



USC University of
Southern California

Sustainability Hub

Sustainability Hub Subgroup Overview

April 18th, 2022

BACKGROUND

About the Sustainability Hub Subgroup

- USC has made significant progress in its transition towards sustainability, but a main obstacle remains how siloed the schools are. When it comes to sustainability initiatives, students, staff, and faculty are not connected to one another.
- Different departments and student organizations do not know what each other are doing in terms of sustainability, and this creates a gap between the work being done and the USC community.
- The Sustainability Hub aims at resolving this disconnect by creating a physical space on campus dedicated to fostering a community centered around sustainability.

About the Sustainability Hub Subgroup

- **Origin:** The SSC started working on the Sustainability Hub concept after an Engagement Committee meeting in Fall 2021
- **Team:** 12 participants
- **Goal:** Assist in the planning of a physical space, or “Hub,” at USC where the sustainability-driven community can interact with each other
- **Methodology:**
 1. **First phase: Research**
 - a. External approach: Benchmarking
 - b. Internal approach: Customer discovery
 2. **Second phase: Planning**
 - a. Analysis of Phase One research and development of Mission Statement and Goals

RESEARCH: EXTERNAL APPROACH

External approach

1. **Team:** Emily Briscoe and Sean McCalla
2. **Goal:** Learn from what other universities have done
3. **Sourcing criteria:**
 - a. Schools with high STARS ratings; then universities at a similar STARS ratings to USC that already have some form of a sustainability hub
 - b. Statistics: 21 universities analyzed
4. **Analysis criteria:**
 - Is the hub physical or digital?
 - Does it have office space? Does it have a communal space?
 - Is it a more academic or social space?
 - Is it more student focused or research focused?

External approach

Results

- Every U.S. university that we evaluated had a sustainability hubs that was primarily student-focused or research-focused, not both.
- Outside of the U.S., dual-purpose sustainability hubs were more common. However, cultural differences must also be taken into account.

RESEARCH: INTERNAL APPROACH

Internal Approach

1. **Team:** Emily Briscoe, Sean McCalla, Laurel Kruke and Luisa Brasil
2. **Goal:** discover stakeholders' insights and opinions, to create a Hub **for** them and **with** them. Our methods were inspired by user-centered design methodologies in order to create something meaningful for the user.
3. **Methodology for choosing interviewees:**
 - a. **49** sustainability driven organizations at USC (USC schools, student government and RSOs)
 - b. **10** organizations prioritized by the SSC through voting
 - c. **16** organizations validated by the Engagement Committee
 - d. SSC developed questions and Engagement Committee contributed and validated

Internal Approach

e. **9** organizations were talked to (from Jan 17th until Feb 25th):

- ESA
- USC Center for Sustainability Solutions
- Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies + ENST
- Post-docs Office
- Architecture Department
- The Sustainability Project
- METRANS Student Association
- GSG Director of Sustainability/UPC Health Sciences
- Student Affairs

PLANNING: MISSION STATEMENT

Mission Statement



The Sustainability Hub is intended to create a physical space on campus dedicated to fostering a community around sustainability.

Building a strong, collaborative community dedicated to advancing sustainability at USC, the Hub will enhance student involvement, increase community-building across schools, help foster the sustainability leaders of tomorrow, and help USC become a leader in sustainability.

PLANNING: GOALS

Goals



1. Professional Networking

Why?

- Students at each level have expressed a need to network for sustainability-related career purposes. The hub would facilitate networking opportunities and enable students to learn more about how they can incorporate sustainability into their careers.

Objective:

- Create a space for students to network through club meetings and sustainability events.

Ideas Menu:

Simplest SCenario	Best SCenario
Sustainability-related career development workshops and networking events	Expand beyond USC - bring in community leaders and business executives to share their experiences
Sustainability Postdocs host office hours for students	Speaker series where postdocs give weekly talks about their research

Goals



2. Informal Connections

Why?

