early days. In line with changing technology, the newest mission surrounding the website is to adjust it so that the audience can interact with its various features from a smart phone (Howett 2017).

Beyond the necessary informational and interactive features, the website straddles the line between incorporating the brand of Emory and unique engagement not found on Emory website pages, ultimately creating the effect that “it’s part of a community [Emory], and it’s a fun community to be a part of” (Howett 2017).

Growing the Ideas: The Incentives Fund

Incorporation of sustainability into all aspects of university and healthcare life is critical for community awareness, involvement, and behavioral change. The Incentives Fund, which started in 2007, was briefly halted in 2010 and 2011, and then was reinstated in 2012 (Emory Wheel 2013), offers small grants to inspire innovations in sustainability. Students, faculty, staff, and campus groups with a sustainability project idea can apply for the grants, which are awarded by a committee made up of faculty, staff, and students from various areas of campus. Projects must be implemented on campus and must in some way contribute to the university vision and climate action goals. There are three incentives funds—one is a general sustainability fund, one for green offices, and one for green labs. Some projects have become a long-standing presence on campus, such as The Green Bean Coffee Cart, which began as a grant to two college students who wanted to expand fair trade coffee on campus and is now installed in Emory’s Cox Hall Food Court (See “Emory’s Sustainable Food Initiative” Report by Peggy Barlett). Other past projects have included planting trees on campus to increase canopy coverage, teaching students about cooking sustainably in a college setting, installation of hydration stations on campus, and creation of educational gardens.

Growing the Staff

For the first six years, Howett and Weaver were on their own in the office with Peggy Barlett as half-time faculty liaison, and eventually came the time for the staff to grow. Finances were tight after the 2008 market crisis, but Howett was successful in partnering with Emory Dining and Emory Healthcare to hire new staff. Each unit supported half of a new staff member dedicated in part to work in that area. The two Sustainability Program

Coordinators, Emily Cumbie-Drake and Kelly Weisinger, were hired in March of 2012. Cumbie-Drake was in charge of student outreach and Taylor Spicer has filled the position, which Emory Dining partially funds, since 2015. The job includes not only student outreach and engagement, but also co-managing the Emory Farmer's Market and overseeing sustainable food education and outreach (Weisinger 2017).

Weisinger, meanwhile, has filled her post for five years with Emory Healthcare partially funding her salary. Her role focuses on outreach to Emory employees, ensuring that they are engaged with Emory's sustainability initiatives. She provides staff with both opportunities to participate in programs and information necessary for sustainable behavior on campus within the work setting. Additionally, she runs a handful of staff-composed committees and task forces for designated topical areas such as the Green Office and Green Lab Certification Groups. She also works with Emory hospitals, clinics, and healthcare. With healthcare, Weisinger primarily attempts to replicate university initiatives, adjusting them to fit within the healthcare structure, but she occasionally follows the current in the healthcare sector as she recognizes its distinct set of challenges and opportunities. As of September 2016, Weisinger was promoted to Assistant Director of OSI with the added job responsibility of managing its communications strategy (Weisinger 2017). (For more information about sustainability in Emory Healthcare, view "Sustainable Healthcare at Emory University," by Lauren Balotin.)

The Office also has interns, which have been a huge source of help since its early days. Over the years, the intern program has shifted from the charge of Howett, to Cumbie-Drake, briefly to Weisinger, and finally to Spicer. There are usually between eight and fifteen interns per semester, composed of both graduate and undergraduate students. Interns typically execute background research to gain more information for a potential project, design programs, implement programs, or act as a helping hand in existing initiatives. Historically, interns were all 'General Interns,' and were given any project that needed to be done; however, in the more recent years a few topical positions have emerged: Green Office and Green Lab Interns, Communications Intern, Sustainable Food Intern, and Garden Intern. Such interns, rather than performing tasks within a variety of topics, would do all the projects in a given topic (Weisinger 2017).

Howett now refers to the office staff as totaling "four and a half people" (2017). This includes her own position as Director, her Administrative Assistant, the two Program Coordinators, half-time Faculty Liaison, and a one-eighth-time Garden Coordinator. Howett pays Emory College in funds for a course release so that a portion of Professor Peggy Barlett's time can be spent on sustainability. With this time, Barlett has chaired Emory's Sustainable Food Committee and the Piedmont Project, a faculty development program designed to integrate sustainability more deeply into the curriculum. Of her staff, Howett speaks fondly: "They're all such wonderful people to work with and have allowed Emory to move up a level in terms of engagement and outreach, giving us a ripple effect of growing our movement and its momentum out even further" (2017).

