President’s Universitywide Sustainability Committee Minutes

Minutes of 20th August 2009
Room 204, Bernhard Center

Members present: Casey Barrons, Samantha Cooper, Paul Farber, Judy Gipper, Patricia Holton, Carolyn Noack, Paul Pancell, Christopher Pyzik, Lowell Rinker, Gini Pikaart, John Schmitt, Pete Strazdas, Barbara Wygant

Guests: Energy Management Outreach Coordinator of Maintenance Services Evan Escamilla

Vice Chair Paul Pancell called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m in lieu of Chair Harold Glasser’s absence.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Acceptance of the Agenda

A motion was made by Rinker and seconded by Noack to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes of July 2009

A motion was made by Rinker and supported by Pancell to approve the minutes of 16 July 2009. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bronco Bash, September 11th 2009

Bronco Bash is on Friday, September 11th, 2009 from 3 pm to 8 pm. The PUSC is going to have a booth promoting sustainability initiatives at WMU. Casey Barrons created a PUSC Bronco Bash sign-up up list. Simply write in your name whenever you are available to work at the booth; the Google Doc automatically saves changes. Casey will send out a final schedule for confirmation on Monday, September 7th. There is a map with our booth location (138) on the Bronco Bash website. If you have any questions or concerns you can reach Casey Barrons at c.barrons@gmail.com

Farmers Market Lunch September 16th, Judy Gipper:

Judy Gipper is working with WMU Dining Services and Western Wellness to organize an exciting new local-foods event at WMU on Wednesday, September 16th. The menu is almost completely based from Western Michigan. For instance, WMU purchased chickens from Bearfoot Farms, apples from Shultz’s farm, and butternut squash from J and S Farms in Scotts, MI, among other local producers. Samantha Cooper volunteered to encourage an advertising partnership with our local food-advocacy organization Fair Food Matters because they are planning a series of events for Eat Local Month (September) throughout Kalamazoo.
The US Green Building Quarterly WMU Feature:

Pete Strazdas informed the committee that the US Green Building Quarterly is looking to focus an upcoming edition on universities. One hour before our meeting, Pete was informed that the Quarterly decided to feature WMU! Representatives from the Quarterly will be coming to WMU in early fall. Pete will inform the committee about more details as they develop.

Potential Water Conservation Initiative at WMU, Pete Strazdas:

Pete Strazdas brought in a visual of the One2Flush conversion kit from a company in Kalamazoo that has engineering this dual flush system, which is approved by the National Plumbing Association and distributed by major chains across the US. While their product is manufactured outside of the country, it employs a diverse range of Kalamazoo people to design, assemble, and package the system (including a KVCC graphic arts professor). Pete informed the committee that two million gallons of water could be saved annually if we switch the systems in WMU’s 400 apartment complex units.

Pete will soon have water flow meters installed on the apartment toilets for “pre-test” data. He anticipates collecting existing toilet data for one month, and then changing out the devices and measuring the water flow for a second month. Pete and Harold Glasser also plan to encourage student research in order to conduct life-cycle analyses and evaluate the overall potential savings for WMU. As a WMU apartment resident, committee member Gini Pikaart volunteered to engage in data collection and recruit more student volunteers.

QUICK UPDATES

ACUPCC Leadership Summit, Lowell Rinker:

Lowell recapped the American College and University President’s Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) Leadership Summit, which he and President Dunn attended as recent WMU signatories (August 13-14)! Harold Glasser was a panel organizer/moderator for sustainability educators from Malaysia, Scotland, Taiwan and India. Committee member Casey Barrons also attended as a volunteer, assisting the ACUPCC team. Former President Bill Clinton attended as a keynote speaker. He discussed several strategies for implementing carbon-reduction measures at universities, such as looking into decoupling and using consultants that offer performance guarantees. WMU, however, historically prefers to utilize WMU staff and academics in order to save money and promote WMU research.

One of the workshops, led by Peter Senge, author of The Fifth Discipline, focused on cultivating leadership for embedding sustainability in the culture of institutions. During this workshop, President Dunn decided that there are three core values that should underpin life at WMU. These values include Wellness and Health, Sustainability, and Diversity and Inclusion, which are all based on respecting, not wasting, and building human capital.

Overall, Lowell felt reassured that WMU is ahead of schedule with two years to put together our WMU Climate Action Plan (CAP). Lowell concluded his update with a great quote from ASU President Michael Crowe: “When told that universities have only 3 percent of the carbon footprint, I say yes, but we have 100 percent of the student footprint.”
Wesustain EcoMug Project Status Report (with Casey and John Schmitt on DKI), Lowell Rinker:

John Schmidt made a recent presentation to Downtown Kalamazoo Inc. (DKI) regarding WMU’s EcoMug program. John proposed creating an EcoMug insert card that local retailers can sign/punch when drinks are purchased by students. John, Casey, and Harold are working out the details of this “Punch Card” with DKI. DKI agreed to help support the EcoMug program and downtown businesses by having the first 100 students who fill their Ecomug “Punch Card” receive a $5 downtown-dollar certificate! Casey passed out examples of potential inserts, along with potential decals that the committee reviewed. Casey also reported that the Ecomugs have been ordered, and they should be ready for distribution at WMU’s Fall Welcome event.