- In addition to professional connections, students have also expressed a need to make social connections with their peers. The hub would facilitate informal connections among students, staff, and faculty

Objective:

- Students can socialize with each other and learn about how sustainability is viewed in different ways
- Facilitate informal “water cooler” conversations
- Draw new students into the space, increasing social breadth

Ideas Menu:

Simplest SCenario	Best SCenario
Students have an open space to work on projects and meet new people	Sustainability-oriented cafe (with coffee and pastries, locally-grown food, vegan options, plastic-free, zero-waste, possibly student-run)

Goals



3. Bridge the Gap in Communication Across Schools

Why?

- USC is very siloed, so it is hard to find out about sustainability-related opportunities at each school and RSO. Students are missing out on these opportunities because they do not know about them.

Objective:

- Create a central space where all sustainability initiatives, projects, and events can be communicated with the larger student body.
- Having a central place where students interested in sustainability can meet informally will foster invaluable connections.
- The hub will be a place to cross-pollinate across disciplines and age groups so that students can connect with each other across academia
- Draw students in to the hub and to create an informal, social atmosphere

Ideas Menu:

Simplest SScenario	Best SScenario
Keeps historical records of sustainability-related initiatives so new students can build off work accomplished by previous students	GE Classes related to sustainability are taught at the hub
Display Wall that showcases the sustainability-oriented work of students across schools and across RSO's	Faculty lead research groups, such as the USC Center for Sustainability Solutions, use this space as a nexus for their work
Event space to host social events across academic departments	

Goals



4. Facilitate USC Involvement in Community Sustainability Efforts

Why?

- Many RSO's and researchers want to help the community around USC transition towards sustainability. But knowing where to start and how to get involved can be difficult.

Objective:

- Create a network of opportunities for USC students, staff, and faculty to engage with the community to improve sustainability.

Ideas Menu:

Simplest SCenario	Best SCenario
Display methods for students to get involved in USC and South Central LA sustainability efforts	Non-USC sustainability groups have events at the hub to recruit students. Creating a space for USC to put on programming that involves community members
Sustainability-related RSO club fair/symposium to get students involved in community sustainability efforts	RSO's that work in the community host information sessions and events to inform students about the work they are doing

Goals



5. Physical Workspace for Sustainability-Driven Students and Staff

Why?

- Students at each level have a desire to work alongside peers also interested in sustainability.

Objective:

- The space creates a modern, comfortable environment where the USC community can do homework, work on projects, and connect over a common interest in sustainability.

Ideas Menu:

Simplest SScenario	Best SScenario
Open space with big tables and flexible furniture to encourage productivity and collaboration	USC Office of Sustainability is located at the hub, with staff members having individual or shared office space
Hotel-style office space where students, especially postdocs, can reserve rooms	Different size spaces for different scales of interaction (office spaces + open workspace + event space)
The space should promote wellness, and it should be a warm, inviting place that fosters connections.	The space should highlight the sustainability of the furniture, equipment, and the space itself

FOR THE OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability staff to be located in the hub:

1. Mick Dalrymple, Chief Sustainability Officer
2. Ellen Dux, Associate Director, Sustainability
3. Sandra Lazo, Administrative Assistant II
4. Erin Jebavy, Marketing Specialist
5. Elias Platte-Bermeo, Sustainability Specialist
6. Julie Hopper Ollison, Sustainability Specialist
7. Joshua Lee Sierra, Sustainability Specialist
8. Experiential Learning Coordinator (Open position)
 - 10 PSIP positions

Simplest Scenario

Basic Office Space

- 1 Private Office
- 7 Cubicles
- Common area/work space
- Kitchen
- Restrooms
- Printer/Copy Area
- Storage

Best Scenario



On Campus Office Space

- Private Office (Mick Dalrymple)
- Cubicle Desks with Doors (4 - 7 OoS Team)
- Hoteling Cubicle Space
 - **Option 1:** Cubicle reservations required, allows for multiple people to utilize the space, ideal for a hybrid schedule.
 - **Option 2:** Shared office space, long table(s) community work space
- Private Conference Room - 10 person minimum capacity
- Small Privacy Rooms (Zoom meetings, calls etc.)
- Office Storage
 - Storage room
 - Locker wall
 - Bike racks

Best Scenario Cont.