To support good coordination, information sharing, and the health of the team, the OSI has several structured gatherings. Weekly standing staff meetings of the four primary

members and, occasionally, Barlett allow the group to plan strategies and problem solve. Oftentimes, the office arranges focus groups with different Emory constituencies to acquire and organize specific information about a given topic area. While each staff member has monthly standing meetings with various individuals in different departments as well as with governance units such as committees and task forces, such meetings are not divided between staff with hard lines and instead encourage fluidity between numerous connections of sustainability and of the university (Weisinger 2017).

The Office also has treasured staff retreats. Two types of retreats occur twice a year each, ultimately with four per year. One type involves laying out the nuts and bolts of what's happening at a given time, going through calendars, different events, and the "nitty-gritty" aspects of maintaining an office. The other type, however, consists of big picture analysis and strategic planning, in which staff look at initiatives from distant perspectives, discuss overall priorities, reflect on accomplishments, and pinpoint where they would like to do better. These reflective exercises lead to development of strategic priorities, and the staff often meets off campus to try to make them restorative (Weisinger 2017).

Finally, there are celebrations. Celebrations occur within the office for individual staff members, with distinct groups such as celebratory gatherings for a specific endeavor, and within the Emory community such as the holiday lunch, at which awards are given out. Celebration of accomplishments serves to validate and encourage further hard work (Weisinger 2017).

Like most aspects of university life, positions are fluid. In 2012, Erica Weaver left her position as OSI's first Administrative Assistant for a program coordination position at the School of Medicine and also became a Sustainability Representative for the School of Medicine building. The Office's current Administrative Assistant is Akelia Hypolite.

Growing Partners across the Campus

It's becoming a point of inspiration for people to work for Emory because they get to innovate in sustainability.

-Kelly Weisinger

On March 20, 2008, staff members went around the offices in the Callaway Memorial Center and cheered about saving energy. They were dressed in skirts made of recycled paper and waved cleverly designed shredded paper pom-poms. They called themselves The Energettes.

The Energettes were led by Joy Wasson, an avid bicyclist and the sustainability representative for the Callaway building. She had talked her Department of Religion co-workers, and one colleague from Journalism, into being cheerleaders for sustainability for OSI's first energy saving competition that was taking place among campus buildings. She videotaped the cheer, a rap created by Loretta Anderson from Journalism, and showed it later at a sustainability building representatives meeting (Wasson 2017).

The Sustainability Representatives Program, known as Reps for short, has existed for nearly the entire life of the Office of Sustainability Initiatives and is thriving today in over fifty buildings. Sustainability Representatives are staff and faculty members from a major building on campus who agree to be responsible for engaging the building occupants on sustainability and related events on campus. The role consists of regular monthly meetings during the academic year run by the OSI staff, with breaks during the summer. Reps are kept aware of sustainability initiatives around the university and big picture processes. They serve to both give feedback on initiatives and send the information out to their building residents. The information, therefore, travels both ways (Wasson 2017). Erica Weaver uses her position as a co-sustainability representative for the School of Medicine building as a means of communication to push out new sustainability ideas from OSI and to inform building residents of the Office's competitions and updates, thus acting as an ambassador for sustainability initiatives and better equipping residents to make the OSI's visions into realities (Weaver 2017).

Wasson was asked in January of 2008, when the program first started with its first meeting on January 24th, if she would be a sustainability representative for the Callaway Center, and she has filled this position ever since. People like Wasson were nominated by "a dean or departmental supervisor" on the grounds of "respect among colleagues and their leadership capabilities" (OSI Sustainability Representatives 2017). Building Reps are useful for the office to gain information about perspectives and problems for the people who are on the ground in the buildings. In sum, Wasson would describe the building Representatives as "liaisons in the building between sustainability issues and faculty, staff, and graduate students of Emory... People in my building will ask me questions such as, 'where do I recycle my light bulbs? What about my batteries?' I find these things out, and if I don't know, I do know enough to find out who to ask.... Sometimes there are special projects where OSI has wanted our input, and we can give it to them. We're a good cross-section of the campus, and healthcare is represented as well" (2017).

One highlight of the program is the educational opportunities it provides for participants. In the past, members have taken field trips or guest speakers have visited Reps meetings to discuss topics at a large scale. Sustainability building Reps have visited Emory's recycling plant, toured the WaterHub (Emory's water reclamation facility), done a Lullwater Park walk, and volunteered at Emory's Oxford Organic Farm. In the early days, Peggy Barlett came and talked about behavior change and sustainability, and there was also an eye-opening speaker on the HVAC (heating, venting, and air conditioning) system (Wasson 2017).

It is not just the Office of Sustainability Initiatives providing such opportunities for the building representatives—the sustainability Reps, too, take unique initiative to educate others about sustainability and motivate their building occupants to act sustainably. Groups of representatives have worked on various ways to get their messages across, including graphics design, set up of information tables within buildings, creation of inventive means for sustainable behavior within buildings, and innovation of ways to inform building occupants about news and building competitions. Some building Reps send out weekly emails with sustainability updates to their building occupants' listserv.

