

Sustainability Committee Minutes 13 February 2009

Attending: Maurice Eldridge, Rebecca Ringle, Nicholas Buttino (Notes), Joy Charlton, Ralph Thayer (chair)

Correction on last minutes: the College has been increasing in energy use, but not as quickly as we would be without preventive measures.

[note from Carr Everbach: Liz Haegele has left the College, and therefore resigned from SusCom. We should ask the Arboretum/Grounds for another representative.]

The following suggestion was made by one of our committee members:

Place a list of "things faculty can do right now to save resources" on our sustainability page and on the faculty-staff dashboard. We can also announce these steps before a faculty lunch sometime.

1. Turn off the lights after class and when exiting your office, every time, day or night.
2. Set your default printing preferences to resource-saving options. Use: 1) two-sided printing, 2) 1-inch margins, and 3) a small but readable font (such as 11-point ...). [Click on the hot links to find step-by-step instructions for setting your defaults.]
3. Turn off your computer every evening, and set it to go into sleep mode after 20 minutes of inactivity. [Click on the hot links to find step-by-step instructions for setting sleep mode.]

Other ideas:

--Walk to work.

--Tell students what readings do not have to be printed.

--Collect printouts of course readings from students to distribute to others the next time you teach your course.”]

Ralph handed out PowerPoint description of Facilities’ sustainability initiatives over the past 10 years – free to distribute [will be posted as PDF on SusCom website]

Summary of Discussion of last week’s presentation by Elizabeth Crampton and Ben Dair:

The College is close to making an announcement of who is the new president. SusCom will have a better idea of what successful strategies might be, once the background and interests of a new president are better known. It is unlikely that any prospective president will not be aware of sustainability issues, and may have already taken particular stands. The next meeting of SusCom occurs after the next Board meeting, at which an announcement may be made.

Planning Steering Committee and Middle-States Accreditation committee acknowledge that new president may establish priorities, and have therefore put on hold recommendations from all planning groups. The Sustainability Planning Committee, SusCom's predecessor, was a sub-committee of leadership planning group. SusCom therefore will continue moving forward with low-hanging fruit as charged by president Bloom in September, 2008, until given direction by new president.

An alternative view is a more active and aggressive approach on the part of SusCom to bring in the new president. SusCom could rally support behind environment *before* president arrives, not wait until after he/she is settled in and establishing priorities.

However, support for sustainability is already evident from College and community values and from the existence of SusCom (especially if made a permanent standing committee rather than ad hoc). We should be deferential to the new president and his/her priorities. Also, the committee can be more successful, if its strategy is based upon the background of the new president. Swarthmore (including all the groups we heard from in the Fall), and Facilities (c.f., Ralph's list) have accomplished a great deal and that is a kind of positive momentum.

The student body, however, may not be sufficiently concerned about sustainability; Many students have little interest in changing their habits to conserve resources. A huge part of SusCom's job is our continuous education of faculty, students, and staff. We must make this a community effort, not just a committee effort. One current motivator for conservation everyone can sign on to, given the economic climate, is money saving. We should aim to bring those who have not 'bought in' to believe in the importance of sustainability. Will our national infrastructure eventually collapse?

There are multiple levels at which the College can be engaged. For example, 1) big statement of ideological commitment, from Administration-down and College-wide, 2) solution generation, from big idea like creating new collaborative electricity market with other schools to determining the relative costs of conservation methods, 3) daily commitment to conservation measures, 4) education/raising consciousness about importance of the issue, as well as specific steps people can take, 5) involvement in political processes/activism from local to international levels.

Should we consider tapping into helping the Obama administration's efforts? The Powershift Conference may generate ideas – it is occurring in a few weeks – and the College is helping students attend this DC sustainability event. People's ability to compartmentalize their lives is just starting to break down, and SusCom needs to facilitate people further in the process of seeing the connections between apparently disparate actions. Note that this is part of the age/education group, and part of education/experience of Swarthmore community.

The following is a draft letter from Earthlust to the new president:

“To the Incoming President,

Welcome to Swarthmore. Now that you, too, are part of this institution that has long been dedicated to social responsibility and progressive change, we offer you yet another invitation. We invite you to answer the call for leadership and action on environmentalism and campus sustainability.

As you know, Swarthmore’s oldest tradition is to spearhead socially progressive values. In 1864, Swarthmore became one of the first colleges that accepted both male and female students. In 1965, the college started the Upward Bound movement to prepare African American students for college. In 1980, the Lang Opportunity Scholarship was founded so that current students could promote social change through community-based projects. Now is the time to extend that tradition to the environmentalist movement. Environmentalism is a social movement inextricably linked with issues of health, nutrition, inequality, and poverty. The effects of environmental injustice and non-sustainable practices can be seen in the neighboring city of Chester and far across the globe.

Many student groups and committees have been pushing for change in our sustainable practices, including Earthlust, Environmental Justice, Good Food, and the Sustainability Committee. Thanks to the efforts of each of these groups, Swarthmore now has wind power, composting, student gardening, and the Greening of Swarthmore recommendations. However, these are singular, localized calls for change. Swarthmore’s environmental network lacks a crucial centralization. Without a salaried sustainability director or a comprehensive sustainability plan, Swarthmore still lags far behind other schools. Although several lists of suggestions and recommendations have been drafted, implementation has been slow. Only through forging a strong, centralized partnership can we progress our campus environmental movement and join the many other institutions that have already shown their commitment to a sustainable mission.

