Welcome and Introductions

Members: Kate Binder, Chris Caprara, Anne Copeland, Mervyn Elliott, Harold Glasser, Matt Hollander, Denise Keele, Leah Omilion Hodges, Carolyn Noack, Tim Palmer, Jeff Spoelstra, Betty Dennis

Guests: Kim Juwong, Kevin Martini, Dean Walrack

Procedural Items

Approval of Agenda
Motion by Hollander to approve the Agenda as presented; seconded by Noack; Agenda approved.

Approval of Minutes
Motion by Palmer to approve the previous minutes; seconded by Hollander; Minutes approved.

Updates/Discussions

Introduction
Denise Keele, Assistant Professor of Political Science has joined the committee. Her active involvement in the Humanities Center Climate Change Study Group as well as the developing Freshwater Studies program will help facilitate a robust culture of sustainability.

Office for Sustainability
Harold presented the recently completed 2012 Sustainability Highlights report which is already being used to share WMU sustainability efforts and achievements with the university and potential funders. Committee members supported the OfS plan to make this publication available on-line, mailing it to targeted groups, and/or sharing this with other university departments to promote the university’s sustainability efforts. See http://www.wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u36/2013/130111-Annual-Report.pdf.

Meetings of Interest
The Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association held their annual statewide meeting at the OfS on March 11, 2013. Harold suggested that faculty recommend that students attend the next Southwest Michigan Sustainable Business Forum meeting scheduled originally schedule to take place on April 11, 2013 at 11am (NOTE: the meeting has since been postponed and the reschedule date will be shared as soon as possible). The meeting will feature an employer/employee panel discussing skills employers are looking for in prospective employees and recent graduates will share perspectives on what attracts them to employers.

Announcement
A reminder that registration is open for Art 5000: Art and the Earth available Summer II. In this course, participants will make and appreciate art that conveys the social, aesthetic, and renewable balance between the re/purpose and sustainability of art and its material utility—as a natural and man-made resource. The faculty contact for this course is Bill Davis. The OfS is discussing how to regularly and fairly promote sustainability focused or related courses such as Art 5000.
Committee members were presented with a draft glossary of terms used for the approved sustainability courses and research definition. The three dimensions and four systems conditions presented in the draft glossary represent required elements characterizing a course or research marked as sustainability focused or sustainability related.

The first six definitions were discussed without modification. As the fourth system condition listed, the definition of the term “economically vital” was examined and explored in depth. Committee members debated whether including the “anticipatory, ecologically regenerative, socially just, and can support flourishing communities” in the definition represents essential defining criteria of this phrase, or whether these terms are redundant because they represent the prior three system conditions. Participants debated whether it was fair to “raise the bar” for faculty that would characterize their courses or research as contributing to economic vitality.

During this deliberation, a suggestion was put to the committee to present these definitions before other faculty members or groups to discuss and offer another perspective on the terms even though the PUSC is composed of faculty members representing all colleges.

There was no clear consensus and no motion to modify or approve a definition of economically vital. The closing recommendation of the committee was to solicit the opinion of the several members of the developing Freshwater Studies program and PUSC committee members not present at this meeting.

**Sustainability Learning Outcomes**

STARS requires sustainability learning outcomes. Harold provided a brief introduction to Jamie Hirsh’s research which endeavors to answer questions such as: How do core competencies in sustainability differ from other traditional higher education curriculum and core competencies? Are there different pedagogical approaches and strategies associated with sustainability in higher education? How do we define core competencies in sustainability? Once the competency is named, how is that acquired? How do we evaluate if a person has this competency?

Committee members were given additional resources to take with them to consider these thoughts along with AACU learning outcomes for an upcoming committee meeting.

Motion by Hollander to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Noack. The meeting adjourned at 5:04 pm.

Upcoming Meeting: Office for Sustainability April 25, 2013 – Please note this is a rescheduled date because the OIS has chosen to cancel and reschedule the April 18, 2013 PUSC meeting.