These emails can contain the Office of Sustainability Initiative's weekly sustainability newsletter or information about important events such as the its building competitions surrounding initiatives including energy saving and recycling. Wasson not only started a cheerleading group to cheer for sustainability throughout the building, she also made a video about bicycling for an alternative commuting video competition. In fact, according to Wasson, her position as a sustainability representative was a key motivational point for her becoming a bike commuter (2017).

The position is not all fun and games, though. "It is hard to effect behavior change in your colleagues and coworkers sometimes, so that gets a little frustrating" (Wasson 2017). It is true that most people do not recycle as second nature, nor are most people aware of the intricacies of the HVAC system in large commercial buildings and the difficulty in achieving perfectly comfortable temperatures for everyone. Many building residents still use bottled water. The role of sustainability representative, therefore, is not just to inform of and to voice sustainability matters, but also to ignite behavior change.

This is Wasson's final semester at Emory, and in her reflection she described her experience fondly:

As I approach retirement from Emory after 16+ years here, I'm having the experience of thinking "Oh, this is the last time I'll do X...". After [a Sustainability meeting not too long ago], I walked out with Raghu Patil and we were just making small talk, but it just hit me as we walked that I wouldn't have those meetings much longer and I'd miss being with that group of people and I got a little choked up as I went back to my office. The Reps meetings are one place as a staff person where I've felt I had shared goals and values with the group, and it's been so enriching of my time here (Wasson 2017b).

Governance, Committees, and Task Forces

The thing about sustainability that's so important is that there's no silver bullet. There's no one thing you can do; it has to be a comprehensive program looking at energy, water, waste, transportation, food, the build environment, purchasing, green space, and research and curriculum.

-Ciannat Howett

Howett co-reports to the Provost (the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs) and the Executive Vice President for Business Administration, an advantageous arrangement because the office has a role both in the academic side and in the administrative and operational side of the University. According to Howett, "it's been important to work in both areas, but also to see where they come together" (2017). Each OSI staff member meets one on one on a regular basis with different departments; for example, Taylor with residence life, housing, dining, and campus life, and Kelly with procurement every month. However, because the office is small, it functions within the model conception that everybody owns sustainability, and therefore relies on the expertise and guidance of other groups to meet its goals.

To facilitate action and increased knowledge, the OSI has created a variety of voluntary committees from which it seeks advice and carries out its work. These committees, along with guiding plans and documents, extend the OSI beyond itself—“participatory governance,” as Weisinger would call it (2017). Some are long-standing such as the Faculty Advisory Council and the Sustainable Food Committee. Others come and go with need, such as the visioning committees and the original Climate Action Plan Committee. Ad hoc committees tend to vary in nature—one example is a Drought Response Committee that arose during a severe drought in 2007. Ultimately, as Weisinger would describe it, the governance has various levels: individuals, longstanding committees and task-forces, and ad-hoc committees and task forces developed to meet a short term need and revived if necessary. Of structure and functioning, she said, “our documents and plans are the backbone, and then those *people* are the next layer of that backbone that help us implement those documents and plans. Guiding documents are what we look toward to prioritize and guide our work, while groups provide strategic guidance” (2017).

Some such structures of governance include the Sustainability in Health Sciences Task Force, the Student Sustainability Forum and residential dorm-building representatives, the Energy and Water Task Force, the Waste Think Tank, and the Green Office and Green Lab Teams (OSI Committees and Task Forces 2017). Below are brief governance descriptions for food-related structures:

Sustainable Food Committee

In his interview, J. William Eley of the original vision Sustainability Committee said, “Dining and eating is a very important part of our lives and I’m glad that we’ve done what we can to support local farmers and food... you can leave the dining hall and you can’t get Styrofoam. That’s a statement” (2017). A statement indeed, and it holds true thanks to Emory’s grand vision surrounding sustainable food and reduced waste. The university and healthcare faculty, staff, and students that make up the Sustainable Food Committee recommend policy for implementing food-related goals in the sustainability vision, such as to reach 75% local or sustainable food, and bring Emory University and healthcare tangibly closer to their sustainable food vision.

Starting in 2007 as one of OSI’s first structures of governance, the Sustainable Food Committee began by defining what would constitute “sustainable” food and “local” food through research and discussion. Members did not just discuss food, however—their diverse backgrounds enabled them to connect food issues with issues of labor, ethics, public health, and science (Newsom 2017). The resulting Sustainability Guidelines for Food Service Purchasing were approved by the Executive Vice President for Business Administration, the Vice President for Campus Life, and the Director of OSI, and have been updated several times subsequently. For further information, see “Emory’s Sustainable Food Initiative” Report by Peggy Barlett.

The food committee also sought to extend educational outreach to the entire Emory community. The Committee’s work included support for Emory’s Educational Garden Project, the establishment of a weekly Farmer’s Market, cooking classes, guest speakers,

and coordination with the organic farm on Emory's Oxford, Georgia, campus (Newsom 2017).

