

Plan for Pitt 2025

Focus Group Notes

Date: February 13, 2020

Theme: Sustainability

Thematic Focus Groups

Each group addressed this set of questions for their assigned topic:

- How do you see this theme play out at Pitt?
- What does Pitt do well in this area?
- What could Pitt do better?
- How do you see this topic relating to each of the six Plan for Pitt goals?
- Now that we have more information about this theme, is it important to Pitt's success? Why or why not?

THEME: Sustainability

- How do you see this theme play out at Pitt?
 - Piecemeal, not wholeistic
 - Decentralized
 - Lack of standards
 - Poor staff, faculty, students
- What does Pitt do well in this area?
 - We do have a plan/office of sustain
 - Continual improvement, adding resources
 - Hydroelec plant, textile recycling
 - Campus/community, cluster for a cause
- What could Pitt do better?
 - Institutional mandates
 - Incorporate these mandates into our contracts, purchasing, etc.
 - "Zero-waste" campus pledge
 - Mandatory training/orientation (studnets at arrival)
 - Green guilding practices(master plan)
 - Divest from fossil fuels (socially responsible investments)
 - Invest in students(basic needs)
 - Support sustainability curriculum
 - Recognize impact on community
 - Create a "Green Network" with stakeholders
 - Pay students a liveable wage
- How do you see this topic relating to each of the six Plan for Pitt goals?
 - Sustainability should be "backed into" the other goals (or a higher priority)
 - Create metrics measure results(make them public)
- Now that we have more information about this theme, is it important to Pitt's success? Why or why not?

Yes!

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- Reflects our aspirations
 - Failure to do so would detract students, research dollars, etc.
 - It's our responsibility
 - We identify as would calss, steward innovator. Be a leader and be the standard!
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- How do you see this theme play out at Pitt?
 - Sustainability plan + Office of Sustainability great step
 - Work in progress
 - Disjointed
 - A lot of activity
 - Water collaboratory, MCSI, Center for Bus., Honors College scholars, sustainability positions in Auxillaries, Housing, Dining, Student Affairs, Transportation
 - SOOS – student groups
 - Faculty Task Force, Department/Fac. Research, University-wide Sustainability Committee
 - What does Pitt do well in this area?
 - Active student leaders / passionate (student input valued)
 - Green events / office
 - Benefits and Health
 - Support for faculty, students – research funding
 - Community Engagement
 - Sustainability Pittsburgh Greenwork Place – winner multiple years
 - Undergrad certificate / courses / a lot of sustainability course content
 - National representation on Boards, events related to sustainability
 - Active, representative across city and region
 - What could Pitt do better?
 - De-silo
 - Volunteerism (staff)
 - Systematic success
 - Operations and faculty working together and interacting each others' work
 - Increase funds to becoming more sustainable
 - Living lab
 - Expand CECs
 - Cluster classes cross – discriplinarities
 - Green infrastructure (indoor and outdoor)
 - Engaging broader groups of faculty and students
 - Communicate what we are doing better
 - Increase transparency

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- 100% renewables
- Divinvestment
- More and better incentives for faculty
- How do you see this topic relating to each of the six Plan for Pitt goals?
 - Advance educational excellence
 - Global importance (UN Sus Dev Goals)
 - Certificate – cross disciplinary
 - Honors scholars (food, water)
 - By nature topic is inter-disc
 - A topic of interest, importance to attract quality students
 - Access and equity core to sus
 - Research of impact
 - Research that addresses real-world challenges
 - Impact to communities
 - Sust research helps with large cross disc collab b/c real input from eng, science, policy, economic, sociology, etc.
 - Global leadership
 - Communities
 - Faculty, students and staff working in the community
 - Translation of research to help communication
 - Applied research for public benefit, industry resource / partner
 - CECs
 - Resource / source of knowledge
 - Advocate for communities at every scale
 - Diversity and inclusion
 - Naturally provides global perspective
 - Topic attracts diverse groups of individuals thought leaders
 - Sust. Naturally exposes issues with diversity and inclusion
 - Embrace the world
 - UN Sust. Development goals
 - Foundational strength
 - Sust. Big topic locally and nationally
 - Companies, NGOs, government
 - Bridges department and units that normally don't talk
- Now that we have more information about this theme, is it important to Pitt's success? Why or why not?
 - 21st century global topic – must be institutional strength
 - Preparing students to be successful in a changing world
 - Economically smart operationally!

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- Supporting local community – purchasing, locally sourced

Current

- Never far from recycling (single stream)
- Specialty stream recycling around campus
- Free public transportation
- New buildings not necessarily replacing all but tough on some
- Staff and student green guide
- Green events
- Pitt dining BYO Mug
- Divestment
- Electric trucks

Well

- Maintain green space
- Reduction of lawn
- Lots of commitments
- Collaborations off campus
- Work from home possibilities
- Reuse of older buildings
- New construction sustainability commitments and performance
- Pitt Pantry – but communicate more

Better

- Consider and honor historic buildings
- Leverage OBID relationships to encourage restaurant responsibility, more green space, etc.
- Enhance green space along Fifth and Forbes
- Promote alternate transportation options – more transit, walk, bike
 - Could link to PTO earnings
- Align incentives for better decision-making
- Collaborate to create maximum positive impact (academic and operationally)
- Broad the communte as contributing to overall Pitt vision
- Making historic and older buildings more comfortable
- Make sustability more than a buss word and more of part of everything
- Own our expertise
- Develop on-campus sust. Endorsed campus
- Bring reuse and values from students to faculty and staff
- More plant forward dining options

Plan for Pitt Goals Relation

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- Embrace the world – sustainability borderless
- Foundational strength – make sustainability part of culture vs. X people's tasks
- Educational excellence – encourage sust. To be part of all year if SEED grants, etc.
 - Industries of future are sust. Related – focus education and research here
 - Academic sust. Major?
- Strengthening communities – leverage CECs for sustainability, partner with city on citywide sust. Issues and implementation

Is Sustainability important to Pitt?

