Wesustain
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

President's Universitywide Sustainability Committee (PUSC) Minutes

Minutes of July 21, 2011

President's Dining Room

Members Present: Mervyn Elliot, Harold Glasser, Matthew Hollander, John Schmidt, Carolyn Noack, Paul Pancella, Mary Peterson, Bill Davis, Sarah Pratt, Kate Binder, Chris Caprara, Caroline Webber, Hailey Magrum and Brian Balconi.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by John Schmidt to approve the Agenda as presented; seconded by Harold Glasser; Agenda approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Matt Hollander to approve the Minutes as presented; seconded by John Schmidt; Minutes approved.

INTRODUCTION – BRAINSTORMING MEEETING

HAROLD GLASSER

Harold gave a brief introduction to the meeting including brainstorming rationale and procedure. The university's strategic plan is under development and strives to be an overarching umbrella document that guides decisions within the university. The development of this plan creates a unique opportunity to integrate sustainability into the university structure. Additionally, the President's ACUPCC commitments declare that we will offer climate change and sustainability education for the whole university.

The goal of this meeting's brainstorming was to develop meaningful suggestions and rich ideas to help propel efforts to integrate climate change and sustainability education forward and result in real progress. The result of the brainstorming will be turned into a report that will ultimately reach the President and Provost.

A four-part questionnaire was handed out. Members were broken up into groups of three and asked to discuss each question as a group. They were then given 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaires individually. The entire group was then brought back together and asked to discuss individual and group ideas regarding integrating sustainability into:

- A Campus Learning Community
- Teaching
- Research
- Institutional Change

BRAINSTORMING RESULTS (collated, but presented largely un-edited to reflect the work of the participants)

LEARNING COMMUNITY

CROSS-COLLEGE COLLABORATIONS

- Create a cross-college graduate research lab
- Create cross-college sustainability related senior design projects
- Facilitate sustainability across curriculum and research

WEB-BASED TOOLS

- Web-based collaboration tool (wiki)
- Wiki for ideas for class content
    - Also for info that professors could include in their syllabus
- Connect people across campus by creating an asset map of "who is doing what and who wants to do what" sustainability related. This could take the form of a database of ideas, curriculum, and "help wanted" for projects and research. Could be multimedia.
    - Develop criteria for identifying existing courses that involve sustainability concepts and opportunities for new integration and infusion (with guidance from the PUSC?)
    - Use a web based survey tool to survey all faculty, ask them to self-report whether their classes or projects fit the set criteria – build the database from this information
    - The OfS has been working toward creating a web-based "idea database" that outlines projects the OfS has done, projects in progress and future ideas. These projects could have multimedia attached to them and people that are interested could "sign up" to share ideas / collaborate with others
    - This resource could help link students with certain skill sets to projects that need support.
- Offer sustainability tips on WMU today
    - Include information about completed projects.
- Create an "Idea Box" on sustainability website to accept suggestions for "sustainability opportunities"
- Ceate a OfS Wiki with college specific ideas for incorporation into curriculum
- Create a GIS map that identifies sustainability projects and initiatives

SPECIAL EVENTS

- Sustainability day activities (or week?)
- Regular focused workshops for faculty or anyone interested—2-4 times per year. Workshops would focus on helping attendees learn how to integrate sustainability
    - Workshops could be focused on different sustainability topics or address specific campus needs
- Communicate what others are doing on campus
    - In conjunction with the workshops and project database, invite people to present and discuss best practices
    - Opportunity for faculty, staff, or anyone to present on their sustainability related research and teaching
- Lecture series that would showcase guest speakers on campus or off
- Sustainability-oriented Research Symposium
- "Zero Waste" Bring Your Own Lunch (BYOL) "brown bags"

ADMINISTRATION-LEVEL IDEAS

- Create a "Sustainability Integration Workshop" for HR orientation and new faculty orientation
- Pilot a sustainability-oriented GE course
- Use FYE to learn about the dynamics of outreach regarding sustainability concepts
- Create a template of sustainability core competencies. Develop a course in each school, as a pilot, which could address the sustainability specific practices of that school's discipline.
- Develop a faculty/staff mentor program and list of possible mentors to support others new to the sustainability arena

MARKETING STRATEGIES

- Demonstrate how little steps (carefully coordinated) can make a BIG and positive change over time
    - Example: Get the word out about free bus rides for anyone with a Bronco ID – create a way to inform people about the campus and community bus system
- Elevate the awareness about campus as a living, learning laboratory by creating campus signage
    - Expand use of the **We**sustain logo
    - Possibly use flat screens or other kind of malleable media so that signage and messaging can stay fresh
- Make sustainability manageable so people don't get overwhelmed/discouraged
- "White Papers" – from PUSC on specific sustainability issues and topics (purchasing, CAP, Non-motorized Transportation, etc.)

