President’s Universitywide Sustainability Committee (PUSC) Minutes

Minutes of April 15 March 2010
Room 204, Bernhard Center

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

Guests: Katrina Murphy, David Parnell, Courtney McNaughton

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

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Noack to accept the Agenda as presented; seconded by Rinker; Agenda approved.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Noack to approve the Minutes as presented; seconded by Sankey; Minutes approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

• Harold passed out the most recent draft of the PUSC roster for committee members to review and correct.

• Pete announced that he is traveling to the east side of the state to see the first EV Commercial vehicle on the market. He will plan to update the PUSC on this trip at the May PUSC meeting.

QUICK UPDATES

Matt, Sam and Chris: SFI Update

Earlier today, the SFI Team presented to the WMU Board of Trustees. The Board passed a unanimous role-call vote to support implementation of the SFI! Congratulations to the SFI Team and the PUSC for all of their hard work and support. The SFI team will continue to hold meetings with the WSA, DOSA and other university officials in order to solidify standard operating procedures for the fall. For more information regarding the SFI Campaign, please see past PUSC minutes and review the following articles:

• Western Michigan University students favor new 'green' fee: Fee for environmental projects needs WMU board approval
• Western Michigan University approves new ‘green fee’
• New student-initiated sustainability fee approved
**Chris—Marketing Committee Update**

The marketing committee is working on a strategic plan to increase web visibility, institutionalize the sustainability fund, build on the EcoRep and EcoMug Programs, complete the Green Guide and create monthly sustainability events. They will also be drafting consistent language to use for Sustainability Office visioning. This effort will increase clarity about when and where the campus community can use the Wesustain logo.

David Parnell and Courtney McNaughton gave a presentation regarding their 410 Campus As A Living Laboratory Project at the last Marketing subcommittee meeting. David and Courtney gave a similar presentation at the April PUSC meeting, which is summarized in the presentation section below.

**Matt and Harold, Sustainability Covenant Meeting**

Matt and Harold worked with Bruce Merchant, Mayor Hopewell and Mike Wetzel to structure the Covent meeting agenda. Matt and Harold presented the results of the online survey they created. This survey explored opinions about different definitions of sustainability, which included: the Brundtland Commission definition, a version of the triple bottom line paradigm from Sustainable Seattle and a broader, process-oriented definition from Donella Meadows and colleagues. These definitions encouraged participants to consider alternative approaches to growth and different strategies for characterizing and measuring sustainability. Participants also explored their vision for what a sustainable and desirable Kalamazoo will look like in fifty years. From here, they considered what their organization should be doing now to realize its goals. They also explored what is critically important to accomplish, which will require collaboration from other Covenant signatories. Matt and Harold will give a summary of the upcoming Sustainability Covenant report at the May PUSC meeting.

**Matt, Harold—Update on conversations with Diane Anderson & her staff on advancing the EcoRep Program**

Harold announced that V.P. Anderson is excited about advancing the fledgling EcoRep program at WMU. Her vision for the program includes maintaining around fifteen EcoReps for Residence Life. She also wants to work with us to eventually create EcoReps that work with students not living in the dorms. They discussed different incentive strategies to reward EcoRep participants, such as offering gift certificates and providing resume enhancing skill sets. Kate, Chris, or Harold will give a progress report on the EcoRep Program during the May PUSC meeting.

**Chris, Kate, & Carolyn—Freshman Orientation**

New initiatives are being planned to integrate sustainability into the structure of freshman oriented—Kate, Chris and Carolyn will keep us posted on these plans!

**Anand—Earth Hour**

Anand was unable to attend April’s PUSC meeting to give us an update; we will ask him to give a quick update at the May PUSC meeting.
Chris—Climate Savers computing Initiative
Chris is taking a leadership role with the student portion of the Climate Savers Computing Initiative. A toner-saving project he is researching involves changing the default fonts to reduce print density (example: Century Gothic), which results in significantly less toner use.

Matt—Update on the collaboration with Jeff and Tim- Lawn Mowers
Matt and Harold held a meeting with Judy Gipper, Jeff Alexander and Tim Holyz. They all agreed to work together to create a pilot program to convert one diesel mower to vegetable oil this summer. They are planning to use virgin ZoyeOil in the initial pilot and hope to convert to used vegetable oil from Dining Services in the future, if the pilot is successful. Dining Services now purchases this 100% soy oil, which is made in Zealand, MI (They have a LEED Silver certified administration building too!). They also run their entire fleet from their own biodiesel products.

John Bibbler, a student in Harold’s 410 course working on the mower conversion project this year, arranged for Sam Merrett of Golden Fuel Systems to visit WMU for a consultation meeting in April. Merrett’s business, which is located in Oberlin, Ohio, manufactures and installs SVO (Straight Vegetable Oil) diesel conversion systems. Merrett will work with WMU to make the conversion equipment for our pilot test as well as help educate our mower mechanics.

EcoMug Program Proposal Update
Matt, Casey and Harold have been holding weekly meetings on Tuesday at 8 am to discuss the future of the Ecomug Program. They have identified three main issues with the current mug:

1. The mug lid threads sometimes break (and the lid does not stay on tightly);
2. Some of the rubber mug bottoms have become unglued, which causes leaks to the inside of the mug and its foam insulation; and
3. Leakage has resulted from the lid/mug interface.

