President’s Universitywide Sustainability Committee Minutes

Minutes of 15th October 2009
Room 204, Bernhard Center

Members Present: Sarah Campbell, Chris Caprara, Samantha Cooper, Paul Farber, Harold Glasser, Pat Holton, Carolyn Noack, Paul Pancella, John Schmidt, Pete Strazdas, Barbara Wygant.

Guests: Energy Management Outreach Coordinator of Maintenance Services Evan Escamilla, Representative from the Graduate Student Advisory Committee Krystal Bresnahan. (Harold- I did not get the name of the student filling in for the other new GSAC representative. Do you have this information? Also, are these GSAC Reps official members of the PUSC yet?)

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Acceptance of the Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to Krystal Bresnahan, new representative from the Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GSAC)!

QUICK UPDATES:

The Sangren Project at WMU

Harold Glasser reported that after exploring four scenarios from the SHW Group, WMU, pending funding, will likely proceed with a staged teardown of Sangren. This scenario resulted in by far the lowest life-cycle costs. Harold also explained that they are working to achieve LEED Gold certification. Chris and Dave will give us a complete project update at the December PUSC meeting.

Sarah—Update on the status of the Composting Project

Sarah explained that she received excellent feedback at the recent Greening of the Campus VIII conference in Indiana. She is currently working with Harold to make final changes to the report, which will be on the sustainability website in the next few weeks. Sarah also explained that she and Harold are drafting a journal article for the International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education, which they are planning to have completed by the end of December.

Overall, Sarah and Harold have broadened their focus by searching for grants to build a Center for Sustainability Research and Learning, which would incorporate a composting project. Sarah reported that there is a pending ERF grant out for just over $100,000, which we should hear back
on in December. The Bronson Foundation has tentatively offered to support a pilot project for up to $25,000, depending on the results with the pending ERF grant. Sarah announced that she will soon be passing on her responsibilities to someone new by the end of December. She thanked everyone for contributing insights, guidance and assistance. She also extended thanks to the WMU administration for making this great research opportunity possible.

**Pete—UI Campus Bike Program overview**

Pete gave the PUSC a quick overview of the University of Iowa’s Bike Program along with a two-page summary. Pete explained that this project was not driven by administration or facilities management. It is a student-driven project, which, in his eyes is the key to its success. The program is a point-to-point system where bikes are stowed at one of three locations, each selected for its importance to the students using the system. These students are from the Sustainable Living Learning Community (SLLC) and they also take a leadership role in creating an educational component to the program. The PUSC held a brief discussion about what a bike program might look like at WMU. For instance, John Schmidt mentioned the importance of having sheltered bike racks, which MSU recently installed. The PUSC agreed to read over the two-pager on UI’s Bike Program and discuss a potential WMU bike-initiative at the November meeting.

**Carolyn—Recycling and Waste Reduction Services Update**

Carolyn reported that WMU is starting a free program that will collect rechargeable batteries and cell phone, ipod, and laptop batteries. She has had a basic collection program for a long time, but the goal is now to extend this service to faculty and students to bring batteries from home. If you are interested, please send items to Recycling Center 210 Physical Plant. After a brief discussion, the PUSC agreed that we should have a central location to drop off batteries with a controlled environment, because each battery has to be in a separate bag, and/or all the terminals need to be taped. Carolyn will follow up with staff members about this idea.

Carolyn also reported that she is receiving requests for offices to have their own recycling bins because the standard bins don’t fit with their décor. Carolyn suggests that we keep the recycling bins standardized so that the campus saves money. In addition, student workers for the recycling center and the campus community at large will have less trouble recognizing the bins if they remain standardized. The PUSC discussed different options, such as supplying free standardized bins or requiring that all bins have a Wesustain sticker for easy identification. After this discussion, Carolyn agreed to create a recycling bin policy proposal and bring it to the next PUSC meeting for review.

Carolyn is also helping to sponsor the upcoming Health & Wellness fair at WMU. Carolyn asked the committee if we should use the Wesustain logo on the bags that are being distributed at the fair. The PUSC held a brief discussion regarding what items are acceptable to adorn with the Wesustain logo. The PUSC marketing sub-committee agreed to make have a DRAFT Identity Use Guidelines proposal for us to review at the November meeting.

**Evan—Update on the Climate Savers Computing Initiative Implementation Plan**

Evan reminded the committee that we signed on to this initiative last summer. The initiative specifically addresses energy usage with IT equipment, which is part of our ACUPCC plan. The initiative includes three main components. The first component is to purchase the most energy-efficient equipment, the second is to reduce energy usage through technology upgrades and energy-saving practices, and the third is to offset remaining energy usage through renewable energy credits.
efficient IT equipment. The second component is to have energy saver settings be the de facto settings (currently being done at WMU.) The third component includes turning off all of the computing equipment that’s usually left on over night.

Evan explained that there is a checklist on WMU’s Energy Management website based on the EPA Energy Star standards, but the PUSC agreed that we need to draft a specific implementation plan in order to get the IT Directors and the campus community on board. Evan and Chris agreed to consult with Anand to schedule a meeting to begin drafting a comprehensive policy (Harold agreed to support this group as necessary and appropriate).

Evan also gave a quick summary of the CRT Buyback program. This week alone, we collected 30 CRTs and replaced them for minimal cost with LCD screens. Evan volunteered to put together a summary upon completion to display on the website and send to AASHE.

