

Recent Activities & Recommendations of the AU Energy & Environment Task Force

Presentation to the
Auburn University Senate

January 10, 2012

- Appointed by Dr. John Mason (AU VPR)
- Charged with development of strategic initiative that enhances energy and environment research at Auburn
 - Broadly promote faculty engagement and participation
 - Strategic initiative to increase externally sponsored research ---> scholarly activities
- Task Force Membership:
 - Chris Roberts, Chair (CoE)
 - Kelly D. Alley (CLA)
 - William D. Batchelor (CoAg)
 - Lori G. Eckhardt (SFWS)
 - John W. Feminella (COSAM)
 - Joseph B. Hanna (CoB)
 - B. Graeme Lockaby (SFWS)
 - Russell Muntefering (Senate)
 - Steven E. Taylor (CoAg)
 - Ralph Zee (CoE)
 - Carl A. Pinkert (Ex-Officio)

Initial E&E Task Force Activities

- Carefully examined previous E&E Review Committee Report
 - Largely agree with previous recommendations
- Task Force held 8 meetings to assess current E&E capacity and identified gaps that if filled would enable growth
- Reviewed ongoing research in each college – performed holistic review
- Considered AU centers/institutes/offices to identify linkages
 - Found truly cross-cutting areas and rich opportunities for campus-wide involvement

Initial E&E Task Force Activities (cont'd)

- e.g. determined that recent investment in bioenergy has paid dividends through significant new external grants
- Additional energy opportunities at AU include: solar, nuclear, efficiency, others
- AU environmental opportunities include: forest sustainability, water resource management, water quality and modeling, geospatial, pollution prevention, climate, others
- Delivered detailed report and recommendations to Dr. Mason

Key Points and Recommendations

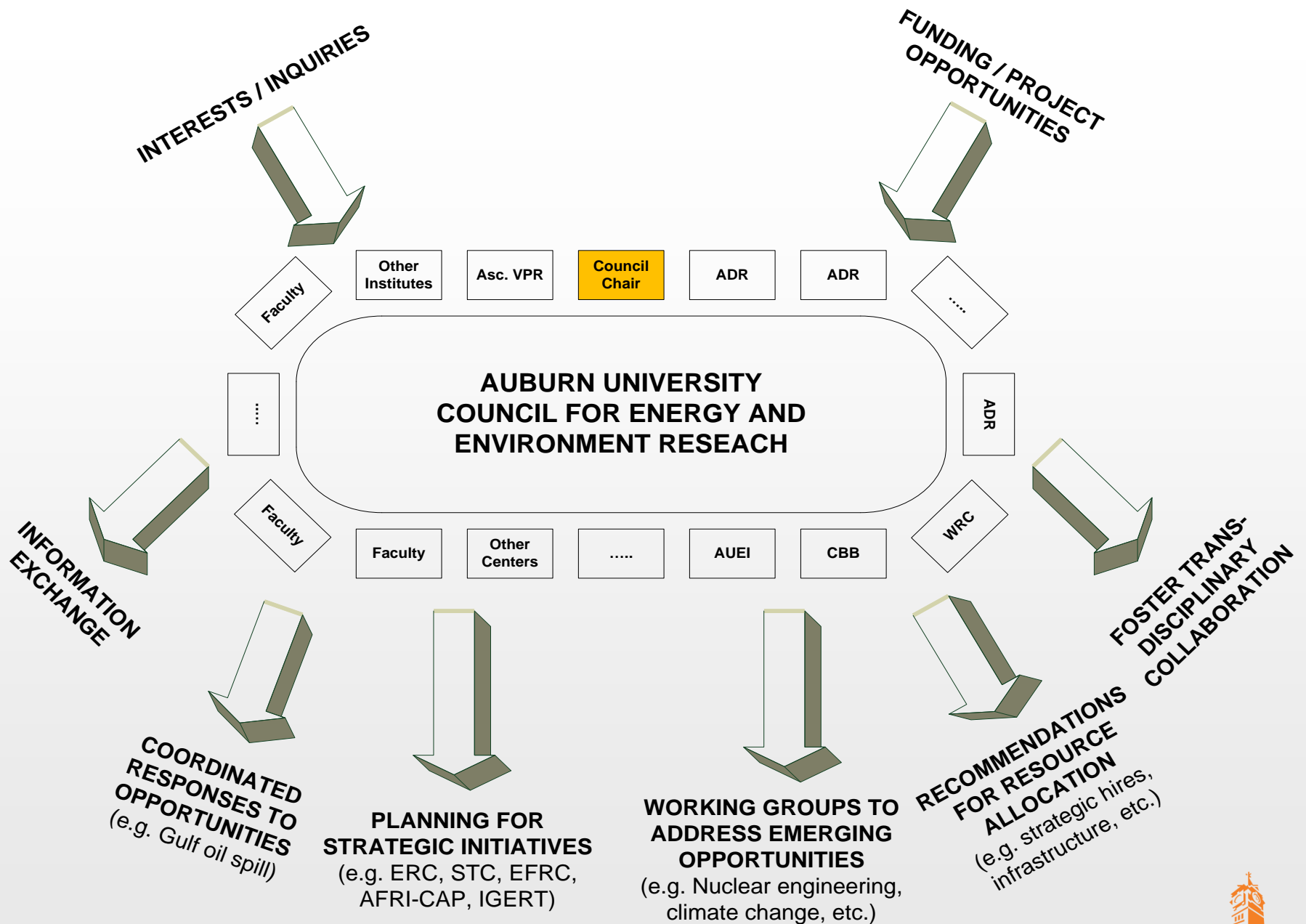
- E&E Task Force identified a critical need for a faculty-led coordinating body to facilitate research so as to be inclusive of entire university
- Task Force recommends creation of faculty-led ***AU Council for Energy & Environment Research***

Desired attributes of ***AU Council for Energy & Environment Research***

- Serve as faculty-led coordinating and strategic planning body for new initiatives in E&E areas
- Focus placed on competitive responses to funding opportunities
- Foster the development of collaborative research in order to effectively pursue “Big Science” funding trends
- Charged with balancing competing E&E priorities

Desired attributes of ***AU Council for Energy & Environment Research*** (Cont'd)

- Membership open to Associate Deans, Center, Institute and Office Directors, Faculty, ACES, Sustainability, Senate Rep, etc..
- Will work in a roundtable fashion
- A Chair and Exec Cmte will be appointed to coordinate activities with OVPR
- Anticipated to evolve into one/two institutes with full time faculty Director(s)



Recommendations for E&E programs previously associated with NRMDI

- Center for Bioenergy and Bioproducts
- Water Resources Center
- Auburn University Environmental Institute

Center for Bioenergy and Bioproducts

- Established with one-time funds --> developed unique lab resources
- Considerable traction in extramural funding
- Recommend to continue to support this center
- Task Force recommends that BSEN should remain host – report jointly to VPR and COA/AAES

Water Resources Center

- Established with one-time funds --> focus on Ag water management, irrigation, etc..
- Task Force recommends that COA/AAES continue to host
- Recommend that focus be directed towards Ag water management and utilization
- Recommend to continue to support this center

Auburn University Environmental Institute (AUEI)

- Had been long standing institute at AU for broad spectrum of environment research
- AUEI temporarily moved under WRC director
- E&E Task Force recommends that AUEI be reconstituted
- Needs new leadership and focus
- Needs support/funding sufficient to be competitive

Specific Recommendations for new AUEI

- Conduct open search for full-time world-class faculty director of AUEI
- Conduct open forum for interested faculty to define focus areas and scope
- Recommend that AUEI report to OVPR in a transition period until fully established

Questions ?