

**Task Force 5**  
**February 23, 2015**  
**WRC 175**

Today the committee welcomed Eric O'Brien from the Sustainability Task Force to present to the committee about the Panther Plot garden and other sustainability issues that the Open Space Task Force could relate to. Chris gave a brief overview of the Open Space and Athletics Task Force to Eric before he presented.

Eric O'Brien – Panther Plot Five-Year Plan – Outdoor spaces

- The Panther Plot is a student garden designed by student scholars
- It grows food to be used in the dining center, and some donated to local businesses and families.
- It is completely run by students
  - Construction Management student will help create items in the garden.
  - UNI gave the garden a fence
  - Physical Plant helps with large maintenance needs and equipment.
- The students wanted to create a welcoming space
  - The students want to change the straight, direct paths to meandering, interactive ones
  - The south side of the garden would have a welcoming main entrance
    - Add a secondary entrance as well
  - Dynamic plants will be added to give the garden depth
  - All information and designs is student work
  - The students voiced a need for garden wash station
    - Currently just a hose strung from a nearby building
    - No sprinkling system currently
    - Use leftover NISG funds to create a station
- HPELS crossover with wellness
- Some classes are taught in the garden already
- Construction documents have been created to help the garden get funded.
- Non-profit leadership alliance crossover funds could benefit space.
- ROTH students/student families with food needs
  - About 20% of harvest is given away to volunteers and students in need
- Try and increase volunteer time among students
  - 40 class time minutes of students volunteering would take four days of work for one gardener.
- Adding hops to the garden
  - Reinbeck brewery will help teach students about hops and help take care of them as well.
  - Hops grow fast, tall, and a good looking plant
- Logs from downed trees

- Try to use logs from campus, but unsure if able to without outside help cutting and hauling
- Brings an extra environment to campus.

Tori mentioned an additional funding opportunity from Dr. Hogan's office since he deals a lot with food and low-income families, as well as pursuing excess NISG funds.

There used to be an old family housing garden on Jennings Drive that showed previous opportunities for students.

- It was used in the late 1990's and early 2000's.
- The campus stopped using it because students would claim a spot, garden briefly, and abandon it.
  - Some students would plant but then leave the country for the summer.

So far, the Panther Plot has been a good neighbor to the community.

- A neighbor close to the plot helps out and enjoys it.
- Neighbors thought it would turn into a "weed patch" like the last garden, but they have been pleased with the results.

Lynn Pakala from Grounds Department in the Physical Plant shared with the group facts about landscaping and his thoughts on campus development, and mentioned that unlike other departments, the Grounds Dept. is reactionary vs. visionary.

- Winter upkeep of campus
  - 13 employees, 10 supplemental help employees
    - Full time
  - They take care of 165 entrances and 93 sets of steps for snow.
    - That is not all the steps, entrances on campus.
      - The rest are contracted out.
  - There are 20 miles of sidewalks on campus
  - 10 miles of roads
  - 9500 parking spaces
  - Application of salt brine before snow saves a lot of money and labor
    - Applied by one truck, and tool cats
    - Iowa DOT is a leader in salt brine applications, other states are way behind.
      - Massachusetts does not know what salt brine is.
- Spring upkeep of campus
  - 13 full time employees
  - The campus is split into 13 areas
    - 14 acres per employee
  - Last spring, grounds spent \$65,000 on plants
    - No direction because of lack of campus architect.
- Compost

- UNI produces 2,700 lbs. of pre-consumer waste per week
  - Prepped food waste
- Compost pile located south of campus
- UNI does not have the equipment to turn it into compost yet, so UNI cannot use it and the pile keeps getting larger.
- ISU's compost takes five weeks to get a finished product.
- Possible partnership from Cedar Falls regarding the equipment to make compost.
- Soil enhancement program
  - UNI has 10 acres of top soil that doesn't get herbicide applied, but does have a natural fertilizer applied.
  - UNI has to buy the compost, fertilizer
  - The whole project is potentially a waste of money
    - It makes the people feel good by implementing this type of program.
  - There may be a better way to spend this money.

Lynn then shared a handout that answered President Ruud's questions from the original charge letter from Lynn's perspective. Changes to the outdoor campus spaces were outlined on a campus map. Lynn and the handout mentioned a need for a new management position to help facilitate ease and sustainability of outdoor open spaces. This document is shared on the Google drive for Open Space committee members to refer to.

Meeting adjourned at 12:40PM. The next meeting is scheduled for  
March 9 at 10:45AM in WRC 175.