3/28/22

**EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH**: Cynthia Klein-Banai, Director of Sustainability at UIC

**CONCISE SUMMARY:**

On 3/28/22, the team corresponded through email with Dr. Cynthia Klein-Banai, who is the Director of Sustainability at UIC. We inquired about the plans for the energy transition at UIC and she provided us with valuable insight on the University’s current initiatives. While the energy situations at UIUC and UIC are different, there is crossover between many aspects.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. **With the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050, what are the main technologies that you can see being implemented on campus to achieve this goal?**
2. We will either electrify our campus through conversion to systems like Heat pump VRFs or
3. Utilize renewable Hydrogen as a fuel in our co-generation plants
4. We can also utilize some geothermal energy.
5. We are initiating an Energy and Carbon study which will make specific recommendations for the next 10 years.

1. **Looking through the CAIP portal, it seems that Strategy 1.0: Energy Efficiency and Conservation and Strategy 2.0: Renewable Energy Sources align closely with the contents of the plan we are creating. Do you think one of these strategies is more important than the other, or is there one that UIC is currently putting more effort into?**
2. Both are necessary as energy efficiency can’t get us to zero carbon/carbon neutrality
3. Renewable electricity procurement will make a bigger dent in our emissions faster and require less effort overall than executing energy efficiency programs. However, energy efficiency programs save money and renewable energy may come at a slight cost.

1. **Within Strategy 1.0, is there any specific technology that the university plans to implement in buildings to increase energy efficiency/decrease energy use? Additionally, would it be possible to share any updates on the Green Revolving Fund?**
2. Building automation and setbacks will go a long way across campus but most buildings need to be looked at individually. The most important thing is to be able to measure and verify success and show the savings.
3. Utilities and Energy Services received approval to initiate a $1 million GRF this year.

1. **Within Strategy 2.0, for the onsite PPA solar rooftop generation, will this be implemented on existing buildings, or only on newly constructed structures?**

We hope both. If the Illinois Power Authority accepts an edit to the Renewable Resources Procurement Plan that allows private utilities (which is what we have with Prairieland Energy) to participate in the Adjustable Block Program, we will likely be able to do some projects that will be cost-beneficial to campus on existing buildings.

1. **What do you believe will be the most difficult part of the clean energy transition on the UIC campus?**

The existing infrastructure – we have high levels, nearly $1 billion, of deferred maintenance so we can’t just tweak our energy systems we need to replace them and that requires funding beyond what we can recoup in energy savings. Also, our power plants rely on natural gas. They are a good interim solution if we can utilize our combined heat and power, but we can’t become carbon neutral with natural gas as an energy source. It’s the same story we have nationally and globally.