Faculty Senate Speaker Susan McIntosh served as moderator for the Faculty Forum on the Energy and the Environment Initiative. Approximately fifty faculty members attended the meeting, which was held in Sewall Hall, room 309.

McIntosh welcomed the group and explained the role of the Faculty Senate in the Rice Initiatives. She said that after the original task forces selected by the provost finished their work, the Senate’s Working Group on the Rice Initiatives initiated peer review of the white papers. McIntosh thanked Deputy Speaker Tom Killian for chairing the working group, and she named the other members of this group: Matthias Henze, Matteo Pasquali, Dale Sawyer, Robin Sickles, and Moshe Vardi. McIntosh also thanked the task force members for producing the white papers, and she thanked the faculty members who reviewed and submitted comments.

McIntosh stated that one concern raised by reviewers was regarding the level of investment or additional research faculty that will be required for success; there is no quick path to pre-eminence. She also stated that funding for the Initiatives was a reoccurring question. McIntosh said that the $100 million dollar figure stated by Provost George McLendon as needed for the Rice Initiatives will not be funded by his office; fund-raising thus lies ahead for those who wish to be involved. She said that the next steps in the process are to refine, enhance, and/or recast the proposals so that they include the best ideas and all faculty members who are interested in participating in the Rice Initiatives.

As a starting point for discussion, McIntosh showed the group comments that faculty members had made after reviewing the Energy and the Environment white paper. Provost McLendon was then asked to address the group. He stated that the Rice Initiatives began as a bottom-up endeavor and would remain so in the next steps. He said he would like for workshops to follow this forum, in which faculty leaders are identified; people who are committed to go “all-in” for their proposed project. He also said it is important to find private sector partners.

McLendon mentioned a proposal from the Bioscience and Human Health Initiative. He said that quantitative biology is an area where Rice could excel by combining biology and physics, two areas where Rice has existing strengths. He also said that some people outside of Rice in biophysics were contacted, and it was discovered that the best thing to do was to move multiple people from an unnamed university in California to Rice. McLendon said it will cost very little to bring these individuals to Rice because outside sources are excited about the proposal and will provide funding. He said that a macro-economist who works on energy may come to Rice, too.
The assembled faculty members offered comments and asked questions of Provost McLendon, which are summarized below.

- Although only a small niche exists for non-carbon energy sources, it is not wise to shut the door completely on ideas that do not include fossil fuels; the non-carbon component has not been stressed enough. McLendon expressed concern in finding external partners while leading with technologies that are under-developed.
- We need to keep in mind what we can do with carbon to create systems of energy. For example, thermo-electric power for waste heat recovery is not in the report.
- Energy storage, renewables combined with traditional sources of energy, and using fossil fuels better are all items that traditional oil companies are already working on for the short-term. It is important to have a proposal that looks at a 30 to 50-year time frame.
- Although it is important to Humanists that Rice does “great” things, they do not wish to be included in a support or token role. Instead, allow the Energy Initiative to be Energy, and do not insert Humanists in an area outside of their field. McLendon suggested reading *Cultures of Energy*, which was reviewed enthusiastically by the Mellon Foundation.
- Energy may be a topic that people care about personally but not on a professional level; we all have a vested interest in health and toxicity, for example. It was suggested that Humanists find ways to have an impact.
- There may be individuals who are willing to get a worthwhile project going, but they are not willing to go “all-in.”
- The transition from fossil fuels will affect Houston more than anywhere else. Humanists and Social Scientists could have a role in the future development of our city.
- The report was weak on the environmental side (Rice Initiative on Energy and Environment).
- Students are interested in the environment; perhaps they should be recruited.
- The public receives conflicting messages regarding energy production. For example, windmills create energy, but they kill birds. It is important for scientists to learn how to communicate.
- One proposal called “Ideas” proposes a dialogue for exchange among the arts and sciences at Rice; a small campus whose faculty and students have a broad range of interests.

McIntosh asked the group for a mechanism for putting these ideas together. McLendon suggested a day-long workshop be held for those who are committed to spending an entire day. He said he will send an email to the entire faculty inviting interested parties to attend. In addition, he said lunch and childcare will be provided during the day of the workshop.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.