Sub-Committee for the Farmers Market

Currently run by Student Life Program Coordinator Taylor Spicer, this committee sets and enforces guidelines for the weekly Farmer's Market. In addition to her position on the Sustainable Food Committee, Carol Newsom of the Candler School of Theology was an original participant in the Farmer's Market sub-committee. The market initially ran up against many barriers, including availability of vendors featuring good nutrition, the price point for many shoppers, and the lack of opportunity for many undergraduate students to cook. Nonetheless, the market now accepts student currency, called Dooley Dollars, and is thriving today without compromising its initial core values and goals: commitment to local food and ingredients, engagement with small-scale food producers, and facilitation of personal relationships between farmers and the Emory community (Newsom 2017).



Figure 2. Weekly Emory Farmer's Market at Cox Bridge (Source: Emory Wheel 2014)

Just as the Office of Sustainability Initiatives integrates community into its programs, community integration occurs within subfields of university sustainability. Newsom described the importance of staff help and insight and an additional early point of pride with the farmer's market: "When I was teaching a course on food and ethics, there was a 'Food for Thought' segment, and so the students had to bring in some kind of food and talk about it, and one of the students had gone over there and really gotten to be friends with the guy who does the honey, and so he bought back several honeys and talked about it and I thought, 'Yes! That's the kind of close connection that we want between students and vendors'" (2017).

In developing the market, there was a lengthy approval process and a controversy over the balance of fresh produce and prepared lunch food. Ultimately, however, despite the compromise and roadblocks, Newsom looks back on the experience fondly: "I saw how it

struggled initially, and how it found its own identity and its own way, and... now it's a wonderful symbiosis with the Oxford farm, and it's valued by the community" (2017).

Policies and Programs

I always reflect on those first days, in 2005-2006. We dreamt of having a Farmer's Market. People told us we were crazy, and now we have a Farmer's Market. And people cannot imagine life at Emory without a Farmer's Market. We dreamt of having a shuttle transit system, and now we have a shuttle transit system. We dreamt of an organic farm, and now we have an organic farm at Oxford. It's one of the really fun things about working in this field—it all starts with that kind of dreaming, with that what-if thing, and thinking about alternatives to how we live, and then, slowly, we make it happen.

--Ciannat Howett

Emory's Pollinator Protection commitment, which seeks to ensure pollinator safety and protection on campus, is not only unique in terms of initiatives surrounding bees and other pollinators on college and university campuses, but also serves as one example of many in which new policy requires processes of review and revision (Emory Report 2014, OSI Campus Pollinator Protection Commitment 2014). According to Howett, because none of Emory's critical plans and policies existed initially, each program requires approval. This includes commitment as a Pollinator Protection campus, the self-explanatory No Idling policy, the Climate Action Plan, and Emory's two sustainability strategic visions. The review, revision, and approval process is not only necessary for institutionalization, but also for deeper dissemination of the ideas, goals, and actions of sustainability in that for programs and policies to succeed at Emory, every person within the Emory community should feel as though they can play a part in developing what they wish to see happen in their community, and that they can own the forward movement of their surroundings (Howett 2017).

Large-scale policies such as the Climate Action Plan and the sustainability visions warranted outreach and feedback in order to truly turn into realities. Howett described this process as critically important: "I'm a big believer that the process is as important as the product, because you need to make sure people are with you. If you're leading and no one's behind you, what's the point?" (2017). To ensure that the process would yield a successful and well-regarded product, policy documents such as visions undergo long processes for review and revision. Surveys might be sent out to the entire Emory community, enabling people to weigh in about what they care for, what they want to see, and what they want to do. In the past, other methods for brainstorming and validating new policies and programs have included discussion groups, a big graffiti wall at the Farmer's Market where people could write their ideas, and town halls. In fact, a town hall on the second vision document was held at the Oxford College campus following 23 stakeholder meetings. In all, over two hundred amendments and new ideas were put forward to adapt the 2016 vision to reflect multiple perspectives, a testament to the engagement of the Emory community.

That's the great thing about sustainability. I don't pretend that I'm the expert who knows all about it and everything that needs to happen to make a healthier and better community—no one can claim that. It's really all of us thinking together and brainstorming together and working on it together that makes it happen. That's been really important for all those big planning efforts—a lot of ownership by the whole community. (Howett 2017).