They have been working with our distributer to get these issues rectified at the manufacturer level as well as to plan for defects in our contract by arranging to have a certain extra percentage of mugs provide for free to allow us to offer replacements. Future EcoMug Program goals include developing plans & procedures for evaluating the success of the existing EcoMug Program. They are planning to compile a list of all potential participating businesses. After meeting with potential and current participating businesses, they plan to author a report on EcoMug Business Participation, signing on new businesses, and recommended next steps for making the program successful with participating businesses. This report will include:

(1) Program evaluation from 2009-2010;
(2) Recommendations for improving the Program; and

Student Sustainability Blog (to be linked to & promoted by the WMU Sustainability Website)
Katrina Murphy, another student in Harold’s 410 Campus As A Living Learning Laboratory course, is developing a student sustainability blog for her class project. Katrina, who is the incoming Western Herald Editor feels that the Herald currently lacks a regular, institutionalized
structure for students to discuss sustainability issues. The working title of the blog is called WMU Greenpiece. This blog will be open to all students to write about sustainability topics. Katrina plans to link this blog to WMU’s Sustainability homepage. Katrina is collaborating with Jocelyn Steinke, a WMU professor who teaches an Environmental Reporting course. Jocelyn will be making it mandatory for her students to write an article once per month. Katrina hopes to engage more classes in a similar fashion. Her full project will be posted on the Sustainability website along with all of Harold’s other 410 class projects this summer.

Pete Strazdas suggested making the connection to WMU more apparent on the homepage of the blog. The PUSC officially approved Katrina to incorporate the Wesustain logo into the website design, and the logo of the Student Sustainability Blog.

Katrina is currently seeking out a blog advisory board comprised of faculty members from every college to advise student writers. So far, Katrina has five faculty members on board, but her goal is to have fifteen board members. Judy Gipper, Director Of Dining Services, volunteered to be on the advisory board contingent on scheduling. Please contact Katrina Murphy if you are interested in learning more about becoming an advisory board member or a student writer!

Vermicomposting Pilot
John Lee is an undergraduate student in Harold’s 410: Campus As A Living Laboratory course. He is cooperating with Judy Gipper, Director Of Dining Services to monitor pre and post consumer waste in the WMU dining halls.

Carolyn—gave a brief update on the Recyclemania competition.

Harold—gave a reminder for all PUSC faculty to please attend the upcoming Sustainability Across the Curriculum Faculty Lunch on May 4. Widespread interest resulted in him raising the limit from 40 faculty to 50.

PRESENTATION:
David Parnell and Courtney McNaughton—On How to Build Support and Awareness for Sustainability On Campus
David and Courtney are students in Harold’s 410: Campus As A Living, Learning Laboratory course. Their project seeks to address the limited awareness of sustainability activities on campus (for instance, the majority of students surveyed were unaware of our Sustainability Website). Currently, you can only find the sustainability website by searching for it in the search bar of WMU’s website. Courtney presented a document titled, “Wesustain Icon: Access for Outreach.” This document examines the results of a survey they conducted this semester to gauge student interest in and knowledge of sustainability initiatives on campus. This survey illustrated that there is a broad interest in sustainability, but that overall awareness of sustainability initiatives on campus is low.

David and Courtney also conducted a research assessment of Michigan schools and top SEI Institute Green Report Card schools based upon where they position their icons/identities and/or logos. Overall, their survey and research suggest that adding a homepage link to the Sustainability website will increase recruitment and retention, keep former students better
informed of sustainability initiatives and engage more current students. PUSC members suggested linking the three pillars to the homepage to increase the likelihood of obtaining a prime spot and foster awareness of all three pillars. PUSC members voted unanimously to recommend the creation of a pilot study for at least 6 months (with complete and thorough tracking and evaluation of Google Analytics data) to explore the effects of placing the Wesustaina icon on the Home Page and About WMU pages.

DISCUSSION

Harold—Discussion on PUSC vision for WMU Sustainability Initiatives Funding Priorities to prepare for President Dunn and the Development Office for the Capital Campaign

Harold identified three potential high-leverage areas of funding:

1. An Institute for Sustainability Research and Learning building that would meet the Living Building Challenge;
2. Bookend funding for the SFI program (Financial support for graduates of the SFI program to work for WMU for an additional year, at one end, and a program to support K-12 students involved with the Kalamazoo Promise to collaborate with our SFI Interns on campus sustainability projects, at the other end); and
3. An endowment fund for supporting sustainability curriculum development and collaborative, translational research.

These three proposed funding priorities have an estimated cost of 10 million dollars. Harold encouraged the PUSC to consider potential outside donors apart from potential Earmark funding. Harold will attempt to engage the Development Office for advice and develop a case statement for presentation at the June PUSC meeting.

Harold—Discussion on possible content, structure, and format for our planned PUSC Annual Report. Should we form a formal Working Group for this project?

This agenda item was tabled for the May PUSC meeting.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Items to address at the May 10 PUSC meeting or subsequent meetings:

1. Summary of the May 4 Wesustain Faculty Sustainability Luncheon
2. Sustainability Office Development Update
3. WMU Sustainability Initiatives Funding Priorities Update
4. Discussion regarding the content & structure of the PUSC Annual Report
5. SFI Update
6. Sustainability Covenant Report Update
7. Marketing Committee Update
8. Sustainability Website Homepage Link Progress
9. Gibbs House Program Restructuring Update
10. Update on conversations about a Waste Vegetable Oil to Mower Pilot
11. EcoRep Program Development Update
12. EcoMug Progress Update
13. Progress on Student Sustainability Blog
14. Monthly Campus Sustainability Events discussion
15. Update on 410 Vermicomposting Project & Dining Hall Pilot
16. Update on Filtered Water Pilot
17. Socio-Cultural Studies Learning for Sustainability M.S. track progress update

The April PUSC meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.

**Upcoming meeting:** Bernhard Room 205 on Thursday May 20 at 3 pm.