Centering Environmental Sustainability at the Rose Library: an addendum to the *This Rose is Green*

In 2019, Dorothy Waugh organized this committee through the creation *This Rose is Green: Embracing Environmental Sustainability in the Rose Library*. This report set forth Rose Library's responsibility to environmental sustainability based on our own strategic goals and set forth a plan to:
- Create a culture of sustainability,
- Develop green habits, and
- Build resiliency.

In *This Rose is Green*, Waugh also acknowledged "the triple bottom line," a combination of social, environmental, and economic factors that are the link between social responsibility and environmental sustainability.

Per the initial instance of *This Rose is Green*:

- Rose Library is uniquely positioned to develop environmental literacy among our user communities and has already identified justice-centered professional practice as a priority of our work especially as environmental justice continues to be the most affecting issue of our time. The Rose Library cannot aspire to justice-centered professional practice without addressing the environmental impact of our work.

- Professional discourse supports the assertion that ongoing and considered response to our environmental impact is necessary to meet our professional obligations as a trusted and ethical resource to the public good. While this response focuses on storing our physical and digital collections, Rose Library must not fall into the trap of creating more efficient models just increase collection and negate the effect of those sustainable choices. We must be wary of viewing success in terms of growth. This new mindset must be grounded in a firm understanding of the responsibilities that we bear to our collections and our communities.

- Rose Library should understand that to create a viable environmental sustainability plan, it must be economically sustainable. The cost benefits associated with many environmental practices have long been lauded as a motivator for going green, but there is an initial buy-in that must be overcome.

After three years of moving environmental sustainability forward at that Rose Library, it is time review the Rose Library Environmental Sustainability Committee's (RLESC) direction to encourage continued momentum.

Current Initiatives and Goals
Since 2019, the RLESC has looked for ways to increase Rose Library's environmental sustainability. Because there was little involvement between the committee and Rose Library Leadership (RLL), smaller, more individual-focused projects were undertaken. This is not to discount the work and the impact of the projects complete, but RLESC broke with the initial recommendations of *This Rose is Green*. Over the past two years, RLESC has worked on individual or socially focused projects, centering the education and training on staff members. However, to make an impactful change, the

RLESC must look to operational projects and decision-making centered on the Rose Library. The goal should not be for the RLESC to start and work on projects; it should be to ensure that, at every step in every workflow, Rose Library staff are asking whether this is the most environmentally sustainable option. The updated projects slated for 2020-2021 show a renewed attention to changes at the organizational level that will make increased impact to Rose Library's carbon footprint.

Completed projects include:
- Working with CCR to ensure that all events held in Rose Library are certified zero-waste (CCR already has a system for zero-waste events)
- Creating relationships with OSI and Sustainability representatives within the Emory University Libraries
- Completion of the card reader access to the stairs behind the elevators between the ninth and tenth floors
- Green Office certification at the Silver level.
- Eliminating staff lunches to reduce unseen environmental impact
- Read/Act Program implementation for education on personal sustainable options
- Off-site/zoom capable meetings included in onboarding documentation
- Report on Rose Library's work from home survey

In-process projects include:
- Complete Sustainable Purchasing policy
- Plan for the Resilient Communities grant programming, and if the program is not funding, to create programming that would mimic this project
- Revamp the Read/Act program to be more participatory and aimed at changes for the organization
- Create Rose Library Climate Action Plan
- Identify options for reducing digital footprint and limiting digital storage carbon footprint
- Compiling a sustainability curriculum for Rose Library Leadership

Identified projects for 2021:
- Adding zero waste requirement language to documents for using Rose Library spaces
- Adding sustainability language to the collection development documentation (one-pager)/operational impact statement
- "Energy tree," to ensure that all electronics on the ninth and tenth floors are shut down and unplugged every evening.
- Continue identifying telework opportunities for Rose Library staff
- Work with Outreach Archivist and Campus and Community Relations (CCR) to identify a social media strategy to highlight Rose Library work
- Review all workflows to identify sustainable options

In turn, the RLESC is looking to create an overall proposal for Rose Library to meet the goals established by Emory University, and for this to happen, RLESC requires a commitment from RLL to move forward. The following points are outside the abilities of any member of or the whole of the RLESC and require leadership participation.

Identify a change metric:
The triple bottom line includes social, environmental, and economic aspects. The Rose Library staff have already shown a dedication to environmental sustainability, so the key component missing in this metric is economic. Studies show that sustainable options are becoming more cost effective than obsolete or fossil fuel components, but there is always an upfront cost to making a change. RLL will need to agree to the $% change whatever that might be.

- Ensure that no single use plastic is purchased by Rose Library even if this means we are responsible for washing dishes.
- Identify more sustainable digital storage options since AWS is not transparent and the current server sites we use are coal powered.
- Identifying recycled and reused options for all supplies, relying primarily on reused materials.
- Where can we increase the allowable operational costs to consider more sustainable options?
  - Should this number be identified as a $%?
  - Should RLESC be given a budget and would that be a percentage of the RL budget?

Creating an assessment for success
Over the past year, any forward movement was success, but the committee needs to identify how Rose Library can be a leader in environmental sustainability. RLESC should identify current levels of waste and energy consumption with help from OSI. This is likely to require Emory University Library buy-in since the Rose Library shares only three floors in the Woodruff Library[1]. Currently, there is no statistic in which to gauge success or failure.

Current goals of Emory University[2] include:
- Diversion of 95% of non-construction waste from municipal waste landfills by 2025.
- Reduction of all municipal landfill waste generated during university events to zero by 2020.
- Stop the use of plastic bottles by 2025
- Reduction of energy usage by 50% from 2005 numbers.

A Rose Library Climate Action Plan is one of the goals for the upcoming year, and that document should direct the rest of the goals for the year, if not for a span of years. This document should be aspirational, and we should identify plans to meet these goals as best we can. RLL should be involved in the creation (or, at least, the approval of the plan).

Every goal set should move the Rose Library in line with the Emory University's strategic goals. This is currently difficult to gauge as most of the goals deal in change numbers, and as explained earlier, Rose Library does not have current statistics. However, once these numbers are identified, the Rose Library strategic plan must include this objective. In cases where there is not a change metric, Rose Library should plan to meet the university's goal.

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[1] Current chair, Laura Starratt, is working to create a EUL Environmental Sustainability Committee. This will allow RLESC to work with the library-wide group to identify these numbers.
[2] Taken from the Emory Sustainability Vision and Strategic Plan