In addition to public input and ensuring that various Emory governance bodies are on board, OSI implementation follows a process not dissimilar to other policies. The OSI at times takes initiatives to the Employee Council, the University Senate, the Council of Deans, the Administrative Council, senior leadership including the Provost and the Executive Vice President of Business Administration, and occasionally to the President's Cabinet. An example of collaborative expertise is seen in the university's 2011 Climate Action Plan. There was a Task Force composed of engineers and scientists who assessed potential climate actions in terms of the physical plant feasibility. Their work came together with that of the Climate Action Plan Committee, composed of faculty and students, and ultimately developed a Climate Action Plan for the university as a single unit. During approval with the Council of Deans, however, it was desired that climate action plans be tailored to each academic unit. Ultimately, Emory became the only major research institution in the United States to have an overarching Climate Action Plan for the university and individual plans for each academic unit that adhere to the campus wide plan while specifying flexible action within units. (For more information on Climate Action at Emory, view "Carbon, Climate, and Co-Generation: A History of Emory's Energy and Climate Commitments," by Katelyn Boisvert.)

Programs and projects, meanwhile, are interdisciplinary and holistic, falling under different branches (OSI Programs 2017). While some projects are long-term, others are one-and-done attempts, exemplifying the risky nature of innovation and a boldness of which Emory can be proud (Wagner 2017). The Office of Sustainability has some unique programs such as Emory's Sustainable Events Certification, in which event planners complete a checklist and OSI certifies an event. Other events are the yearly Earth Festival in center campus that kicks off Earth Month, and the annual Green Networking Night (co-led by the Career Center) that connects interested students with sustainability professionals and potential Atlanta employers. There are also annual awards for campus sustainability innovators (Emory Wheel 2013).

Additional programs include academics and curriculum development (see "Teaching the Future: Academic Infusion of Sustainability at Emory," by Meggie Stewart), sustainable food, healthcare, energy conservation and climate action, water conservation and management, greenspace (see "Greenspace at Emory: Finding the Balance," by Orli Hendler), and waste (see "Emory's History of Waste Diversion and Recycling," by Amelia Howell). Below is information on some selected programs at Emory.

Life of the Campus

The Office of Sustainability Initiative's competitions foster awareness and culture change in campus life. Annual energy reduction competitions occur in the month of October for buildings in three categories: residential, research, and administrative/classroom. Energy-saving lifestyle tips are shared and a winner in each category receives a prize of \$1,000 to be used for sustainability-related investments. Water-saving and recycling competitions were also held for many years, as well as an annual national waste reduction competition, called Recycle Mania, which has often involved public art projects made of recycled materials. The competitions are both educational and motivating, facilitating friendly competition on campus and strengthening inner-building bonds, as was seen with Joy Wasson and her cheerleading squad for the Callaway building. (For more information about sustainability in campus life, refer to "Sustainability in Campus Life: The Changing of Behavior," by Jamie Nadler.)

Transportation

Although not directly the work of the OSI, transportation initiatives and their benefits are exemplary of processes of positive change on Emory's campus, and OSI coordinates educational outreach and projects to encourage sustainable commuting. The percentage of campus that uses sustainable commute options is now 50%, and Emory's Cliff shuttle system runs on a biodiesel blend that uses recycled cooking oil from the cafeterias (Weisinger 2017, Emory Magazine 2007). According to Kelly Weisinger, "people are starting to incorporate [alternative transportation] into their daily lives and understand the benefits—not just the environmental benefits, also the social benefits, personal benefits, and financial benefits" (2017).

The shuttle system is not Emory's only vision and initiative for sustainable transportation. There are other incentives for sustainable commuting at Emory, including free staff transit passes, vanpool/carpool, in which commuters who live and work in the same area with similar work hours can share their commute in a leased van, and Park-n-Rides, in which commuters can park for free at given locations and ride to Emory's Woodruff Circle Transit Hub, to name a few (Emory Transportation and Parking Services 2017). Additionally, the university's most recent sustainability vision, published in 2016, imagines an Emory beltline similar to the one in the works in larger Atlanta. There is currently a working group for the Emory beltline composed of faculty, staff, students, community members, and individuals representing non-profit organizations. "The Emory beltline started with just a dream, and now we have it in our new vision... it's hard sitting here today to imagine that, but I really feel confident that ten years from now I will get on my bike and ride the Emory beltline to wherever I want to go to connect to the Atlanta Beltline! ...I've seen it happen time and time again" (Howett 2017).

STARS

There are multiple systems in place to measure sustainability in institutions of higher education. The most comprehensive of these systems is STARS, which stands for Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System, and is the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's system of national ratings of

sustainability in higher education. AASHE is a national and international organization that sets standards for sustainability, guides university sustainable progress, enables collaboration and sharing between schools, and is widely recognized as a standardizing force for goals and aspirations that schools can look to when developing sustainability plans.

For the Office of Sustainability, Weisinger serves as the data steward, managing big data collection and reporting efforts with STARS and other rankings such as the Princeton Review and the Sierra Club rankings. The STARS system includes 95 criteria and is hundreds of pages in length, and incentivizes Office staff and community members to keep track of relevant qualitative and quantitative data. The process of gathering and inputting data is a lengthy one. Input is required for subjects including institutional characteristics, academics, engagement, operations, planning and administration, and innovation, each divided into sub-topics that are divided into categories that are divided into various questions. Every three years when the prior rating expires, OSI re-gathers the data (AASHE 2014; Weisinger 2017).