**Harold: GOC VIII—Greening of Campus Conference Overview**

Harold reported that there were great presentations by Sarah Campbell on WMU’s composting initiative, and by Kate Shields & Chris Caprara on WMU’s GHG Emissions inventory. Harold’s presentation on the PUSC was also well attended. During the conference, there were lots of discussions as to whether or not AASHE is adequately serving paying campus members. Harold hopes that AASHE, in the coming months, will become more responsive to the needs of its constituents—particularly in the area of sustainability education and curriculum development.

**Harold: Sustainable Endowments Institute (SEI) Update**

The Sustainable Endowments Institute (SEI) is a nonprofit organization engaged in research and education to advance sustainability in campus operations and endowment practices. Harold reported that our overall rating went from a C- to a B! When you separate out the Endowments categories, WMU was identified as one of 80 “Campus Sustainability Leaders” in the U.S. and only one of two universities in Michigan with this distinction. Harold reported that the issue now is to build on this momentum and secure the necessary structural changes with Administration to make sure that we have the staffing and resources to implement high leverage strategic initiatives.

**Harold: Oct. 8 Faculty Senate Meeting Overview**

Harold spoke to a well-attended Faculty Senate about the PUSC and our activities. He received a significant number of emails from the Faculty, who contributed great suggestions and ideas. For instance, some faculty members feel that we need to create a user-friendly method of receiving feedback from the sustainability website (we have asked Lisa about creating this earlier, but it has slipped through the cracks). This re-raised our previous conversation about developing a strategy to have one place where all questions are filtered on the website. Sam suggested that a Frequently Asked Questions section be drafted for the website in conjunction with the feedback section in order to increase efficiency. After a brief discussion regarding who would manage these questions, the PUSC agreed that it is important to work toward hiring a Sustainability Director that has time allocated to manage this information.

**Harold: Conversation with Dave Lemberg on WMU Transportation Issues**

After a brief discussion and unanimous consent, Harold agreed to schedule Dave to give a presentation on transportation initiative ideas for the November PUSC meeting.
Harold: Maureen Hart events update
Harold and Sam requested people to contact them in order to suggest potential point people who could benefit from meeting with Maureen to discuss community sustainability and community sustainability indicators. Sam and Harold requested that PUSC members contact them if they are interested in attending a dinner with Maureen in addition to the scheduled events.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Evan—Discussion on the proposed Sustainability Marketing Plan & Identity Use Guidelines
Evan reported that after the Sub-committee had their first meeting they have gained a sense of direction. Active vs. passive marketing and decision-making will be clarified at their upcoming meeting. The Marketing sub-committee plans to give a presentation on their progress at the November PUSC meeting.

Barb Wygant—on the creation of a disciplined Sustainability Research Initiative.
Thanks to Barb for updating us on her vacation! Barb feels that we should establish a portal or service online. Barb suggested that we do a series of information packets on potential research projects with contact information for distribution. Barb agreed to design a sample and send it out to the committee. Casey reported that UC Berkeley has an internet project that publishes details on proposed projects and allows those reviewing the site to pledge funds to support the projects. Berkeley’s bike program has utilized this program.

Pete also mentioned that his recent trip to Washington D.C. planted some potential funding seeds, especially with Vice President Joe Biden’s office, which is currently purported to have some excess funding. Harold and Pete agreed to meet and discuss potential Federal grants before the next PUSC meeting.

Possible collaboration with Faculty Senate on a regular Sustainability Lunch for Faculty
Harold raised the possibility of creating regular PUSC-sponsored luncheons to facilitate / support sustainability course development. The PUSC agreed that we should push a Faculty Sustainability Lunch initiative forward. This lunch could potentially meet two times a semester and once during the summer. The purpose of the lunch would be to discuss curriculum ideas and opportunities. In addition, it would encourage the facilitation of new initiatives & proposal development for focused, disciplinary sustainability courses, as well as infusion of sustainability across the curriculum.

Paul Farber & Harold Glasser on a possible Learning for Sustainability Track for the Sociocultural Studies of Education, MS
A meeting will be held next week with the Sociocultural Studies of Education Program to further discuss this potential collaboration. Paul will update the PUSC on this meeting at the November PUSC meeting.

John Schmitt on a possible Sustainable Business course
John is working on developing a Sustainability course for small Businesses. He agreed to update the PUSC at the November meeting regarding any progress.
Evan: Water Update
Evan explained that through his research, he discovered that the reverse osmosis system wastes a significant amount of water. Evan has been communicating with Culligan and Gordon to potentially get machines installed in the Bernhard Center. Evan plans to run tests on other options in terms of cost and life-cycle. He agreed to give the PUSC a formal update at the November meeting.

INFORMATION ITEMS
PUSC Representation
John explained that he had a recent conversation with Dr. Samant, interim Dean of the Hayworth College of Business about Hayworth Representation on the PUSC. Schmitt agreed to officially represent Hayworth. Harold is due to follow up with the Deans of the colleges that we don’t currently have representation from. He will update the PUSC in November regarding new representation status.

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 19th, 2009 at 3 pm in Rm. 204 Bernhard Center

Meeting Adjourned: 4:53 pm

NOTE: items highlighted in green represent issues, projects, or subsequent updates that we need to follow-up on.