

## Ad-hoc Sustainability Committee

Minutes of meeting September 5, 2008 in President's Conference Room, Parrish, 10:30 am

### Present:

Nick Buttino

Ralph Thayer

Joy Charlton

Arthur McGarity

Maurice Eldridge

Eric Wagner

Amanda Bayer

Nadine Kolowrat

Al Bloom

Carr Everbach (recorder)

Carr gave an introduction for this first meeting of the Sustainability Committee (SusCom, for short) that reviewed the history of the predecessor committee (SPC) and outlined its final recommendations. He also updated the group on two sustainability-related issues that came up over the summer, namely the Greenhouse Gas Inventory grant submitted to PA-DEP in late August and the ongoing negotiations with company Viridity on forming a power-pool with other institutions in our area to better manage electrical use. Carr also noted that he had scheduled a faculty lunch presentation by SusCom for October 1, 2008.

Nadine updated the group on the submission of a Green Roof grant to DEP over the summer, mentioned that Haverford has just received 3 faculty positions from the Mellon environmental grant program, and suggested that Swarthmore might apply to that program for funds.

Al Bloom thanked the SusCom members for their previous service and described what he thought would be the fate of the previous SPC recommendations within the long-range planning process. He assured the group that our recommendations would be considered by the final committee, but cautioned that the likelihood of specially-earmarked funds for sustainability were unlikely in the near future (and perhaps ever). Such funds would have to compete with other initiatives in the long-range planning process, such as new buildings, faculty course load reductions, and financial aid. The SPC's faculty appointment recommendation will be handed off to CEP, which will look for good synergies such as Environmental Economics hires that would help departments and the ENVS program, both.

Al Bloom addressed the charge of the committee by saying that we should make best use of current resources, coordinate and consolidate sustainability efforts on campus, promote a website, and focus community attention on the Lang Center as a vehicle for sustainability communication. We are to focus on the "Action Items" list from the SPC, rank-order them, quantify their costs and benefits, and build community support for the implementation of the top few. Costs that are not too large and that can be subsumed under current budgets would be preferred, but our committee can point the way to more expensive proposals that might be considered for future years. Our committee can also work to educate the community and work with the Deans and Earthlust (among others) on ways of reducing unnecessary use of resources.

Joy outlined what the Lang Center can do, and what it can't do. It can serve as a central focal point for issues of social responsibility, including sustainability, that cut across all campus stakeholder groups. It can provide meeting space for our committee and for student groups; it can provide our committee a Lang Center Intern who might work on the website, its Advisory Board can work with us through Eric Wagner; it could offer Summer Internship spots; it could sponsor fireside chats/lunches. What it cannot do is provide a staff position or part of one (perhaps someday, but not soon). Nadine reminded the group that the Lang Visiting Professor for Issues of Social Change could be a sort-of staff addition, and Joy agreed that she would like our committee to nominate someone for this position, though it is sometimes difficult to get people to come. The requirement is for one year, and so people who are active but recently retired might be better bets.

Maurice pointed out that we are in "ranking season" and we might find someone good to invite from the many lists of green schools (e.g. Warren Wilson College in Ashville, SC).

Joy reminded the committee that our alumni are also extremely energetic, especially the ones that came to the Spring 2008 Lax conference. We should find alumni with specific expertise in areas where we have projects, and ask for their help, rather than having alumni representatives on our committee. The same logic would apply to grant writing or energy audits.

Nick, as the only student present, volunteered to tell Earthlust about our committee and its charge, at its Monday meeting. Joy mentioned the assistance the Lang Center would like to render to all student groups, including leadership training, how to run a meeting, etc.

Carr asked each member to fill out a weekly schedule and get it back to him so that he and Ralph could plan the next meeting of the committee. Adjournment was at 11:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carr Everbach X8079