President’s Universitywide Sustainability Committee (PUSC) Minutes
Minutes of October 20, 2011
President’s Dining Room

Members: Pat Holton, Sarah Pratt, Megan Walsh, Ochas Pupwe, Nola Wiersma, Carolyn Noack, Paul Pancellla, Anand Sankey, Paul Farber, Mary Peterson, Andrew Targowski, Kate Binder, Matt Hollander, Harold Glasser, Bill Davis, Pete Strazdas, Judy Gipper

Guests: WMU Athletics Staff Members: Kathy Beauregard, Matt Kulik, Dave Corstange

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Andrew Targowski to approve the Agenda as presented; seconded by Paul Farber; Agenda approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Matt Hollander to approve the Minutes as presented; seconded by Paul Pancella; Minutes approved.

INTRODUCTION

HAROLD GLASSER

Harold reviewed the purpose and goals of the PUSC for the guests from Athletics and stressed that part of role is to make connections and foster collaborations between departments and offices on campus. The PUSC is interested in learning about how Athletics models sustainability in its daily functions and what areas might benefit from discussion and collaboration.

MATT HOLLANDER

Matt provided a brief overview of the projects currently underway at the Office for Sustainability and guided by the PUSC. Through the Student Sustainability Fee, the OfS employs over 20 student interns who work on projects such as Oil-to-Mowers, a cargo bike feasibility study, the Campus Beet initiative, a student-led bike shop, the student garden initiative, and the Gibbs House.

Some of the larger collaborations that the OfS is responsible for include the Climate Action Plan that helps meet our ACUPCC commitments to become carbon neutral and provide sustainability and climate change education for all students.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION

I. DAILY OPERATIONS

The Athletics Department employs about 150 people including GA’s and manages the 450 student athletes that represent WMU every day. In the office, the campus recycling procedures are utilized. The NCAA requires that paper documentation be kept on file for at least five year. A company is hired to do shredding and recycling of old records. The internal filing system is mostly paperless. Cell phone usage is another big resource draw.

In the past, media guides constituted a major source of paper consumption by the department. The football guide alone was 130 pages and distributed to every player. These guides are all online now. Additionally, movement has been made toward email communications instead of paper mailings and completely paperless ticketing methods are being explored.
II. GAME-DAY RECYCLING

Matt Kulik pointed out that we rarely have 30,000 people in one spot on campus. As a result, post-game clean up is a huge endeavor. There are at least 10 groups that come to help clean areas after events. Part of the job of Athletics is to inform all these groups about what goes where and what can be recycled. Additionally, instead of using fountain drinks, many groups are recruited to collect returnables.

Megan mentioned that in preparation for this meeting, she researched ways that athletic departments have become carbon neutral. These tactics included using recycled gym shoes for sports arena footing, and purchasing carbon offsets. University of CO Boulder has made an effort to make one game per year carbon neutral and is looking to expand from there. For this game, they had sustainability tables providing information, bought carbon offsets for the team flying in and for the electricity used during the game.

**Discussion:**

Athletics would welcome a similar initiative and suggested that the effort could start small with tabling, information, and an awareness raising effort. It was suggested that a basketball game might be a good place to start. Megan also suggested that an informational video on sustainability could be shown at sporting events. This would be most feasible during a football game, but in general, announcements are easy to do during games.

Harold mentioned that AASHE has produced a greening of athletics document and he will forward it to Kathy, Matt, and Dave.

As an additional awareness raising tool, Dean’s “water bottle monster” was discussed and approved for an appearance at a game.

Carolyn and Matt Kulik have been coordinating to create an announcement during games for fans to pass recyclables to the aisles for workers to collect. This has worked well at other schools and they both committed to continuing discussions to work out the logistics for a pilot at WMU.

**Discussion:**

Kathy suggested considering the number of event staff needed to support it. The student section is typically not the messiest area after a game, so target sections should be identified. Figuring out the system for passing recyclables and making sure they get into the correct container will also be important. If all types of recycling are passed down, how would the person at the end sort? It’s possible that only bottles only might be more appropriate. Collection should also start in smaller areas where people aren’t passing over 40 seats.

Matt Kulik also suggested placing recycling containers at the top of every aisle and ushers could pass out information about what is recyclable.