In this time of institutional change, we all have the opportunity to renew our goals, forge new partnerships, and learn new ways to tackle our obstacles. We extend to you this invitation to be a progressive leader, move for action, and include Swarthmore in the green movement of the twenty-first century.”

A correction is needed: Swarthmore College joined the Upward Bound program; it was a federal effort; Swarthmore did not start it, though we were an early participant. The College has not always been that slow, as the letter says, to move on sustainability issues, especially in the Facilities area. The recent campus visit and talk by Mark Allen Hughes, the Mayor of Philadelphia’s Sustainability Director, was especially interesting in that Hughes talked about so many ways Philadelphia is effectively situated re: sustainability. Good to use positive momentum to move forward, while pointing to ways we can do more, better, and faster.

The letter's calls for some specific action (such as the hiring of a Sustainability Director) on the part of the new president may circumvent the long-range planning process. There is a danger that Earthlust's letter appears to put the College back in the days before a Sustainability Committee was created. It downplays the progress we are making. The letter should include the links to the larger recommendations (both SusCom's and those of the Sustainability Planning Committee in May 2008) that are on our website.

Invite representatives from those students who attend PowerShift to speak with our committee. It is always helpful to hear good ideas, such as the Harvard checklists brought to us in our previous meeting by Elizabeth Crampton. Perhaps we could provide the Gazette a set of questions to focus the things that we are interested in; find a Phoenix journalist to write a story on SusCom, and perhaps interview Ralph about what Facilities is doing. There is still a lot more work our committee should do on the PR function.

Decision to add Ralph's PowerPoint packet as PDF on SusCom website.

Next meeting is on Monday 23 February 2009: 11:30-12:30am in Lang Center. We will continue this discussion (hopefully with more SusCom members present! - ECE editorial remark)

Here is information provided by Elizabeth Crampton after the previous meeting:

Harvard's Campus-wide Sustainability Principles

Introduction

Harvard University contributes to the global environment and human well being in several important ways. Through its primary mission of research, education and outreach, Harvard's faculty have made significant advances in science, economics, public policy, design, medicine and public health. The University's academic preeminence and respect throughout the world also provides a considerable opportunity and responsibility to consider the example set by the economic, human health, and environmental performance of its campus. Harvard also influences generations of students whose future behaviors and decisions are shaped by what they learn from their campus experience and the actions of the University's leaders. The University has an affirmative record of responsible compliance with environmental and safety regulations and a proven effective system of environmental management accountability. As Harvard plans its future growth, these considerations should support planning decisions that reflect a balance of economic, environmental, and socially responsible values. The following principles are intended to guide Harvard's practices toward sustainability through the management of building design, construction, renovation, procurement, landscape, energy, water, waste, emissions, transportation, human health and productivity.

Sustainability Principles

Harvard University is committed to developing and maintaining an environment that enhances human health and fosters a transition toward sustainability. Sustainability

should be advanced through research, analysis, and experience gained over time. To that end, Harvard University is committed to continuous improvement in:

- **Demonstrating institutional practices that promote sustainability**, including measures to increase efficiency and use of renewable resources, and to decrease production of waste and hazardous materials, both in Harvard's own operations and in those of its suppliers.
- **Promoting health, productivity and safety** of the University community through design and maintenance of the built environment.
- **Enhancing the health of campus ecosystems** and increasing the diversity of native species.
- **Developing planning tools** to enable comparative analysis of sustainability implications and to support long-term economic, environmental and socially responsible decision-making.
- **Encouraging environmental inquiry** and institutional learning throughout the University community.
- **Establishing indicators for sustainability** that will enable monitoring reporting and continuous improvement.

Implementation Framework

In order to be successful over the long term, decisions concerning human health and sustainability must be economically sound and seamlessly integrated with established management and financial systems. The initial implementation plan for the University's Sustainability Principles is based on four closely related tracks:

- **Capital Planning and Construction** -The University's capital planning and approvals process for new construction and major renovation of existing campus facilities will be expanded to incorporate the Sustainability Principles in its review. Each school and administrative department proposing a capital project will be required to establish specific objectives consistent with the Principles as part of the formal approval process for capital projects, as is done currently for numerous other priority financial, technical and regulatory issues.
- **Annual Financial and Budget Planning** -The University's annual budget planning process will include explicit recognition of the Sustainability Principles in the commitment of operating funds. As part of its internal annual financial plan, each School and Department will be requested to set specific goals and to report on how expenditures for facilities, support services, procurement and other activities are consistent with the University's commitment to continuous improvement towards campus sustainability.
- **Supporting the Schools and Departments** -The University will continue to invest in support systems for sustainability, such as the Harvard Green Campus Initiative (HGCI), to facilitate the implementation of the Sustainability Principles by providing schools and administrative departments with: a clearinghouse of proven planning tools, guidelines, preferred technologies, products and design solutions; campus specific research and innovation; cost effective financial incentives; training and expertise; assistance in meeting planning and reporting requirements; and a means of facilitating broad community engagement.
- **Broad-based Continued Review** -Recognizing that the concepts of sustainability will evolve over time through experience, research, economic analysis, and technological advances, the University will continue the work that led to the development of the Sustainability Principles by appointing a standing sustainability advisory group consisting of members of the faculty, administration and student body. This group will be charged with advising in the development of sustainability

indicators, monitoring progress and providing recommendations for improving the Sustainability Principles and Implementation Framework.