President’s Universitywide Sustainability Committee Minutes

Minutes of 17th September 2009
Room 204, Bernhard Center

Members present: Casey Barrons, Paul Farber, Judy Gipper, Harold Glasser, Patricia Holton, Carolyn Noack, Paul Pancella, Lowell Rinker, Gini Pikaart, Anand Sankey, John Schmitt, Pete Strazdas

Guests: Energy Management Outreach Coordinator of Maintenance Services, Evan Escamilla

Chair Harold Glasser called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS
Acceptance of the Agenda
A motion was made by Strazdas and seconded by Pancella to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes of August 2009
A motion was made by Rinker and seconded by Strazdas to approve the minutes of August 2009. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
On Wednesday, September 16, Dining Services sponsored a Farmers Market Luncheon! The event was a tremendous success—and it received some great coverage in the Western Herald! Thanks again to Judy Gipper for taking the initiative to create this wonderful local foods event. We all hope that this even’s success will help inspire more local food events in the future!

The WEsustain Ecomug was distributed to all first year and transfer students! Check out the Ecomug Information on the WMU Sustainability website! We are pleased to report that his initiative was also well reported by the Herald.

QUICK UPDATES
Report from Casey’s sub-committee on “Formal Use Guidelines” for the WMU Identity:
The subcommittee hasn’t met yet, but they have a goal of creating recommendations before the next PUSC meeting in October.
Harold Glasser: Maureen Hart events:
Maureen Hart, of Sustainable Measures, will be coming to speak and give a workshop at WMU, Nov. 12-13. Please note that these new dates replace the Oct. dates reported for the upcoming WMU Sustainable Communities (SCI) events. Based on the SCI Survey, reported on earlier, PUSC members believe that there is significant interest in a large-scale community sustainability indicators research project. The Maureen Hart events will help us to see if this is an idea that has legs on campus and in the community. Harold also sought additional event planning/workshop organizing support from a PUSC member, but, unfortunately, no one volunteered. Harold appointed Sam Cooper to be the point person for the Maureen Hart events, with Casey Barrons assisting. Sam and Casey will give an update on event planning for Maureen Hart at the next PUSC meeting.

Harold on the M-live Award & SEI:
• MLive.com Award—WMU received the Greatest Green Initiative” award for our recent advances with fostering campus sustainability initiatives and efforts to build a campus culture of sustainability. Congratulations to the PUSC for a job well done—we now have lots of great and fun work ahead of us! VP Rinker will accept the award on September 24, in Grand Rapids.
• The Sustainable Endowments Institute (SEI) Report Card is due next week—Harold will report on the results at our next meeting.

DISCUSSION ITEMS
Lowell—Discussion on campus transportation alternatives:
President Dunn recently asked Harold to explore both Zipcar and a bicycle coop/lending program. Do any of these ideas (or other ones) have traction? If so, what should the PUSC be doing?
• The ZipCar System offers a hybrid “rental” vehicle to users, for as little as an hour, with a small membership fee. Harold has contacted representatives from Zipcar for financial requirements to implement such a program at WMU. WMU would receive 3-4 vehicles. WMU would have to guarantee $1,600/month in revenue for two consecutive quarters for each Zipcar, approximately $29,000 for 3 cars. The program would also require some additional staffing from WMU to implement.
• Bicycle infrastructure is seen as an area with great opportunity for improvement. Currently, WMU, and particularly transportation infrastructure makes bicycle transportation challenging, as bikers and pedestrians often share sidewalks and ingress/egress can be difficult and daunting—particularly in the winter. Bike loan systems (and Bike Repair Coops) have been very successfully implemented on many campuses and require much less capital than strategies, such as the ZipCar. Lowell suggested a Cooperative with WSA, similar to model used at Central Michigan University. Considerable concern was expressed over three issues related to promoting increased bike usage: (1) the awkward and dangerous crossing of
Stadium/Oakland, may need to be addressed first—or it should at least be addressed concurrently, (2) inclement weather, our school calendar, and the limited efficacy of snow removal by the City and township, which pose special challenges for students/staff interested in using bicycles.

- WSA looking starting a ride-share program to get “home”. Additionally, WSA will be looking at WMU’s capacity to initiate “homegrown” a car-sharing program that would use WMU resources, instead of contracting with external businesses, such as ZipCar. Harold has previously looked into digital ride boards, such as Zipride and Zimride, and offered to share his resources/insights with WSA, as they go forward with exploring this opportunity.
- Casey stated that WSA will be distributing a survey this Fall to assess student needs/desires for more sustainable transportation options.
- WSA has requested that the Student Association of Michigan (SAM) help with collecting current alternative transportation practices and plans from peer institutions.

