President's Universitywide Sustainability Committee (PUSC) Minutes

Minutes of March 17, 2011
Room 205, Bernhard Center

Members Present: Kate Binder, Paul Choker, David Dakin (Ex Officio), Cari DeLong, Mervyn Elliott, Harold Glasser, Matthew Hollander, Patricia Holton, Carolyn Noack, Paul Pancella, Mary Peterson, Joel Raveloharimisy (Ex Officio), Anand Sankey, and John Schmitt.

Guest: Toni Woolfork-Barnes

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Joel Raveloharimisy to approve the Agenda as presented; seconded by Matt Hollander; Agenda approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Patricia Holton to approve the Minutes as presented; seconded by David Dakin; Minutes approved.

ANNOUNCEMENT

HAROLD: CREATING A NON-MOTORIZED TRANSIT MASTER PLAN

After considerable and ongoing discussion around the university regarding non-motorized transit issues and opportunities, Harold introduced a new initiative—in cooperation with our MDOT Regional Transportation Planner, Darrell Harden—developing a non-motorized transit master plan for WMU. Harold and Matt are working with WSA and GSAC to organize a committee as well as to engage local and regional players including the city, county, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS). Our goal is to complete this plan by the fall of 2012. If you would like to be on this committee, or would like to recommend someone, please contact Harold at harold.glasser@wmich.edu or Matt at matthew.f.hollander@wmich.edu.

I. DISCUSSION

DR. TONI WOOLFORK BARNES—INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

After being contacted by Harold, Toni was invited—and graciously agreed—to meet with the PUSC committee to present an overview of the First-Year Experience Programs. Toni explained that there are three components to the First-Year Experience Programs.

- New Student Orientation is required and mandatory for all incoming students
- Fall Welcome, open to all first year students, is a four-day program that is designed to help students with their transition to the university (≈2,500-2,800 students/yr attend)
- First Year Experience Seminar is a two credit class that is designed to facilitate the academic and social success through learning more about WMU and the Kalamazoo community (≈1,300 students/yr attend)

LOGISTICS OF FYS: There are ≈70 faculty and staff that teach FYS. It is a 2 credit hour course that meets for 75 minutes twice a week. Each section has ≤20 students. A student leader is also paired with each “faculty” facilitator. Roughly one-half of FYS is standardized across sections that cover the general curriculum: the Common Read, research, the course textbook, and health and wellness. Students also participate in co-curricular learning activities, which include: participation in athletic events, attending the Health and Wellness Fair, and service learning. Toni mentioned that exposing students to research (and hopefully engaging them in it) is a high priority for FYS. Special sections of FYS have been created Aviation, Business, Pre-Law with other specialized sections for Kalamazoo Promise, Honors Students and Gear up Students. Funding for two pilot FYE Seminar topical courses on global climate change that was supported
through a NSF grant during the Fall of 2009 and 2010 will no longer be available.

The Common Read is chosen by a special committee, which meets in May or June and generally chooses from 6 options. Professional development for Student Leaders and “Faculty” Facilitators happens in May and August in a single location (Student Leaders are trained in May). This year there will also be “parent academy” led by Shari Glaser.

QUESTION: Joel asked about creating a program for first-year Graduate students. Toni suggested that she meet with Joel and GSAC to explore strategies for reaching new Graduate and transfer students.

QUESTION: Harold asked if there was a formal evaluation process for the FYE Programs and any assessment on the success of students that through all three stages? Toni mentioned they now have four years of data from Institutional Effectiveness. Toni is also on the Millennial Committee and is incorporating this research and student survey data to modify and improve the FYE Programs.

II. DISCUSSION

OFFICE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is one of President Dunn’s Three Pillars, along with Health and Wellness, Diversity and Inclusion. Harold discussed the Office for Sustainability’s role within the University, the Office’s goals, and our directive from President Dunn to foster and facilitate the building of a campus culture of sustainability. The office’s mission is to improve quality of life for all. President Dunn is on the ACUPCC National Steering Committee and has committed WMU to reaching zero-net GHG emissions at some time in the future. Paul Pancella is coordinating the development of our Climate Action Plan. Another requirement of ACUPCC is climate change and sustainability education for all students.

QUESTION: Harold asked if President Dunn’s “Three Pillars” have been used to structure FYE Programs. Toni mentioned that Health and Wellness is built into the formal curriculum of FYS and that Diversity and Inclusion is built into the First-Year Orientation Cabaret Show, but that no structured effort has been made to date to reflect the Three Pillars.

III. DISCUSSION

OFFICE FOR SUSTAINABILITY COLLABORATION WITH FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

Three main places for collaboration between FYE Programs and the Office for Sustainability along with specific opportunities / potential initiatives were identified:

1. New Student Orientation
   • Include information on sustainability and the OfS in the Orientation Book (Done!)
   • Build sustainability into other orientation materials
   • Incorporate sustainability into the Cabaret Show (Joan Herrington)—a suggestion was made that the Cabaret Show might be able to build skits around the Three Pillars

2. Fall Welcome
   • Train Student Leaders to become “Sustainability Ambassadors”
   • Distribute Eco-Mugs (just before Pizza with the Profs starts)
   • Provide a table display on the OfS during Pizza with the Profs
   • Student Leaders’ could take first-year students on a bike ride or walk to introduce them to downtown
   • Provide information on non-motorized transit opportunities on campus websites (coordinate with Bronco Transit)
   • Participate in the Resource Fair (we did this last year)

3. First-Year Seminar
   • Sustainability-related Common Read
   • Separate sustainability-oriented sections of FYS
   • Incorporate sustainability and information on the OfS into the Student and Faculty training sessions
   • Create small, competitive research grants for sustainability that are open to all 70 FYS sections
Finally, a suggestion was made to create a tool-box of campus sustainability resources. These could include ppt's, videos, brochures, etc., which could be inserted into the three FYE components where appropriate and as opportunities arise.

Meeting adjourned 4:40 pm

**Upcoming Meeting:** Bernhard 205, Thursday, April 21 at 3 pm.