President’s Universitywide Sustainability Committee (PUSC) Minutes

Minutes of 18th March 2010
Room 204, Bernhard Center

Members Present: Casey Barrons, Samantha Cooper, Chris Caprara, Bill Davis, Dave Dakin, Mervyn Elliot, Paul Farber, Judy Gipper, Harold Glasser, Matt Hollander, Pat Holton, Maryann Lavendar, Caroline Noack, Paul Pancellla, Mary Peterson, Chris Pyzik, Lowell Rinker, Anand Sankey, Pete Strazdas, Andrew Targowski, Barbara Wygant

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

PUSC Chair Harold Glasser called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Approval of Agenda
Motion by Farber to accept the agenda as presented; seconded by Targowski; Agenda approved.

Approval of Minutes
Motion by Noack to accept the minutes as presented; seconded by Sankey; Minutes approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

• Please continue to forward Harold ideas and suggestions for monthly campus sustainability events to raise awareness and build capacity. Our goal is to have a full slate of these to implement next year!

• Pat announced that there are plans for WMU to host a Michigan Department Of Natural Resources (MDNR) Green Infrastructure Conference on April 26 at the Fetzer Center. The conference will include several workshops and presentations including a presentation by Cari Delong, Natural Areas & Preserves Manager of Landscape Services on the stormwater retention efforts at WMU and our ongoing quest to become stormwater neutral. Pat will forward a poster to the PUSC listserv with conference details in the near future.

• Harold informed the committee that there is a Regional Sustainability Covenant event on April 14 at the Douglas Community Center from 11:30 am – 1:00 pm. During this meeting, the following questions regarding next steps for sustainability indicators work in Kalamazoo will be discussed:
  A. Think 50 years out! What does a sustainable and desirable SWM Region look like—or what are a few of its key characteristics—from the perspective of your organization? (Vision casting)
  B. What does your organization need to be doing now to help us all to realize this vision? (development of goals & objectives)
  C. Recognizing that some sustainability initiatives can only be accomplished through collaboration with other Covenant signatories, what single, high-leverage activity, action, or project is most critical to get launched—from the perspective of your organization?

• Dave presented a logo draft for use on our upcoming Tree Campus USA signs. Dave announced that ten to fifteen of these signs are going to be posted around campus in prominent areas. Dave will plan to bring an updated logo to the April PUSC meeting.
QUICK UPDATES:

Chris Pyzik—Brown Hall update
Chris explained that while WMU is not seeking formal LEED certification for the Brown Hall renovation, we are utilizing formal LEED guidelines. Judging by these guidelines, we are in line with LEED Silver requirements. For the most recent details on the renovation, please visit the Brown Hall Renovation webpage on WMU’s Facilities Management website.

Anand—Earth Hour—March 27
The national Earth Hour is taking place on March 27, 2010. This event encourages people around the world to shut off their lights for one hour to conserve electricity. Anand reported that WMU is going to shut off the accent lights in buildings. In addition, several residence halls are planning to shut off their lights. Anand will update the PUSC on WMU’s Earth Hour efforts at our April PUSC meeting.

Anand—Update on ACUPCC March 9 Webinar
Anand participated in a webinar provided by the American College and University President’s Climate Commitment (ACUPCC). This webinar explained the wealth of resources available for universities to put a climate action plan together. Anand explained that after signing the ACUPCC, HE organizations typically create a committee, pick two of seven proposed initial actions to focus on, and complete an inventory of emissions within one year. Within two years the ACUPCC requests that a climate action plan be submitted. ACUPCC representatives mentioned that they are flexible with timing if the institution is clearly making progress. Anand feels that we really are ahead of the curve. Harold stated that we hope to be nearly a year early on the submission of our action plan. Anand shared a quote from the ACUPCC webinar, “Climate neutrality isn’t about a definite date. It’s about the journey toward the date.”