Harold—PUSC Composition:
Harold suggested that we need additional student PUSC Representatives to replace Josh Shultz. Harold recommends a joint position between Kate Shields and Chris Caprara. The PUSC agreed to appoint both students to the committee. In addition as we begin to explore curriculum and research opportunities more, it would be very helpful to have full faculty representation from the Colleges of Aviation, Haworth College of Business, College of Fine Arts, and College of Health and Human . With support from the PUSC, Harold was encouraged to make a request for nomination of new members at his Faculty Senate Presentation on Oct. 8 and follow up with the Faculty Senate and Dean’s of these Colleges as necessary and appropriate.

Harold—Discussion on Preparations for Oct. 8 Faculty Senate Presentation:
Harold asked for suggestions on how to represent the activities of the PUSC and pitch highlighting curriculum opportunities/issues (Harold is invited to the Fac. Senate Exec. Comm. Meeting on Sept. 25 to discuss these preparations & seek their input too.). The Faculty Senate Presentation is on Thurs. Oct. 8 at 4:30. The PUSC discussed how to implement our decision to focus on adding faculty members from Business, H&HS, and Art.

Open Discussion / Progress to Date Follow up:
WMU Herald—The Western Herald News Editor, Fritz Klug, has been writing excellent articles about campus sustainability. Most recently Fritz has covered the BTR expansion, SEI Report Card, and the EcoMug program The PUSC agreed to send a “thank you” encouragement email/letter for his efforts to educate the student population on
sustainability initiatives.

**Student Fee for Sustainability Initiatives**—Pete raised the issue of exploring the creation of a “student sustainability fee” to help support sustainability initiatives on campus. He discussed the SDSU sustainability fee—a student “tax” voted on by students. WSA is looking at a few options to help the proposed Sustainability Office designate funds for Student Sustainability Research Projects. One option being discussed is earmarking a percentage of the Student Assessment Fee. This option seems to be the most preferred, however, such an initiative requires approval from the Board of Trustees. Another option is to petition, in a WSA general election, for a nominal fee that would go towards a specific sustainability initiative on campus, i.e. ZipCar, EcoMug, Bike Share, etc. If there are any other suggestions or comments please contact Casey Barrons.

**Discussion on EcoMug**—PUSC members remarked on the great cooperation and dedication involved in implementing the EcoMug program, especially given short time frame. All of the hard work an preparation in building the previous three EcoMug initiatives really paid off. John Schmitt expressed interest in helping to continue to support the ongoing implementation of the EcoMug Initiative as well as to secure the necessary support to institutionalize the EcoMug Program. He raised the possibility of building it into a Sustainable Business Project Class.

**Additional PR / Marketing & Brainstorming Ideas:**
- Host special events at campus cafés – greater discount at certain times?
- Coupons for additional EcoMug discounts?
- WSA will be selling EcoMugs to Senators for $7 **UPDATE**: WSA has already sold over 15 EcoMugs within 2 weeks of sales. WSA is researching funds and strategies for continuing the EcoMug Program.
- The PUSC recommended starting to explore setting up meeting with President Dunn to discuss strategies and opportunities to fund and support campus sustainability initiatives. They also suggested that it would be wise to solicit a formal request of support from President Dunn for a collaborative, coordinated Sustainability Initiatives Funding Effort between OVPR and the Development Office, as was outlined in the Strategic Sustainability Initiatives Report.
- **Wesustain Fellows Initiative**—Sam Copper and Harold are working on a White Paper that outlines a promising, potential opportunity for recent graduates, WMU students, and high school students to work collaboratively on campus sustainability research/projects. Sam and Harold will give an update on this proposal at our November meeting.
- External funding for composting—Bronson in a July meeting with Sarah and Harold offered to provide up to $25,000 to explore the creation of a food waste composting pilot. Funding opportunities for a single purpose composting facility
appear limited, so Harold is developing a White Paper for a state-of-the-future multi-purpose Sustainability Research / Demonstration Project / Meeting Center.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Items to address at the October PUSC meeting:

1. PAPER POLICY DISCUSSION—Dr. Glasser has invited Dr. Said AbuBakr, Professor and Chairman of Paper Engineering and the Paper Technology Foundation and others for a conversation with the PUSC paper procurement policies (for Oct. or Nov., depending on availability)
2. Update on Greening the Campus VIII meeting
3. Report on SEI rating
4. Report on Harold’s presentation to Faculty Senate
5. Paul Farber and Harold Glasser on new M.S. in Education for Sustainability discussions

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

Meeting was adjourned at 4:40pm