

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Environment Committee

Meeting of December 10, 2025, 12:30-2:00 pm
Virtual meeting on Zoom.

In attendance: H. Resit Akcakaya, Jennifer Gilday, Timothy Gonzalez, Sam Lavin, Christine Pash, Christopher Percival, Christopher Sellers (co-Chair), John True (co-Chair), Tom Wilson.

AGENDA

1. The meeting was called to order at 12:34pm by co-Chair True.
2. The draft minutes of the UEC meeting of 11/12/2025 were approved without objection.
3. Christopher Martin (Associate Vice President for Campus Planning, Design & Construction) was unable to make this meeting, so discussion of tree removal at Tabler Residence was tabled. Martin had made a commitment at the UEC October 8, 2025 meeting to attend this meeting with answers to questions posed by the committee. The co-Chairs will send an email reminder and invitations to the next committee meeting on February 11th, 2026 as well as future meetings.
4. Recycling and zero waste:
 - a. Christine Pash presented a draft resolution entitled “Resolution on Developing a Comprehensive 10-Year Waste-Free Campus Plan for Environmental Justice.”
 - b. co-Chairs requested a copy of this document be provided to the committee as a Google document for comment and input before the February 2026 meeting.
 - c. Pash invited committee members to attend virtual meetings on Fridays with members of the University, community, and BLARG (Brookhaven Landfill Action and Remediation Group).
 - d. Wilson said that the desired outcome should be a resolution that the Senate will approve, and requested a copy of the document for UEC consideration and editing.
 - e. Percival pointed out that the Senate is an advisory body and part of shared governance. The resolution should focus on recommendations and actionable items, not mandates.
 - f. Pash will send the committee a copy of the document.
 - g. Sellers proposes that UEC members will come to some Friday BLARG meetings, UEC will comment on a copy of the draft resolution, and will consider the next steps at the February meeting.
 - h. Gilday pointed out that funding is already very limited for sustainability projects on campus and may limit what can result from any resolution.
 - i. Sellers suggested that Teresa Deasy (Environmental Projects Technician, Auxiliary Services Association of Stony Brook University) and Erin Kluge (SBU Sustainability Coordinator) be brought in on discussions. Pash said she had been in contact with Kluge, Gilday suggested she contact Deasy too.
5. Stony Brook Ethical Investing Coalition.
 - a. Sam Lavin: Representative of the Graduate Student Organization (GSO). Coalition is trying to urge the Stony Brook Foundation (SBF) to make more ethical investing decisions. Coalition is interested in a representative from UEC attending a future meeting between the Coalition and representatives of SBF.

- b. Extensive discussion ensued.
- c. Gilday: do we have any insight about the portfolio that SBF has now? Pash: SUNY ESF has committed to responsible investing, we are advocating for SBU to follow this lead. Gilday: getting this information would be helpful.
- d. Wilson: for many years SBF has not only declined to provide any information like this to the Senate but has actively resisted any attempts to obtain it. SBF has taken the position that they are not a State Agency and not subject to Freedom of Information requests. University Senate has requested a seat on the SBF Board, that request has been repeatedly denied.
- e. Wilson: a similar effort, TIAA Divest, has tried to get TIAA-CREF to divest from fossil fuels, with little or no success.
- f. Sellers: transparency has been a continuing problem, but it would be a good thing to continue to push the issue, particularly in the area of environmentally responsible investing.
- g. Percival: do you have a meeting scheduled? Pash: not sure, hoping to strengthen the cause by recruiting partners.
- h. True: How far as SUNY ESF gone? Pash: ESF adopted an ethical investment policy last August, she will try to locate a link to the policy.
- i. Lavin: what is the endowment investment structure at ESF? Is it similar to SBU?
- j. True: we will wait for more information on this and put it on the agenda for February.

6. Smoking policy discussion.

- a. True and Sellers: Senate President Brenda Anderson has requested our participation in the discussion on whether an update on smoking policy is needed.
- b. Sellers: discussion triggered by vaping in a bathroom setting off a building fire alarm.
- c. Percival: Existing smoking policy appears to focus on tobacco. I can look
- d. Gonzalez: there is no practical enforcement of any smoking policy.
- e. True: the incident that precipitated the discussion was evacuation of the Library after vaping in a bathroom set off the fire alarms.
- f. Wilson: The current policy seems to regulate human behavior. Prohibiting smoking in a building is appropriate given the secondary health effects, prohibiting smoking by an individual in their car parked on campus is an overreach. Prohibition of smoking within a certain distance from a building entrance might be defensible, prohibition in the open air far from buildings does not seem appropriate. The state legalization of marijuana may also need to be taken into account. Even smokeless tobacco that has zero health effects on anyone but the user is prohibited - such a prohibition might not even survive a legal challenge. A reworking of the policy certainly seems in order, because of the environmental health effects UEC might have a role to play.
- g. Sellers: who would enforce such a policy? True, Gilday, Wilson: Risk Management / University Police. True: At another meeting, Head of Risk Management stated that they do not actively patrol for smokers.
- h. Gonzalez: smoking prohibition is enforced in dorms. Percival: smoking prohibition is enforced in classrooms. True: inside buildings smoking is a fire code violation so that would be enforced pretty strongly.
- i. Gilday: as of late 2025, although New York State has legalized marijuana, State operated colleges must still comply with Federal law. It is clear however that recreational cannabis use is common on campus.

- j. Percival: Committee consensus seems to be that smoking in buildings, near entrances and air intakes should be prohibited, smoking in other areas should not be restricted.
- k. True: Respond to the Senate Executive with our consensus.
- l. Sellers: We do not have to take the lead.
- m. True: We will share our consensus with members present, then send to Senate President.