- Pitt would be fine if we didn't do this but it would be better if we did
- Short-term does not matter, BUT
 - Gen Z very interested in sust
 - Sust keys and makes Pitt competitive
 - Career opportunities of future linked to sust
- Moving from Pitt's risk averse pasts
 - New willingness to engage in innovative and revolutionary conversation is good
- Moving in more expeditious fashion to more generative ideas and progressive
- Link to health will be key
- Sust should be part of core, not add on benefit
- Need to tell Pitt fall sust. Story – are we better than CMU, etc.
- Pitt as central aspect of SWPA Forge the Future
 - No longer in transition but make a difference now
 - Good citizen in Pgh, higher education, region, global
- Be greater than we are individually by working together
- Pgh's environmental legacy is still an issue
- If you can decrease sust here, how can we transfer to other places and scales
- Faculty and student attraction and retention requires true and transparent sust = people can choose. We must help them choose us
- Truly transformational opportunities exist – we can be the ones that do that research, education, etc.
- We must not fail to develop new ideas that transform our world positively

- Need to get the uncommitted, non-choir to answer these questions
- Fiscally responsible
- What's the debate
- Own Pitt alumni in sust. Space
 - Link, claim, build relationships
 - Long-term success on where a Pitt education will take you in terms of sust.
- Link to educating women

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- Prepare to change the world (GSPH)
 - So much to do, not enough money to do it
 - More from roundtable to action
 - Must dream to do and dream big to do more
 - We plant seeds of sust with students
 - How can Pitt truly lead in the sust. Space
 - Scale jump vs. incremental progress
1. The Office of Sustainability; two university wide committees – the Sust task force and the University Sust. Committee, the compost initiative, the Foodshare community on Facebook, the textile bias, SOOS, Electric Box Trucks, aim for reusable containers, Green Speakeasy
 - a. Some initiatives are separate efforts – some university-wide, but mostly separate – would be good to be more collaborative – we continued behaviors but better instead of alternating behaviors – how Pitt sees sust is only one part of the sust spectrum
 2. Some things that don't like also have benefits – it's a laboratory of efforts, allows for organic starts
 - a. Center allows for you to start things with that you would not be able to with more structure
 3. More sustained funding to help efforts to bring about sustainable efforts
 - a. Communicate what we are doing better, transparency, and education about composting, recycling education
 - b. Promote personal responsibility
 - c. Many undergraduates want to see change, but not as much change from their efforts – championing their ideas to see real, big measurable change – lifting them up and recognition
 - d. Build it into our contracts with companies
 - e. Encourage more research on our campus – sustainability-focused research
 4. Diversity and inclusion
 - a. Digital accessibility – anything that is digital and with a screen-reader so anyone can read – universal design – equity – more than just yes it goes with ADA, has to be more than that – also needs enforced, cannot just be a policy – enforcement needs to be a part as well
 - b. Methods to account for issues individuals may encounter when applying to college – visually-impaired person may have a harder time with exams
 - c. Strengthen the communities and engage in Research of Impact

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- i. Pitt has such a large impact- where build, who talk to – has so many ties to sustainable choices – is the growth of the university a sustainable thing for the university and the community
 - d. Advance Educational Excellence
 - i. Writing – connecting what you do with teaching and what you do with service
 - ii. Living lab on campus
 - e. Embrace the world
 - i. Climate change – global effort – we don't have a choice we have to start making better choices – better responsibility – communication – build foundational strength
 - ii. We have a definition of sustainability but what it means to us is different than coastal communities – we have to think how we address this so they are helped and included as well
 - iii. Pay support staff better – paying administrators and faculty a living wage as well
 - iv. Fair wages = access to city of Pittsburgh housing = the opportunity to use sustainable transit options
- 5. Yes. Sustainability should be Pitt's #1 effort if we want to be here in the coming years. It's not just a good thing because it's a good thing to do – it's a viability point for Pitt.

- 1. Suppliers – part of negotiations for sustainable practices
 - a. Increase in items recycled – Ex: Batteries – compost
 - b. Reusable containers
 - c. Electronic files instead of paper
 - d. Beyond capacity enrollment in sustainability classes
 - e. Activism on campus – Fossil free Pitt
- 2. See #1
 - a. Pitt's constantly adding new programs and opportunity to move forward
 - b. Goal of 25% plant-based food
- 3. We have strong sustainability goals but need better roadmaps
 - a. More reusable energy – solar, wind
- 4. It relates but should be its own goal
 - a. Consider sustainability along with other goals
 - b. Increase education opportunities for students, faculty, and staff
- 5. Catalyze transdisciplinary sustainability research across the university
 - a. Incorporate environmental social governance investing
 - b. Invest in a sustainability institute across the university

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6. Our definition of sustainability should include diversity
 - a. Develop fellowship and scholarships for underrepresented students who are interested in sustainability
 - b. Last bullet point for goals could be an idea/pragmatic solutions on how to accomplish goal
7. Yes, important.
 - a. We need to remain competitive in leading industries
 - b. Strategy to address declining enrollment
 - c. We do not want to further negatively impact environment of our city
 - d. Students interested in innovation and contributing to a healthy environment