President’s Universitywide Sustainability Committee (PUSC) Minutes  
Minutes of April 25, 2013  
Office for Sustainability (OfS)

Welcome and Introductions

Members: Chris Caprara, Anne Copeland, Bill Davis, Mervyn Elliott, Paul Farber, Harold Glasser, Jamie Hirsh, Matt Hollander, Denise Keele, Leah Omilion Hodges, Jonna Johnson, Carolyn Noack, Tim Palmer, Paul Pancellia, Sarah Pratt, Jeff Spoelstra, Andrew Targowski, Pete Strazdas

Guests: Christian Galbraith, Betty Dennis, Kelsey Schuring

Procedural Items

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

Approval of Agenda
Members decided to move the Greenhouse Gas Inventory agenda item up on the agenda, immediately following the Brief Updates agenda item. Motion by Pancellia to approve the modified Agenda; seconded by Noack; Agenda approved.

Updates/Discussions

Points of Interest

Kalamazoo Bike Week, promoting cycling advocacy, awareness, and education takes place May 9th -18th with various events occurring around town. Information about events can be found at http://kalamazoobikeweek.com and the OfS homepage.

Universitywide sustainability efforts continue with 500 solar panels being put into place on the Sangren Hall rooftop. These panels are designed to generate 0.25 megawatts of power by Fall 2013.

A $0.5 million federal grant was received by Facilities Management to provide funding for five more stormwater projects on campus to support facilities management’s strategic approach to retaining and infiltrating stormwater.

As part of WMU’s ongoing energy conservation measures (ECMs), lights in the OfS have been replaced with more energy efficient LED lights that use significantly less energy. Parking lots near Parkview campus and Ellsworth Hall are undergoing similar changes to LED lighting.

Work continues at the OfS on elements of non-motorized transportation (e.g., pathways and bike share research). A summary will be presented at the OfS at the end of May.
PRESENTATION

GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY PRESENTATION
Christian Galbraith, graduating Environmental Studies senior student, presented the results of her ENVS 4100 report of WMU’s greenhouse gas inventory (for the 2012 calendar year). Data were gathered from campus sources including Facilities Management, Logistical Services, Office for Institutional Research, Auxiliary Enterprises, Study Abroad Programs, and the Office for Sustainability. Current WMU greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were compared to calendar year 2008 emissions. Overall, emissions were reported to have decreased from 123 Mt to 106 Mt eCO$_2$ (equivalent CO$_2$). The Office for Sustainability will build on this student effort in order to fulfill WMU’s GHG reporting commitment with the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment.

The ENVS 4100 student report and a summary of WMU’s report to the ACUPCC will be made available on the OfS website.

Members discussed ways to reduce WMU emissions including the possibility of creating an offset package for Study Abroad programs. The concept of taxing travel expenses and using that revenue for facilities conservation would align with actions identified in WMU’s 2012 Climate Action Plan. Additionally, WMU’s large-scale investments in energy conservation were discussed.

CLIMATE ACTION IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING
Denise noted that recent climate lectures at Lee Honors College, namely Paul P.’s lecture on GHG emissions, generated significant interest from faculty members eager to contribute to future university sustainability efforts, either through Climate Action Plan implementation, the PUSC, or other such ad-hoc sub committees.

A more thorough and thoughtful discussion about Climate Action Plan implementation is scheduled to take place at a future PUSC meeting.

SUSTAINABILITY TRACKING, ASSESSMENT, AND REPORTING SYSTEMS (STARS)
GLOSSARY FOLLOW UP
Committee members continued a review of the draft glossary of terms used for the approved sustainability courses and research definitions. During the last committee meeting the fourth system condition listed, the definition of the term “economically vital”, was examined with a final recommendation to solicit further faculty opinion.

Upon consideration of feedback and additional research, a recommendation was made to replace the term “economically vital” with “economically accountable” with the following definition:

“Economically accountable—economies that employ full-cost accounting to internalize externalities and facilitate the making of decisions that are consistent with what nature can provide and with what societies and communities can afford.”

A motion was made to approve this definition of economically accountable and to change the three dimensions in the definition to adjectives (replacing environment, society, and economy with the adjectives environmental, social, and economic). Matt moved to adopt these changes and Paul P. seconded. Motion carried.

Harold encouraged any interested members to stay and informally discuss how to advance STARS Education and Research credit areas (e.g., graduate programs, undergraduate programs, learning outcomes, etc.).

Motion by Matt to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Harold. The meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Upcoming Meeting: May 16 canceled. Next regularly scheduled meeting June 20.