

Sustainability Committee Minutes

20 March 2009

Attending: Amanda Bayer, Ralph Thayer, Nick Buttino (Notes), Carr Everbach (Agenda), Joy Charlton, Eric Wagner, Rebecca Ringle

Carr's All-Staff Meeting talk on March 17 focused on resource efficiency so that we can return to the non-wasteful values of Swarthmore's founding – and save staff jobs in the economic downturn. From questions following that talk and several emails:

Suggestion that SusCom should add a page on its website to give tips to people to educate their friends/community members on how to discuss sustainability.

Are we in a position to do this? We cannot be one-stop shopping for all sustainability suggestions, but we should be able to offer some links, ideas, and guidance as a start.

Ralph has information that we can put on the website (submitted later; see attached).

For outside links, idea that we will keep top three recent things and change them about once a month.

Education is large part of student groups' contributions. GreenMarch suggestions have been great so far.

Tom Cochrane is developing a system to give carbon cost for reserving space. Good small example to stop people from reserving rooms that they do not need, since the rooms are lit/heated/cooled depending upon reservations.

Suggestion that we create a wiki for discussion of green points by the community. Would it be moderated? By whom? Suggestion that we should create a radio broadcast/ podcast. Concern that these suggestions will take too much time/energy from co-chairs. What do we do with all of these great suggestions that are outside of our scope? How can we teach people to help on their own?

Lang center intern for summer to help? Setting up a (lightly) moderated wiki using BlackBoard tools may not be too much trouble over the summer. We might try it and see how it goes.

What is Swarthmore's role/niche? What is the value added by Swarthmore?

Swarthmore may be influential on others due to our clout/leadership, and we should make use of that leverage. Also, we must catch up to our own standards and high-minded ideals. Symbolism is important because of magnifying effect on people's actions.

Discussion arguing that we should do the morally correct thing regardless of outcome. Argument for focusing Swarthmore's efforts on developing innovative technologies, procedures, perspectives that could be useful for adoption by the wider world. But we are behind other institutions in many aspects of sustainability.

Swarthmore College has value in seeing connections between areas.

Motion to give wiki and education project to summer intern. Agreement to do so, and add a community education link to the SusCom website.

Discussion on SusCom participating in Web 1.0 v. movement toward Web 2.0

Discussion on Greenhouse Gas Inventory grant from Pennsylvania DEP:

- Two consultants from Temple (Ambler) hired, plus some Temple grad students
- Two Swarthmore students (Rebecca Ringle and Hannah Jones), with some help from Ben Dair this summer.
- Statistical sampling of residents' energy/resource use in the four municipalities comprising the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District.
- How much data are we trying to collect? Enough to estimate tons of CO2 equivalent on an ongoing basis, starting retrospectively (2008) but building in procedures for tracking.
- Plugging data into spreadsheet to build a model that can be displayed on a website. Considering everything, including packaging of consumables, transportation, energy use.

Request to reflect on last meeting: proposal to make SusCom a standing committee. Eric will make another pass – need to be ready by COFP committee assignment (end of semester). Send out via email.

Two Greenbox suggestions given to Rebecca on paper.

Ralph needs to make case to the Administration to make investments that will pay for themselves over time (e.g. replace leaky windows in Wharton). Unfortunately, fiscal downturn has the potential for Facilities to lose staff, postpone efficiency improvements. Ralph should receive backing from SusCom when making case for preserving staff to improve efficiency: pennywise but pound-foolish.

Suggestion for Environmental Services to place specially-designed "CONTAMINATED" sticker on recycling containers that have been contaminated by food/coffee/nonrecycling. Corrosive effect of pervasive belief that recycling containers are just emptied into the trash so why bother to recycle.

Need for conversation with EVS. Invite EVS coordinator to SusCom meeting

Divide duties among SusCom members to responding to Greenbox suggestions on our website. We are getting large backlog of good suggestions that need to be addressed with SusCom italics on website.

Next meeting 30 March 2009 11:30-12:30 in Kohlberg 230 (not Lang Center)