

Higher Education Working Group: 2020 Year in Review

January 2021

Introduction

As 2020 comes to a close, we reflect on the importance of taking action to mitigate the impacts of climate change on community health and embrace planning that prepares us to weather the unexpected.

Despite the many changes and adjustments spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic this year, the HEWG has contributed to high-impact work through collaboration and using collective resources of the member institutions. The working group's accomplishments and ongoing work is summarized in this review.

The HEWG convened in person in February 2020 to kick off the implementation of the GRC HEWG's 5-year Strategic Plan. Since then, three task forces - representing the first three goals in the Strategic Plan - have been engaged remotely to implement the plan, working closely to align the work with the City of Boston's goals. As co-chairs of the HEWG, we represent the final task force - Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan. Working with the Green Ribbon Commission, we have worked to coordinate the group's efforts with the aim of broadening and accelerating the impact of the HEWG in Boston.

Higher Education Working Group Co-Chairs

Jaclyn Olsen, Harvard University
Dennis Carlberg, Boston University

Resources

[Boston Green Ribbon Commission: High Education Working Group](#)

[HEWG 2020 Strategic Plan](#)

[GRC Strategic Plan 2021-2026](#)

[City of Boston 2019 Climate Action Plan](#)

Carbon Free Boston Reports

- [Technical Reports](#)
- [Social Equity Report 2019](#)

Overview of HEWG 2020 Strategic Plan



GOAL 1 SUPPORT CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION ACROSS THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

- STRATEGY 1.1** Provide climate leadership opportunities and incentives for institution-wide carbon-neutral buildings and campus operations
- STRATEGY 1.2** Set sector-wide carbon reduction goals, with periodic targets and rewards that align with the City's climate action plan
- STRATEGY 1.3** Share information and resources with higher education institutions to support the sector in creating and implementing climate mitigation and resilience planning



GOAL 2 FACILITATE COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH THAT LEVERAGES THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR'S CAPABILITIES TO PROMOTE SOLUTIONS FOR EQUITABLE CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND MITIGATION IN THE GREATER BOSTON AREA

- STRATEGY 2.1** Develop a formal cross-institution research collaborative to inform the implementation of the City's climate action plan
- STRATEGY 2.2** Create a research partnership between the City and the HEWG members to facilitate living-lab research with the City on CAP implementation
- STRATEGY 2.3** Assess carbon-neutral solutions for transportation in the region



GOAL 3 TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE TO OTHER SECTORS TO ACCELERATE CHANGE FOR EQUITABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF CLIMATE MITIGATION AND RESILIENCE

- STRATEGY 3.1** Provide workshops and share resources within and across key sectors to accelerate climate mitigation and resilience
- STRATEGY 3.2** Collaborate with cultural institutions, commercial building owners, and the healthcare sector on tools for building energy and GHG data tracking and reporting, as well as strategies for increasing resilience planning and implementation
- STRATEGY 3.3** Effectively communicate the urgency of climate change and opportunities for scaling climate mitigation and resilience progress



GOAL 4 DEVELOP THE HEWG AS A HIGH-FUNCTIONING COLLECTIVE OF DIVERSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CROSS-SECTORIAL IMPACT FOR THE CITY'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- STRATEGY 4.1** Implement a shared governance model and working group process
- STRATEGY 4.2** Hire a HEWG coordinator
- STRATEGY 4.3** Expand the engagement of HEWG within the higher education sector in Boston

2020 HEWG Participants

 Goal 1 Task Force	 Goal 2 Task Force	 Goal 3 Task Force
Lisa Tornatore BU	Jennie Stephens Northeastern	Nicole Morell MIT
Jacob Glickel Northeastern	Jacqueline Ashmore BU	Maria Cimilluca Northeastern
David Timmons UMass Boston	Tina Woolston Tufts	Erin Tighe Harvard
Steve Lanou MIT	Nitsan Shakked Tufts	Kristy Kime Emerson
Jason Barcus Harvard	Laura Corlin Tufts	Donna Brescia Emerson
Mary Fischer Brandeis	Joan Fitzgerald Northeastern	Duncan Pollock Emerson
<p align="center">KEY</p> <p>Bold indicates task force liaisons * Indicates co-chair</p>	Jaclyn Olsen * Harvard	Dennis Carlberg * BU
	John Cleveland Green Ribbon Commission	Amy Longworth Green Ribbon Commission