Evan—Update on Eco-thon
The Ecothon competition has officially come to a close! The Eco-thon competition used last fall’s average electric consumption as a baseline and compared that to each Hall’s February numbers. The Hall with the greatest percentage reduction won. Evan announced that Valley 2 is the official winner! There will be a celebration on Tuesday, March 23 at 6 pm. Eco-thon organizers will be holding a post-meeting to discuss strategies for engaging more students next year. Please become a fan of the Eco-thon Facebook page and invite students and colleagues! Chris and Kate are working with Harold and Anand to perform an evaluation of this year’s Eco-thon to guide improvements for next year.

Carolyn—Update on Recyclemania and the dorm Competition
To review, Recycle Mania is a friendly competition among university recycling programs in the United States. The competition is a 10-week program to publicize and improve recycling and waste reduction on college campuses. The winner receives the traveling trophy for the year as well as a congratulatory advertisement in all other schools’ student newspapers. Carolyn reported that we are in the midst of the nationwide competition, as well as an inter-dorm competition. Unfortunately, the schools that perform best on per capita recycling tend to recycle and waste
more products overall. However, Carolyn happily announced that CMU and GVSU are currently behind us in per capita recycling!

**Casey—Next steps re.: WSA B-P Review of Campus Sustainable Endowment Practices**

Last month, Casey gave a presentation on her report analyzing [Campus Sustainable Endowment Practices](#) based on 2010 Sustainable Endowment Institute (SEI) Green Report Card data. Casey reminded the PUSC that WMU was named one of 80 Campus Sustainability Leaders by the SEI. Despite this honor, we received a D in relation to our endowment transparency. As a result, Casey began evaluating how other universities are increasing endowment transparency. Since last month, Casey edited her report to more clearly display the relationship between sustainability and transparency. Her goal is to facilitate an eventual recommendation agreement that can be forwarded on to the Faculty Senate’s CPFC (and eventually the President) for review. Casey is also planning to author a resolution of support for the WSA. Casey plans to hold additional meetings with key administrators such as Jan Vanderclay, Gail Kurtz and John Jellies to help move forward with recommendations. Please contact [Casey Barrons](#) if you have any questions.

**Matt—Update on conversations with Jeff Alexander, Tim H, and others on a Waste Vegetable Oil to Mower Pilot**

410 student John Bibbler, Harold and Matt are working with Tim Holyz to create a pilot for using waste cooking oil from Dining Services to run campus diesel lawn mowers (Dining Services has already switched to a local vegetable oil supplier, Zoyoil, from Zeeland). The group plans to use virgin Zoyoil in their initial pilot to gather baseline data. They are also working with Jeff Alexander to explore the possibility of implementing this system in a full size vehicle, if the pilot is successful. Maryann mentioned asking the soy oil company representatives to sponsor our efforts and/or offer scholarships. Matt reviewed that the end goal is to assess the viability of using waste oil in diesel engines on campus. Please contact [Matt Hollander](#) if you have any questions.

**Matt—Update on 410 Vermicomposting Project & Dining Hall Pilot**

Matt recently helped 410 student John Lee build a homemade worm composting bin. John plans to utilize this bin to begin recording baseline data and supplement the initial research gathered in Sarah Campbell’s report titled, “[Options For A Composting Program at Western Michigan University: A Case Study](#).” Next steps are to create a pilot with Dining Services for one dining Hall to gather data on composting rates, compost quality, and a variety of other parameters for pre-, post-consumer, and mixed composting so that we can design an efficient full-scale research composting system.

**Chris—Update on Filtered Water Pilot & 410 Class Project**

Chris is working with 410 students Kim Schafer and Alex Secrest to create a survey assessing student perceptions regarding drinking water and water options on campus. Lowell stated that installing water filtration systems on campus may be a great example of a potential SFI project because the payback time is too slow for the administration to justify such investments during the current budget crisis. Please contact [Chris Caprara](#) if you have any questions.
Paul F.—Socio-Cultural Studies, Learning for Sustainability M.S. track update
Paul announced that there are no recent developments with developing the M.S. new track—conversations are ongoing.

Harold—Progress on development of a student sustainability blog
Harold reported that we now have a student sustainability blog under development, created by undergraduate 410 student Katrina Murphy! Katrina is setting up the blog to be run by students with a student editorial board. Katrina needs volunteers to serve on the editorial board. has been The PUSC agreed to have Harold ask Katrina present at our next meeting.