7. Wheeled Vehicles and Pedestrian Safety report and recommendations.

- a. Draft report discussed,
- b. Minor edits proposed.
- c. Sellers moved and Akcakaya seconded to approve the edited draft, post on the Senate website, and send to the Senate Executive for consideration. The motion passed without objection.

8. Food-truck generator proposal.

- a. Draft report discussed.
- b. Minor edits proposed.
- c. Percival moved and Gilday seconded to approve the edited draft, post on the Senate website, and send to the Senate Executive for consideration. The motion passed without objection.

9. Virtual versus in-person work:

- a. True: A request was just sent to the Executive Committee to include the ARC survey questions from UEC's 2021 survey.
- b. Wilson: discussed alterations to the ask. Sellers accepted these as a friendly amendment and will pass them along to the Senate Executive. Asked for a notation as to whether the questions are identical to 2021 or new in 2025. Wilson: will send them as an email:

Questions:

1. (Unchanged from 2021) What is your mode of transportation to get to campus when you work on-site?
2. (Unchanged from 2021) What is your commute length in miles (one way)?
3. (Unchanged from 2021) What is your commute duration in minutes (one way)?
4. (New question) Could your job be performed remotely one or more days per week? (Yes / No, if no skip questions 5, 6, and 7).
5. (Unchanged from 2021) If you had the option to perform some portion of your job remotely, how many days per week could you do so and fully meet your academic/professional obligations?
6. (New question) If you have been performing some portion of your job remotely, how many days per week have you been doing so?
7. (New question) To what extent has your area / department / supervisor been supportive or unsupportive of remote work? Very supportive, somewhat supportive, neutral, somewhat unsupportive, very unsupportive).
8. (Unchanged from 2021) Comments regarding remote work.

- c. Lavin: We are planning to send a similar questionnaire to the graduate students.

10. Sustainability / C4E, raising SBU's environmental ranking.

- a. Gilday: no news, this can probably be removed from future agendas until there is news.

11. Old business not previously considered.

- a. Akcakaya: At the December Senate meeting, USB President Goldsmith answered a question about preserving the natural environment with a statement that the University has to grow with no qualifications, but that she would accept guidance from the Senate. Assemblywoman Rebecca Kassay recently met with Goldsmith and has expressed alarm about Goldsmith's attitude toward the natural environment on campus.
- b. Gonzalez: President's attitude is at odds with the University's stated ambition to be a climate leader.
- c. Wilson: At the President's welcome address she was all in on growth, with a stated goal of nearly doubling the size of the University over 10 years. Clearly the growth advocates got to her before the smart growth advocates. This is going to be an ongoing challenge. Stony Brook is already larger than every Ivy League college, why can't we grow in quality rather than in size?
- d. Percival: We should try to provide comments favoring smart growth and try to comment on Master Plan.
- e. True: Try to pull up past smart growth research. Wilson: we have a lot of background, I will try to dig up our past work.
- f. Akcakaya: We should try to build up not out. Building up is only more expensive if you deeply discount the value of open space.
- g. Sellers: Can Akcakaya prepare a first draft for consideration at the February meeting. Akcakaya: yes.
- h. Wilson: Perhaps this should be the battle we fight.

12. Next meeting will be February 11, 2026, Wednesday, at 12:30-2 pm

13. The meeting was adjourned at 2:05pm.

Respectfully submitted.

Thomas Wilson.

Wheeled Vehicles and Pedestrian Safety

A Report from the University Senate

University Environment Committee

11 November 2025 Draft

As campus became more crowded, and students increasingly adopt powered wheeled conveyances (scooters and e-bikes), the issue of pedestrian safety on campus has become important. Scooters and e-bikes can reach speeds of 20-30 mph, which can be unsafe in crowded conditions.

In the following, “wheeled conveyances” shall mean bicycles, scooters, and skateboards, whether powered or not, and all powered vehicles.

We recommend the following:

- The University designate pedestrian-only corridors (dismount zones) where riding of any wheeled conveyance is banned. These should include areas of high pedestrian density such as the academic mall, the Zebra Path, the areas around the SAC circle and the Union, and any walkways narrower than 4 feet wide.
- Powered wheeled conveyances shall obey speed limits on campus, and be limited to 10 mph when pedestrians are present.
- Riders of wheeled conveyances should be encouraged to wear bright clothing, especially at night, and to use audible signals when approaching pedestrians from behind.
- Pedestrians must share the designated bike paths with wheeled conveyances, by keeping to the right and not walking more than 2 abreast.
- In the absence of bike paths (*e.g.*, on Campus Drive, Engineering Drive, Gym Road, Lake Drive, Stadium Road, and Shirley Kenny Drive), wheeled conveyances shall have right of way on all roadways on University property. Signage shall be erected to that effect.

_____ Adopted by the University Environment Committee

_____ Adopted by the University Senate

Food Trucks in the SAC Circle
A Report from the University Senate
University Environment Committee
11 November 2025 Draft

In the past year a number of food trucks have taken up residence in the SAC circle. It is clear that there is demand for their services, but their presence comes at an environmental cost.

The food trucks are powered by gas generators, which are noisy and polluting. The noise pollution and the smells detract from the ambience in and near the SAC circle, especially during warmer weather when students, staff, and faculty utilize the outdoor tables near ESS and the SAC.

Even though the food trucks also detract from the aesthetics of the campus, we recognize that they are likely to remain as part of the landscape until new campus infrastructure and more dining services can be constructed. But in the mean time, it is possible to reduce, or even eliminate, the need for generators and their resulting pollution, by providing electrical power for the trucks.

The University Environment Committee requests that the University upgrade their electrical system so that the food trucks can be powered by university electrical feeds.

_____ Adopted by the University Environment Committee

_____ Adopted by the University Senate