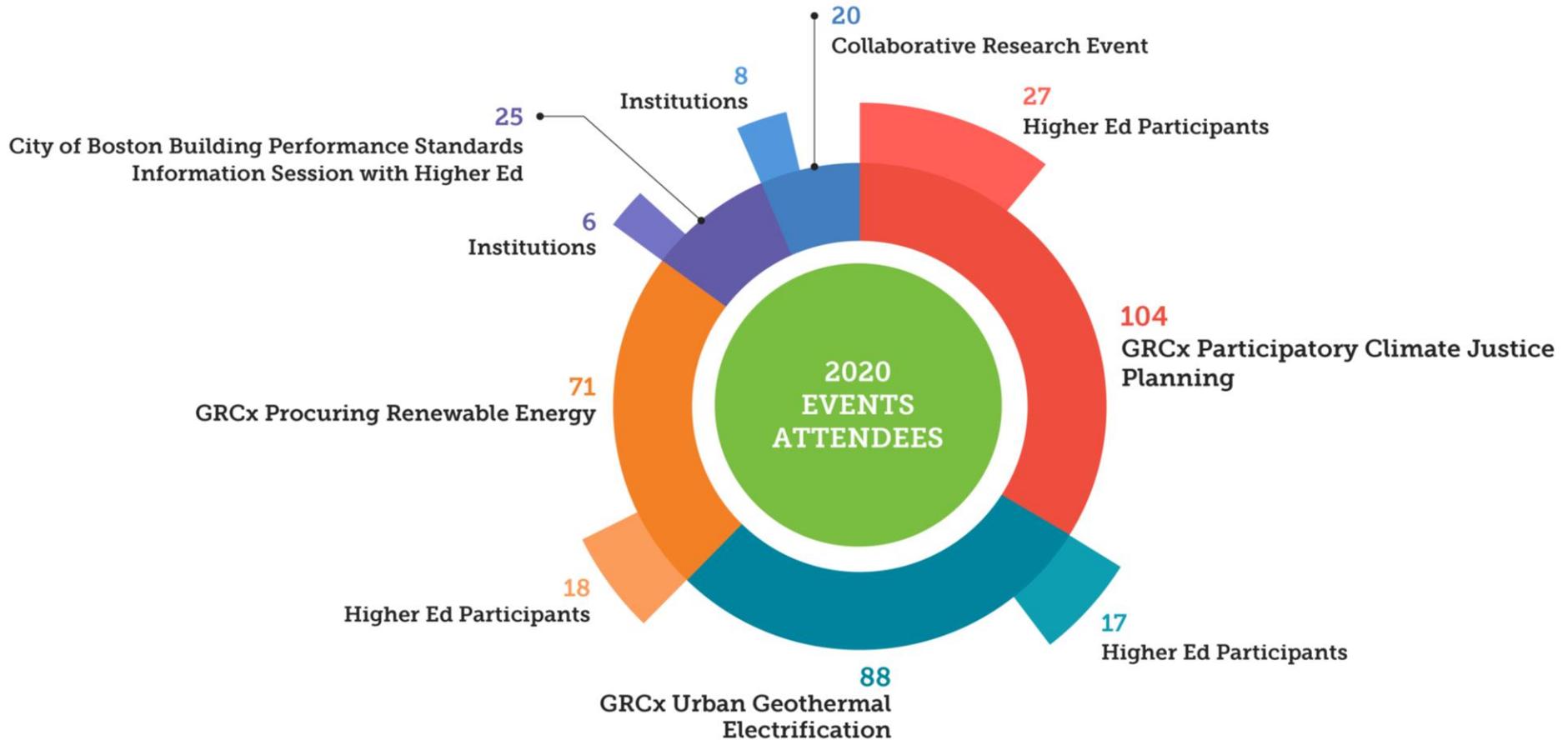
2020 By The Numbers: Working Groups

Despite the global pandemic, the HEWG's task force groups have carried out robust activities to implement the Five-Year Strategic Plan in 2020. Each task force group is focused on carrying out the first three goals of the Strategic Plan.

The task force groups are organized under a new leadership structure which aims to develop the HEWG as a high-functioning collective of diverse institutions with cross-sectoral impact on the City's CAP implementation.