Although the process is tedious, the system is a good means through which OSI can check in with itself and measure its impact. Schools are expected to report honestly and are subject to staff auditing, but there is also a peer-to-peer review. Because of STARS, university information is recorded, such as relevant student and faculty research, community and public engagement, greenhouse gas emissions, green building processes, energy consumption, sustainable food, grounds management, purchasing policies, transportation programs, water use, diversity, affordability, equity, investments, employee satisfaction, and workplace health and safety (AASHE 2014). However, the OSI staff members do not model their sustainability initiatives off of the metric because many of their goals and programs pre-date STARS, and, according to Weisinger, “STARS does not tell the whole picture of sustainability” (2017). Nonetheless, they do use it to identify areas for improvement and to further challenge themselves. It is also an opportunity to showcase some of Emory’s unique programs and initiatives, such as the WaterHub (see page 21) and Pollinator Protection Program.

After assessment and input of data, each question yields points that ultimately accumulate into a final calculated number. This number translates into a rating of platinum, gold, silver, or bronze. “Only one school has ever reached platinum, and the first time was in 2016,” Weisinger said from behind her desk with Emory’s STARS report pulled up on a laptop beside her. “We get enough points to be rated a very high gold, so we’re fairly close to platinum... but those last fifteen points are really hard” (2017). Nevertheless, Emory’s gold STARS rating is a point of pride.

WaterHub: Sustainability Fusion

The WaterHub, while not a structure of the Office of Sustainability, is an additional point of pride for its staff. Atlanta is the largest metropolitan area reliant on the smallest single watershed for its drinking water, and Emory has become a leader in creating a culture of water conservation. Its WaterHub, a one of a kind structure among universities, is a water reclamation facility that recycles and reclaims up to 146 million gallons of water a year,

enabling Emory to model best practices for water conservation and to be a leader in water stewardship (Howett, Weisinger 2017). For Howett, the WaterHub marries the academic and operational aspects of sustainability, similar to the academic and operational positions that she reports to; it is both an operational structure and source of lab sampling and journalism practice for Emory classes. “It creates this idea of a living laboratory, where our campus is part of our classroom. The operational part is not set-aside with some people working in a boiler room doing something mysterious. Instead, it’s become our best educator about issues related to water and energy,” she says (2017). (For more information on the WaterHub and water conservation at Emory, view “Stormwater Management and Water Conservation at Emory University,” by Kelly Endres.)

Revolving Fund

One recent accomplishment of the OSI is the creation of a Sustainability Revolving Fund of \$1.5 million. The revolving fund supports energy and water efficiency programs that pay for themselves over time. The fund “revolves” when the cost savings are reinvested back into it to further invest in efficiency programs, and ultimately it will speed up improvements from new investments. The Sustainability Revolving Fund Working Group is a prime example of an additional subject matter committee, or “special committee” (Weisinger 2017).

Community Engagement and the Future

Even with structured governance, policies, and programs, staff members of the Office of Sustainability Initiatives face daily challenges and acknowledge room for improvement. A common personal vision among the interviewees was to increase quantity and quality of sustainability-related community outreach and engagement. Both Weisinger and Howett agree that changes in the office and its functioning will need to happen. As she looked toward the future and remarked about her surprise that students had not consistently been the primary drivers to the momentum, Howett discussed some of her future priorities:

It’s always frustrating to me that I’ll talk to people in the Emory community and I find they don’t know all the stuff we’re doing in sustainability—they have no idea. Many of our success stories appear one time in the Wheel or Emory Report, and if someone doesn’t catch the story, it’s very hard to educate them. And if they’re not drawn to our website and looking in each of the little [subject] areas to find out, they may not know. So that’s been a huge ongoing challenge—getting the word out about everything we’re doing.

In order to implement our new vision we really need to have greater capacity for outreach, and in particular, I would like to see the addition of at least one staff position that addresses community outreach.... I remember in my interview with President Wagner, we were talking about me and the position, and I said, ‘if this is about creating a green oasis of privilege at Emory, then I’m not interested in the job.’ It is so important, has been so important, and continues to be so important that we get outside our campus gates, that we create a whole community of reaching out, helping to implement, sharing best practices and lessons learned, and creating momentum. And I see with

President Sterk [Emory's new President as of Fall 2016] a strong commitment to community outreach. So I think for us to be able to fulfill her vision, the university's vision, and specifically our sustainability vision, we need to have someone we can task with that... How do we tell our story? (Howett 2017).