Princeton Review and Status of SEI, Lowell Rinker

Lowell informed the committee that WMU ranked #3 out of 15 in the Princeton review Green Ranking of Michigan Universities, behind Grand Valley and MI State. We received a ranking of 92, while U of M received a ranking of 89. We were also ranked third among fifteen peer universities.

According to Lowell, the Sustainable Endowments Institute (SEI) completes a yearly report card that ranks universities in relation to sustainability. We recently received a summary of WMU from SEI that we need to edit and make comments on. Lowell expects that we will do better than our 2008 “C-” score, given our many recent accomplishments, as well as the fact that some key elements were left out of the WMU summary last year. From what Lowell understands, the Princeton Review is less detailed, so the SEI ranking should be a more accurate barometer of our comparative progress.

Sustainable Communities Initiative—“save the date: 10/21/09,” Lowell Rinker

Harold Glasser has arranged for Maureen Hart to come to Kalamazoo for the Community Initiatives luncheon on the November 12. Maureen Hart will also be leading a workshop on developing Sustainability Indicators on the November 13 (Details of times and locations will be posted on the Sustainability Website, when available). Maureen is renowned for her work on community sustainability indicators (see her website: Sustainable Measures).

Purchase of new Recycling Containers, Carolyn Noack

After assessing stainless steel, recycled plastic lumber and painted steel bin varieties, WMU Recycling Services decided to purchase stainless steel recycling bins. They will be outfitted with the Wesustain logo on each side and on the back of the bins. Everything will be laser cut with a yellow backer as well. Some bin modifications include using magnets instead of locks and redesigning the WMU Recycling logo with the assistance of WMU’s design Center. The new bins are scheduled for installation in mid October.

Paper Study, Casey Barrons and Lowell Rinker

All of the campus testing is completed for the paper study, and the data is synthesized. We are now engaged in a study to evaluate trends in recycled paper prices at other universities. Paper study representatives lean towards recommending a 100% recycled paper, considering our fairly local provider and feedstock sources. Lowell explained that Paper Science and Engineering
representatives want us to utilize a fixed use of recycled content (perhaps up to 75%), largely because of the volatility of the recycled paper markets. In addition, they would like us to explore having multiple paper sources. In order to continue this healthy debate concerning paper policy at WMU, Lowell is inviting representatives from Paper Science and Engineering to speak at the September PUSC meeting.

**Greening the University VIII, September 20-23, Indianapolis, Paul**

WMU has three presentations/posters accepted: (1) Discussion of our PUSC and Campus Greening Activities (Harold); (2) Sarah Campbell’s Composting Report and Next Steps at WMU, (3) WMU Student Led GHG Inventory (Poster by Kaitlyn Shields & Chris Caprara). September 14th is the last date to register for this conference. Please announce this to potential WMU students. Conference organizers created a special rate for the first 75 students to register, and they are working on sponsorship to help other students attend. The Environmental Studies Department at WMU may be able to assist with fees for students. Other options for students include their Colleges, undergraduate research awards, OVPR Research awards, and the Provost. Please contact Harold Glasser immediately if you plan to attend so he can coordinate travel and hotel arrangements.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**“Formal Use Guidelines” for the WMU Wesustain Identity”**

Casey passed out a draft of the marketing guidelines for review, which include the design center guidelines that were given to the PUSC. The committee unanimously agreed that this draft looks great so far, though they want the subcommittee to have the final say. Right now, Anand Sankey, Evan Escamilla, and Casey Barrons are on the Marketing Subcommittee, but they are hoping to recruit more members before they hold their first meeting. Please email Casey Barrons if you are interested in becoming a member of this subcommittee c.barrons@gmail.com

**Our Progress to Date—what issues should we be addressing, what’s slipping through the cracks, what are we doing well, where do we need help, etc?**

Lowell feels that we have done an excellent job moving forward with sustainability as a university, and he reminded the committee to feel proud of the partnerships we have created in and outside of WMU. John Schmitt expressed the importance of getting the word out about the efforts WMU is making with sustainability, and Pete reminded everyone to encourage students to apply for a position with the Herald in order to re-establish an Environment or Sustainability beat writer. John also feels it is important to develop a class on the impact of sustainability on a business. Pete Strazdas suggested creating a student fee for sustainability initiatives, however he was uncertain whether there was a strong student desire to enact this policy. The Committee agreed that these are important potential initiatives, and they want to discuss them further and potentially form more subcommittees to address these ideas.
INFORMATION ITEMS

Set next meeting Date.

Harold proposed that we set all of the meetings for the semester and make them the 3rd Thursday of the month at 3 pm. The committee agreed to this proposal.

Upcoming meetings: September 17th, October 15th, November 19th, December 17th

Items to address at the September PUSC meeting:

1. Report on Expansion of PUSC to include faculty members from each College? (10 minutes)
2. Discussion on Preparations for Oct. Faculty Meeting—highlight curriculum opportunities/issues
3. PAPER POLICY—Lowell has suggested that we invite Shelley Grant, Judy Gipper, and Said AbuBakr to PUSC meeting to discuss.

Paul Pancella adjourned the meeting at 4:20 pm. Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 17th at 3 pm in the Bernhard Center, Room 204.