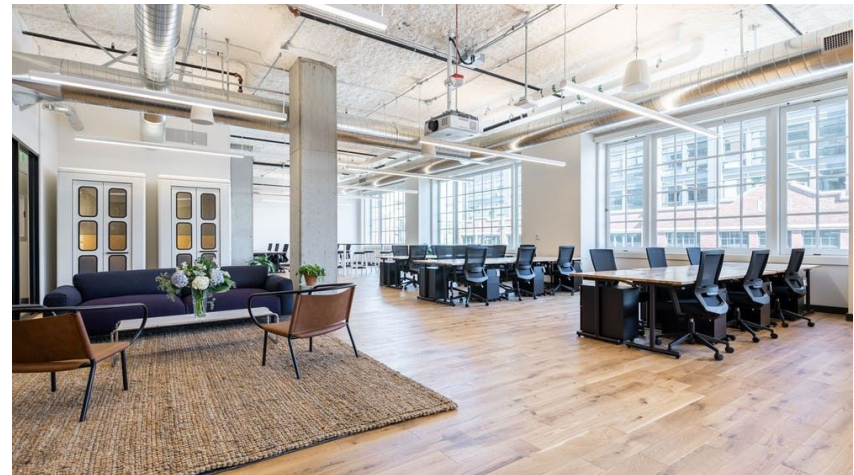
- Kitchen/Lounge
 - Full size refrigerator
 - Sink
 - Microwave
 - Table & Chairs
 - Couch
 - Vending Machines
 - Square footage required - TBD
- Restrooms

IMAGES



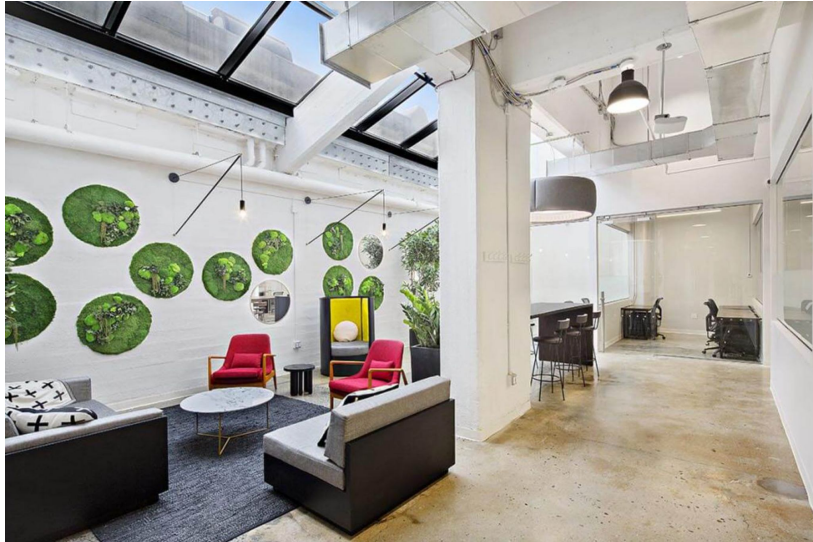
Source: pictures from WeWork

Example of combination of office space,
open workspace and lounge areas



Source: pictures from WeWork

Images



Source: picture from naturalist.us

Example of combination of office space,
open workspace and lounge areas



Source: picture from uncovercolorado.com

Best Scenario - Shared Work Space/Lounge



Best Scenario - Shared Work Space/Lounge



FURTHER QUESTIONS

Further questions



- Who will be in charge of running the hub? - need for a community manager
 - If students are, there will need to be lots of infrastructure and systems in place to account for student turnover each year
- Can the hub be the central location for some of the big sustainability efforts at USC?
Can it be adjacent to the sustainability office? Can it be strategically adjacent to something else?
- Will the hub have an anchor? Or will it become an anchor for all things sustainability related on campus?
 - If the hub is its own anchor, perhaps all sustainability projects should tell the hub what they are doing. This would help bridge the large gaps between the “silos” of the different schools and organizations at USC