Additional personal goals and identified areas for improvement of the interviewees include greater efficiency in data analysis (Howett), greater tangible initiative on issues of social justice as they connect to sustainability (Eley, Weisinger), use of social media for student outreach and communication (Early), greater emphasis on the social and economic aspects of sustainability at Emory, not just the environmental (Thomas Rogers [introduced page 23], Weisinger), and a more ubiquitous understanding of sustainability globally and on campus (Rogers, Weisinger). Eley called for emphasis of education on sustainability issues and Weisinger and Howett discussed that sustainable action on the part of universities such as Emory is more critical than ever because the new federal administration is drawing back from leadership in the realm of sustainability.

In some respects, universities are typically seen as big, slow-moving, and culturally conservative institutions grounded in tradition and wary of change (Rogers 2017). Nonetheless, they are also places of large-scale and influential innovation and change. Hopefully, with increased community engagement, sustainability initiatives can be key players in Emory students' transformation into adults. Hopefully, students will graduate, go out into the world both nationally and internationally, and "become the people in their law firm who set up a composting system... and be the people who say, 'why can't we put a solar panel on our office building? They will start expecting that in the places they go and the people they touch, because they've been living and seeing it happen and being successful here'" (Howett 2017). President Emeritus Wagner similarly described this wish: "You live inside the bubble, we all live inside this bubble, and we expect to leave it. And when we graduate and do leave, I wish we took a little of the bubble with us. There are things that happen on the campus that are better than society in general, whether it be sustainability or inclusivity. I hope that we would take a little of that with us and say, 'Hey now that I live in my new community, I happen to know from my former community called Emory University that things could be better, things could be different'" (2017). As Eley puts it, "we should have a positive ethos for the world associated with us, and not just a tower" (2017).

The Office of Sustainability is meant both to improve sustainability at Emory and engage with the surrounding community. "That means our neighbors right next to us on Clifton road such as the Center for Disease Control and all the businesses that are right next door, sure, but it also means the people who live in neighborhoods around us, the bigger and broader DeKalb County, the City of Decatur, the state of Georgia, the southeast region, and all of the people who live and work in those places" (Weisinger 2017). Working toward sustainability goals together could ensure that Emory unifies its community in terms of sustainability awareness, behavior, and culture, and that heightened awareness in turn enables Emory's members to spread university reach outside of the immediate community and into the global community— into the great beyond.

New Vision Committee: Amplifying the Momentum

The original vision from 2005 saw great success, but it nonetheless started as something new. Emory had not previously seen sustainability as a “fundamental principle guiding the university,” and no accompanying vision had yet been incorporated into any of the university planning documents and unit efforts (Original Vision Sustainability Committee 2005:1). After a decade of dreams, hard work, roadblocks, accomplishments, and both personal and community growth, 2014 saw the development of a new sustainability vision for Emory.

Completed in May 2016, the “Emory Sustainability Vision and Strategic Plan” lays out university and healthcare sustainability goals for the next ten years and a review and revision at the midway five-year mark. It generally uses 2015 as a baseline for data and identifies the range of its goals through 2025. To develop the vision, the Office of Sustainability worked in conjunction with a committee composed of faculty, staff, students, and administrators representing various units within the academic, operational, and healthcare realms of the university. The document envisions a sustainable future in four respects: culture change, network expansion and leadership strengthening, transformation of campus infrastructure and functions, and development of strategic partnerships (New Vision Committee 2016:2). Each of these areas comes with recommended “action commitments” and accompanying tasks and initiatives that can achieve the university’s goals (New Vision Committee 2016).

There were a few vital steps in developing the vision. The first was for Howett and Barlett to compile a team of individuals to create the visioning committee, which was officially appointed in fall of 2014 with approval from the Provost and the Executive Vice President for Business Administration. They sought members who were innovative and outside-of-the-box thinkers and thought broadly about what needed to and could be done within the Emory community. According to committee co-chair Matthew Early, Vice President of Campus Services, “I was really impressed with the way the group thought, the way they interacted with each other, the way they were able to process opposing and alternate views, and the way the team was able to re-write a goal that could still achieve a certain success while keeping in mind the opposing views. It was just so collaborative, and in turn, I was really impressed with the collaboration of the entire community. I had a great time” (2017).

Thomas Rogers, a history professor and committee member, also described the committee:

I think most people on that committee saw themselves as playing multiple roles, but we all knew that we came from particular units or perspectives from within the university.... I did want there to be a strong faculty voice on the committee, so linking the vision to curriculum and including varying student perspectives and participation was important to me. I think that the non-faculty members, and I don’t fault them for this at all, didn’t particularly think about curricular aspects of sustainability for instance, or the ways that students could be involved in pushing forward a sustainability mission. And I think it’s just because that’s not their perspective; they think about building efficiency,

for instance, and efficiency in the huge physical plant.... So yes, there were differences between members of the committee, but that's not to say they weren't sympathetic to other things. Once they were raised, other members of the committee were interested in discussing them.... It was crucial to have those different perspectives and skills... but it did reveal to me a real discrepancy in an understanding of what sustainability is (2017).