Teaching

Academic changes

- Create an intro class within each academic college that teaches about specific sustainability activities and demonstrates how we practice the **We**sustain motto
- Create a Sustainability GE course or area requirement
    - 2-3 credit hour course integrated into on the required areas
    - Specific requirements for each major/minor that would fulfill the sustainability GE requirement and learn how sustainability applies to their field.
    - 50% common content, 50% specific to that major/area
- Sustainability minor or major
- Sustainability completion program (EUP)
- MA, MS and PhD tracks in Sustainability
- BA and BS in Sustainability
- Business and Engineering certificates in sustainability
- Certificate in Sustainability Ed
- Sustainability focused specialized courses
- Lifelong Learning Institute Course

Collaborations

- Collaborate with orientation leaders. Provide a tutorial similar to the one proposed for incoming faculty/staff and create ways for them to teach new students about sustainability on campus
- Provide a venue/forum and some structure for interested faculty to meet and discuss ideas for incorporating sustainability into various diverse major programs
- FYE
    - Include OfS at orientation, Fall Welcome, and in FYS classes
    - Increase integration of sustainability as is being done with the video competition pilot (highlighting sustainability activities/initiatives and PSAs) this coming semester

Administration-level ideas

- Money for incentives to hire faculty with sustainability experience
- Institute for Sustainability

Resources for students

- Communicate to students how they can participate in sustainability efforts within their college
- Make ties to campus Service Learning effort
- Teach skill sets to undergrads
    - Energy conservation
    - Recycling
    - Non-motorized transit
    - Sustainable purchasing
    - Life-cycle analysis

Resources for staff/faculty

- Create resources to help professors make the operation of teaching more sustainable
- Link people already incorporating sustainability in their curriculum
- Build sustainability into training for new faculty
    - Create faculty development opportunities to help them learn about sustainability in their fields
- Faculty development workshops for existing faculty
- Make available professional development funds for faculty who want training or development in sustainability

Research

Funding ideas

- Internal mini-grants
  - Pot of money specific to stimulating research dealing with sustainability
- Sustainability fund for faculty research
  - Ask faculty if they would be willing to be taxed in order to develop this pot of money
  - Function similar to the international program run through HI
- Explore endowed positions that would pay researchers
- Mini grants to cross college teams for large-scale grant development
- Support creative activities and scholarships that are not grant focused
- More GA/DA support for sustainability research
- Collaborate with OVPR to:
  - Create a series of workshops on grants, which provide incentives for sustainability research
  - Target sustainability related grants, disseminate calls for proposals, assist with professional writing
- Try a sustainability fund for faculty with support from our AAUP chapter. Use funding to award research/grant proposals
- Separate some part of FRACASF so that part of it is segregated for seeding research projects related to sustainability
- Support for grant matches
- Money (ASTRA?) to support other sustainability research activities that are not likely to be grant funded
- Pool of money to support cost-share on proposals addressing sustainability
- Utilize OVPR and OfS website to promote funding opportunities related to sustainability
- Endowed research position in sustainability
- Start up funds for new faculty doing sustainability research
- Earmark some university money for sustainability research

Collaborations/support for researchers

- Sustainability Ambassadors
- Providing support for people who have expertise in sustainability but don't have enough to consider themselves experts
- Combine student and faculty dual research opportunities
- Look outward for best practices in specific disciplines/societies/organizations
- Grant development support
- Master's capstone projects
- Explore collaboration with the local and regional communities on "Sustainable Communities" and "Community Sustainability Indicators" research
- Support collaborative research between students and researchers
  - Involve staff and the entire community

Special events

- Create opportunties for researchers to show what point they're at in developing sustainable practices and share best practices with the university community
- Annual symposium for faculty and community

Other

- "Hey OfS" idea program or problem reporting with rewards to person with best idea (Bronco Bucks or Bookstore credits)

Institutional Change

Academic

- Support for new course development
  - Possibly through the OfS

- Faculty tenure
    - Find a way to change tenure structure so that people who would like to collaborate with other departments—and especially across colleges—do not jeopardize their tenure
    - This added language must not violate AAUP wording or interfere with specific college's requirements (discussion/collaboration with the Faculty Senate, Administration, and the AAUP will be necessary)
    - Re-write the contract language
- Sustainability leadership training
- Improved E-Learning platform to include VOIP
- Develop courses that will lead to curriculum change at GE level
- Joint appointments (especially Cross College)

Administration

- Create a "Sustainability Institute" to support many of the changes suggested here—especially those related to collaborative, cross college courses, degree programs, certificates, and research collaboration
- Invest in use of electronic records and systems to reduce paper and waste
    - Already in use at Sindecuse
    - Invest in Unified Clinic
    - Already in use at Waldo for research
- Create more new "sustainable" residence halls
    - LEED Certified
    - Expand residents paying for utilities
- Make sustainability a more visible trait among administrators – walk the talk
    - How they operate their office or division
    - How they get to meetings (and travel in general)
    - What is used during meetings (food, printed materials, "give-aways", etc.)
    - How offices are decorated/redecorated

Collaborations

- Expand opportunities for resource sharing—include staff
    - Centralized reception or call center instead of greeter in every office area and printer on every desk
- Foster an atmosphere of inter-college collaboration not competition or siloing
- Create physical space on campus to encourage networking & research collaboration
- Expand incentives for interdisciplinary collaborations
- Provide examples of policies at other sister institutions (best practice)

Wrap Up

Ideas from this brainstorming meeting will be organized by the OfS and sent out via survey monkey to all of the attendees of this meeting. At that point, they will have a chance to review the ideas to ensure that all are communicated clearly and accurately. All corrections should be written in the comments section for each idea. Once the survey is edited, it will then be distributed to the entire PUSC and members will be prompted to rate the ideas in terms of priority. The November meeting will be devoted to further discussion of these survey results and next steps.

Update re. future meetings

The August PUSC meeting will be devoted to Diversity and Inclusion. September will focus on the preliminary ACUPCC CAP. October will focus on Athletics and Sports. After we have a clearer sense of where things are going with our "Sustainability in Research and Teaching" brainstorming we will invite Academic Affairs and OVPR for discussions.

Carolyn Noack made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Matt Hollander, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Upcoming meeting: August 18, 2011 at 3 PM in Room 204, Bernhard Center