President’s Universitywide Sustainability Committee Minutes
June 12, 2008

Present: Casey Barrons, Dave Dakin, Paul Farber, Danielle Harik, Pat Holton, Carl Newton, Carolyn Noack, Paul Pancellia, Chris Pyzik, Brandi Pritchett, Pete Strazdas, Harold Glasser

Board of Trustees Room, BHC

• Minutes from 5/22 were approved unanimously.

• Quick Updates:
  >>AASHE membership—AASHE membership should be live and all resources available to WMU staff & students (password details were distributed in an earlier email).

  >> Update from Paula Davis—Kalamazoo Gazette—Glasser will meet in July to discuss progress with sustainability initiatives on campus and publicity for the committee’s work. Please send Glasser any ideas of projects/initiatives that you would like Paula to visit/ know about.

  >> Rinker approved a collaborative demonstration project spearheaded by KVCC (Theo Syris) to build a “Concentric Circles Garden,” possibly on the Stadium Drive Apartments property. Contact Glasser if you are interested in this or other food/gardening project’s and he will get you in touch with the group.

  >> Media exposure—We need to explore the publicity question in more detail—how we should document and share publicity opportunities, in particular. Recently Steve Chester, MDEQ, was here to gather information on the windmill and PV array, as part of a LEED Platinum DEQ building project in Bay City. Should this type of activity involve the website or other media? How should we be involving/utilizing University Relations (Cheryl Roland). There was a consensus that the sustainability website should be a direct link off the WMU home page.

  >> Green Guide—Casey has been reviewing the GVSU Green Guide (pretty good) and a host of other campus green guides. She will continue the process of developing a contextually appropriate Green Guide for our campus that draws on these outside and existing resources, which will be tested by students and peer reviewed.

• Update on the ACUPCC National Conference in Grand Rapids, MI (June 5-6):
  WMU was represented by Dave Dakin, Pete Strazdas, and Harold Glasser. Casey Barrons was a student assistant for the conference! [Harold will send out an email next Thursday to AASHE about our concerns and needs from WMU] (HG did follow up with Tony Cortese directly, but hasn’t heard anything back yet). President Oyelaran from Kalamazoo College has been meeting with President Dunn about signing the PCC.

Pete Strazdas: Ray Anderson from Interface was conference keynote speaker. Pete found his presentation about fortune 500 company incorporating sustainability enlightening. He was most intrigued by Michael Crow (President of ASU) and CFO from University of Florida. Some university officials were gloating about their initiatives and some were sharing best practices. Most danced around curriculum issues. Facilities are relatively easy ground for sustainability.
There was a general sense from all those attending that the conference didn’t hit on the real and deep challenges of the PCC. Much more effort and sophistication needs to go into discussing the issues and finding solutions.

Dave Dakin: Attention getter was potential for external funding. We need to explore how to go about pursuing those resources? Grant from IRS was a surprising funding source. Clinton Foundation grants are tied to the PCC. (Is WMU targeting any of these resources?)

Harold: There are serious concerns regarding the possibility of achieving climate neutrality and the role of carbon offsets. Glasser encourages all committee members to look at ASU sustainability initiatives. David Orr has commented that we have been “teaching students how to become better vandals of the Earth”. Michael Crow argues that colleges and universities have a higher responsibility to help solve critical local and world problems and enhance quality of life for everyone. Climate neutrality is a moral issue for him. Harold spoke with Crow about ASU’s effort to create a core sustainability requirement. Crow agreed to send details on their process and the content of their course. Harold suggested a plan to cap emissions and then incrementally reduce emissions.

The conclusion was that the PUSC should continue to explore the issues associated with signing the ACUPCC. We should carefully follow what other schools are doing and review the state of the art in reporting and GHG reduction on campuses as well as stay abreast of the offset issue. At the present time, we simply do not have enough data regarding implementation and HE institutions’ ability to meet the climate neutrality requirements to recommend that Dr. Dunn should sign.

Discussion on Higher Education legislation (from the ACUPCC Conference):
The following discussion drew on the presentation by Jim Elder.

Strazdus raised the issue that while more sustainability legislation has been appearing the issue is resource allocation. There is still a possibility of some money. There will be elements of our report—some high impact initiatives—that will need money. Pete suggests that we get ahead of curve and set a plan of attack for funding those resources.

Dave: NIH funding has dropped. Most federal agencies preparing for a democratic president.

Strazdus is a signatory of the Kalamazoo Alliance (Chamber of commerce, airport, WMU, city of Kalamazoo, and City of Portage). Pete is going to Washington D.C. in a few weeks. He plans to stop at EPA and DOE office. Looking for granting opportunities that he feels this region deserves. University Presidents (ACUPCC) have made an alliance with U.S. Conference of Mayors and AASHE. Now suggesting more alliances with architects and facilities officers.

Harold will work with Jim Elder to make sure a short discussion on the state of federal sustainability legislation and funding appears in our Strategic Sustainability Initiatives Options Document.

Discussion on website:
Website needs formal structured reporting. There was a sense that we need someone to work alongside Sherry Rowland to assist with publicity. Sustainability needs to be on the forefront of peoples minds in a cross disciplinary/cross our roles on campus context—not in silos. Sharing
information and enhancing communication throughout the university on sustainability is imperative for our success. The new test web link is:

wwwtest.wmich.edu/sustainability

WMU Sponsorship of the SBF Conference in November on Our Campus?
Glasser raised the issue that several PUSC members had asked about WMU sponsorship of the upcoming SBF meeting that will be at the Fetzer Center, November 13th. Strazdas suggested that WMU leverage funds from business partners to have as many students as possible go for free. As a pool, WMU could gather vendors that do sustainability-related activities and get them to pitch in sponsorships. There was a motion by Noack to have Glasser discuss Strazdas’s suggestion with Rinker to Approved, unanimously. (Glasser followed up with Rinker on this matter and Strazdas will be contacting Audrey Wieranga of the SBF organizing committee to see if they would entertain the idea and if so, he will be pursuing the idea of pooling corporate sponsorships in WMU’s name.)

Review of Initiatives—Prioritization—Homework:
We decided on one main criteria for prioritizing the list if initiatives that Glasser has sorted into four main four categories: IMPACT (overall potential to stimulate meaningful and significant progress on sustainability on campus). Two other supplementary criteria were decided on, EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION and COST.

Reminder: to everyone to please review the website regularly for updates, changes and suggestions. We hope to go live July 1.

Our next Meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 24. Glasser will be sending detailed follow-up emails with specifics and full documentation of the initiative review/prioritizations procedures that we agreed to.