Harold—Update on progress with arranging the May 4 “Sustainability Across the Curriculum” Faculty Luncheon
Harold announced that there will be a Wesustain faculty Luncheon on Tuesday, May 4 right after grades are due (12:15 to 2:15 pm)! The purpose of the meeting is to help facilitate the building of a faculty learning community around infusing and integrating sustainability into teaching and research. The meeting will be in the President’s Dining Room in the Bernhard Center. Harold will send a formal announcement to the PUSC listserv with details in the near future.

PRESENTATIONS // DISCUSSION
Carolyn—Standardization of Recycling Bins Policy Proposal
Carolyn passed out a proposal to standardize campus recycling bins. Carolyn believes this is necessary to maximize visibility, minimize contamination and avoid confusion among Recycling Center employees and the campus community. Carolyn clarified that there are no grandfather clauses in the proposal. Chris suggested creating a downloadable map with all bin locations in order to reduce employee training. After a brief discussion, the PUSC voted to unanimously support Carolyn’s standardization proposal. Please contact Carolyn with any questions.

Matt, Sam & Chris—SFI Overview and Update
Matt, Sam and Chris gave an overview of the Sustainability Fund Initiative (SFI) campaign. They announced that election week is almost over! To review from last month’s presentation, the SFI team feels that enacting a campus-wide sustainability fund is an effective strategy for securing funds to continue our efforts to build a culture of sustainability.

The language on the official WSA election ballot is as follows:
“Do you favor introduction of a Sustainability Fund Fee of $8.00 per semester and $4.00 per summer session for the purpose of funding student designed and led sustainability initiatives, an Office of Sustainability, and a WMU Green Jobs Program? This fee would be collected from students enrolled at WMU’s main campus and begin in the 2010-2011 academic year.”

If the SFI passes next week, our next step is to meet with a diverse group of WMU representatives and prepare a presentation for the Board of Trustees for their April meeting. In a recent meeting with President John Dunn, he expressed his confidence that the Board will pass the SFI. If this happens, the SFI will go into effect Fall 2010 and create around $480,000.00/year (65% to student research/green initiatives, 20% to a new Office Of Sustainability and 15% to Student Green Internships!) Please join the SFI Facebook group titled, “I Support The Sustainability Initiative at WMU”!
SFI Newspaper articles:
- “Western Michigan University students favor new 'green' fee: Fee for environmental projects needs WMU board approval”
- “Western Michigan University students may pay to go green: Balloting ends today on fee to fund environmental initiatives”
- “WSA Throws Support Behind Sustainability Fee”
- “Green Fee” on WSA Ballot Next Week”

Harold—PUSC Annual Report preparation
Harold requested volunteers to send thoughts and ideas regarding possible content, structure and format for the PUSC annual report. Further discussion on the Annual Report was tabled for next month’s PUSC meeting. Please come prepared to help draft an agenda at our April meeting.

INFORMATION ITEMS
Items to address at the April 15 or subsequent PUSC meetings:
1. MDNR Green Infrastructure Conference
2. Earth Hour Summery
3. Update on Recyclemania and the Dorm Competition
4. Status and next steps for Casey’s Campus Sustainable Endowment Practices Effort
5. Update on conversations about a Waste Vegetable Oil to Mower Pilot
6. Update on 410 Vermicomposting Project & Dining Hall Pilot
7. Update on Filtered Water Pilot & 410 Class Project
8. Socio-Cultural Studies Learning for Sustainability M.S. track progress update
9. Progress on development of a student sustainability blog
10. Update on progress with arranging the May 4 Faculty Sustainability Across the Curriculum Luncheon to discuss sustainability related curriculum (and research) opportunities/hurdles
11. Monthly Campus Sustainability Events discussion
12. Possible Gibbs House Restructuring discussion
13. SFI Board Of Trustees Meeting overview
14. Discussion regarding the PUSC annual report

The March PUSC meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Upcoming meeting: April 15 2010, Rm. 204 of the Bernhard Center