2020 By The Numbers: Events & Participation



2020 By The Numbers: Baseline Interviews

To better understand and support sector-wide needs, a series of baseline interviews were conducted under the leadership of the Goal 1 task force. Expanding outreach to additional schools in the Boston-metro region supports the higher education sector connect with the GRC, build relationships among themselves and the on-going GRC members, and have discussion about what kinds of support would be most useful to them.



TASK FORCE 1: Support climate action planning and implementation across the higher education sector



Strategy	Description	Highlights
1.1	Provide climate leadership opportunities and incentives for institution-wide carbon-neutral buildings and campus operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducting baseline interviews with higher education institutions in the Boston metro region• Planning an introductory event in Spring 2021 to expand the HEWG network to include a set of institutions that have not historically been involved
1.2	Set sector-wide carbon reduction goals, with periodic targets and rewards that align with the City's climate action plan	
1.3	Share information and resources with higher education institutions to support the sector in creating and implementing climate mitigation and resilience planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compiling case studies and best practices from universities, including information on climate justice planning initiatives.

TASK FORCE 1: Support climate action planning and implementation across the higher education sector



		Completion scale	DESIGN					IMPLEMENT					MEASURE						
			1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
GOAL 1	Strategy 1.1	Climate leadership opportunities	█	█	█	█													
	Strategy 1.2	Sector wide carbon reduction goals	█																
	Strategy 1.3	Share information and resources	█	█	█														

STRATEGIC PLAN PHASES



DESIGN

FLESHING OUT
PLAN
DETAILS



IMPLEMENT

OPERATIONALIZING
COMPLETING
TASKS



MEASURE

CHECKING
REFINING
IMPROVING
EVALUATING

TASK FORCE 2: Facilitate collaborative research that leverages the higher education sector's capabilities to promote solutions for equitable climate resilience and mitigation in the greater Boston area.



Strategy	Description	Highlights
2.1	Develop a formal cross-institution research collaborative to inform the implementation of the City’s climate action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted a Collaborative Research Event with over 20 researchers from the Boston area in July 2020 • Supported GRCx event in October 2020 on Participatory Climate Justice by Joan Fitzgerald from Northeastern
2.2	Create a research partnership between the City and the HEWG members to facilitate living-lab research with the City on CAP implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing three-part series on the Past, Present, Future on how to build an equitable, healthy, climate resilient future for Boston for January – March 2021.
2.3	Assess carbon-neutral solutions for transportation in the region	

TASK FORCE 2: Facilitate collaborative research that leverages the higher education sector's capabilities to promote solutions for equitable climate resilience and mitigation in the greater Boston area.



		Completion scale	DESIGN					IMPLEMENT					MEASURE								
			1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5				
GOAL 2	Strategy 2.1	Formal cross-institution research collaborative	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█						█	█				
	Strategy 2.2	Research partnership with the City	█	█																	
	Strategy 2.3	Assess transportation solutions	█																		

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TASK FORCE 3: Transfer knowledge to other sectors to accelerate change for equitable implementation of climate mitigation and resilience



Strategy	Description	Highlights
3.1	Provide workshops and share resources within and across key sectors to accelerate climate mitigation and resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and marketing support of GRCx series • Supported an event in September 2020 with the City on the Building Emissions Reporting and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO) • Utilizing attendance to track institutions through a conversion funnel • Identifying topics accessible and helpful to all levels
3.2	Collaborate with cultural institutions, commercial building owners, and the healthcare sector on tools for building energy and GHG data tracking and reporting, as well as strategies for increasing resilience planning and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning to host a knowledge sharing event on how universities can engage with climate change related legislation
3.3	Effectively communicate the urgency of climate change and opportunities for scaling climate mitigation and resilience progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to establish HEWG as a foundational resource • Learning from experiences of representatives from Healthcare Without Harm (HCWH) • Leveraging government and public affairs office for best practices and connections • Understanding best role of higher ed in policy

TASK FORCE 3: Transfer knowledge to other sectors to accelerate change for equitable implementation of climate mitigation and resilience



		Completion scale	DESIGN					IMPLEMENT					MEASURE				
			1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
GOAL 3	Strategy 3.1	Provide workshops & share resources	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█		█	█			
	Strategy 3.2	Collaborate across sectors	█	█	█												
	Strategy 3.3	Effectively communicate	█	█	█	█											

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