The current recycling effort at football games was discussed. Most of the recycling from within the venue does not end up at its designated pick-up spot and likely gets tossed into a trash dumpster. Carolyn will be writing specific instructions for recycling workers at each venue to help avoid this issue. Concession area recycling was also discussed. This area is somewhat difficult to manage because all of the workers are volunteers who earn money for their organizations through working concessions. The result is that there is a rapid turnover of workers. Additional discussion will be necessary to identify improved management strategies.

III. WASTE REDUCTION

Carolyn suggested that it might be beneficial to look into including “take-back policies” in contracts and attempt to find ways to avoid generating waste. She cited an example of the mounds of cardboard boxes she finds after the football players receive new athletic shoes. Kathy responded that the Athletics department has an Adidas contract and it would be feasible to ask them about a buy-back policy.

Bill asked if reusable containers could be utilized more during games and practices. Kathy responded that the Coke contract makes this a challenging area to address.

**Discussion:**

Ideas included providing bottle filling stations for athletes during practice and selling reusable bottles at cost. Allowing students to bring EcoMugs into games was also discussed; measures need to be in place to ensure that only empty EcoMugs would be allowed through the gates.
IV. ATHLETES
Many PUSC members were curious about the Athletics Department’s efforts to ensure health, wellbeing and equality for athletes and WMU students in general.

Student athletes are the main priority of Athletics. The NCAA requires extensive drug testing. Athletes are encouraged to participate in various community service projects including Safe Walk to School. They are expected to be leaders and represent the WMU community.

WMU is one of the only universities in the country with equal men’s and women’s basketball funding. Additionally, in order to reduce costs and meet Title 9 requirements, a number of men’s sports and one women’s sport was cut. WMU now funds 6 men’s sports and 10 women’s sports. Efforts are made to support numbers of athletes that are proportional to campus gender ratios. Additionally, WMU has a detailed and supportive transgender policy through the NCAA.

V. TRAVEL
Some team travel is done by van, but most travel happens through the Indian Trails contract. As part of the contract, buses are always full. Not every seat is occupied by passengers, as some space is needed for equipment. Additionally in order to conserve resources, busses follow guidelines that limit idling prior to travel. They also follow strict speed limits.

During the football season, a lot of air travel happens to play games in far away states. The away game schedule has since been cut back. An initiative was started to keep money in the state and play against Michigan teams. MSU was the only one to agree; we have played there and were paid by them. We now owe them three games. By having us play there, MSU saved from not having to fly in a team. WMU will save similarly when they play here.

Hockey season has become more carbon intensive, despite WMU voting against league changes that put Alaska, Colorado, and other far away teams in our league. This will cause an increase in travel for the hockey team.

Purchasing carbon offsets for team travel has not been previously discussed by Athletics, but Athletics agreed to research and consider this strategy that will help WMU to meet its ACUPCC obligations.

VI. FACILITIES
Many of the resource use reductions within Athletics result from coordination with Facilities Management. Ice-skating and pool area lighting has been adjusted and equipment to transfer heat from the ice rink chillers to the pool have been installed, day games are encouraged, and data from Seeley Center lighting is tracked by the hour and shared. The data from the Seeley Center has been used to address behavioral issues and can easily be converted into dollar amounts, making the information (and cost savings) tangible and effective.

In addition, suite space is used extremely well. The spaced is used regularly as an office, classroom, meeting room, and game day suites. It is heated with an infrared system instead of forced air. The space is used from 6am - 9pm and then turned over to student recreation and used until frequently until 1am.

The lifespan of the artificial football turf surfaces is about 10 years. The indoor surface is due for new turf and recycling methods will be explored for the rubber components.

VII. ATHLETICS SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
Sustainability initiatives have not been discussed within the athletic conference. Kathy will be sure to make it an agenda point during the next meeting. Additionally, it was suggested that an athletics-specific committee be formed at WMU to address sustainability. The committee could include interested student athletes and multiple passionate staff members. It was suggested that Megan could initiate the committee and Harold offered to do a presentation about sustainability initiatives at WMU and other universities to kick off the creation of this committee. The committee could also facilitate dissemination of information about the Student Sustainability Grants, Internships, and the activities of the OIS.

Carolyn Noack made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Matt Hollander, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.