Senate Sustainability Committee
Meeting Minutes: January 28, 2019 at 11:00 a.m.
College of Law, Rm. 247

Attending in Person: Jenni Asman, Michael Black, Carrie Freeman, Trisha Kanan, Sarah Kegley, Ming Luo, Ramesh Vakamudi
Attending via WebEx: Sabra Blackwell, Valarie Koonce, Ann Mallard, Amy Reber, Joanna Wilson
Visitors: Doug Covey, Julie Golden, Jodie Harper

1. Deena Keeler, Assistant Director for Auxiliary Services at Emory University, spoke to the Committee about Emory’s efforts to move toward zero waste.

2. Ms. Keeler discussed how the University implemented a Zero Waste Policy and hired an outside consulting team to make recommendations on how the university could meet this goal. To date, Emory has successfully increased its diversion rate from 55% to 79%. Its goal is to achieve 95% diversion from landfills by 2025. Highlights include:

   • Compost – Adding compost to campus drove the greatest increase in Emory’s diversion rate given the large amount of trash on campus that is food or compostable paper, but it is also expensive.

   • Materials Management – Emory standardized collection infrastructure and operations into five categories: Compost, Plastics & Metals, Mixed Paper, White Paper, and Landfill. The staffing model also changed from custodial services to “Recycling Specialists.”

   • Communications Plan – This comprehensive plan targeted each group (students, faculty, labs, etc.) and included advertising and even a video contest. The plan focused on positive and consistent messaging. Volunteer “Zero Waste Ambassadors” were also trained and available to help educate others on how to properly sort waste.

   • Event Waste – To reduce event waste, they worked with the Procurement Office on preferred vendors (e.g., vendors who agree not to use Styrofoam, use bulk instead of individual bottles, etc.). Employees don’t have to buy from preferred vendors but must do so to use a department account.

3. The Committee asked Ms. Keeler about some of the challenges her office has faced in moving toward zero waste as well as the best practices she has learned.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.