Once the group was assembled, there were a few tasks on the agenda before they could begin to draft the document. Each of the fourteen group members received research material before even their first meeting, including the original 2005 sustainability vision plan and the Office of Sustainability's overview of its projects from the past decade and accompanying assessment in relation to the original vision plan goals. Once the group was up to date, members were able to get together and simply put everything out on the table in brainstorming sessions lead by Early and Barlett. Barlett shared her prior research and writing on institutionalization of sustainability, and members were also assigned to research peer universities and other organizations, each of which had strategic planning documents available online, to assess how they had integrated sustainability into their operations (Rogers 2017).

After significant research and discussion, the committee was prepared to embark on an overnight retreat in January of 2015 to formally draft the document, during which seemingly crazy or impossible ideas were thrown around. Because goals in this vision would be acting upon or occurring in addition to original goals and accomplishments, it would be much harder to achieve as wide a margin of success compared to when the office and institutionalized sustainability started from scratch. According to Rogers, "This was sort of a running theme of some of the early meetings, that a lot of [the goals of] that 2005 vision—the accomplishments coming out of it as substantial as they were—were, if not low hanging fruit, then slightly easier to achieve. And if we want to have a similarly impactful outcome from *this* vision, we will have to change culture on campus... As co-chairs, they [Early and Barlett] both said let's loosen our minds and think about things that could be really big.... What could be really really splashy with this next vision?" (2017).

With this process in mind, Rogers noted that even as members were brainstorming freely about different kinds of ideas, they were also operating within a recently developed "protocol" based on the institutional documents that they had researched, which were non-coincidentally similar to one another in that they all used each other as models, a testament to the irony that "even as [committee members] were exhorting each other to be bold, the document really fits a genre and didn't break out of that genre" (Rogers 2017). Despite this irony, the innovative idea process was still ultimately a huge success. Early described the brainstorming process in a similar light: "What was important in doing that was removing any kind of biases or concerns, such as 'well, we can never do this anyway, so I'm just not even going to mention it.' ...If we don't hear the opportunity or the idea then we do not have the ability to try to find a way to do it, and then it would never get done... One thing that I was mentioning to the team, if you think about the evolution of humankind or this world, if there wasn't a thought leader out there, we wouldn't really be

where we are, right? People of history pushed for ideas, and that's why we have certain things" (Rogers 2017).

Push for ideas they did. After four and a half months of developing the initial draft vision, an extensive revision and approval process took place and it came time for the reality check. The committee took new and important factors into consideration such as financial feasibility, time frames, synergy with presidential visions, and community availability and willingness to achieve the goals. They spent eight months in 2015 attaining feedback and approvals from different tiers of the administration and meeting small working groups from different administrative and academic departments. They met with the Council of Deans, the University Senate, the Administrative Council, the Student Government Association, and various leadership groups to facilitate review. To obtain the student voice, they put up a large graffiti wall on central campus's Cox Hall Bridge, where pedestrians could write in their own ideas and visions, and also facilitated a "campus-wide community conversation" including an online invitation for groups and individuals to read a "magazine" version of the report and provide feedback (Early 2017). OSI intern, Remy Landon, organized the responses into massive documents for committee consideration.

Such feedback was important, because a few groups alone could not achieve the vision. It could not be achieved unless there was wide community participation, so making sure that others were on board was critical. The feedback process did not come without compromise. The committee was sometimes faced with doubt from administrators claiming the plan to be too ambitious or unrealistic (Rogers 2017). However, as is often the case with sustainable implementation and change, persistence paid off in the approval process. In the end, the committee members received and processed 208 suggested changes and integrated most of them into their revision (New Vision Committee 2016).

After a cycle of re-writing and re-review, the document went all the way to the President's Council for approval. This process was Rogers's biggest point of pride: "I think that we as a group, despite the shortcomings that I'm sure all of us feel remain inevitably, did it in a pretty responsible way that included all of the voices on the committee, certainly, but also very seriously included community and stakeholder feedback...and trying to harvest the ideas that are out there, giving them something to think about...you show them something, show them some ideas, a draft document, and then commit to them that their feedback will be included, so I think that's what I'm most proud of" (Rogers 2017).

Ultimately, the committee's document serves to push the envelope on what a new future for Emory could look like, more so than even the original vision document did, and pushes stakeholders across the university to work toward the milestones it outlines. It was written to be difficult so as to ensure that real and tangible change will happen, even if certain goals are not met (Early 2017). In the words of Kelly Weisinger, "I really look forward to this new ten-year vision. I think there are some really interesting goals in there, and I think it is really refined as far as the next level of sustainability from the last ten years. It is inspirational and it is very, very challenging. So I look forward to meeting those challenges" (2017).

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