

Sustainability Committee Minutes

25 November 2009, Sharples Room 4, 8:30 am

Attending: Carr Everbach, Ralph Thayer, Maurice Eldridge, Linda McDougal, HG Chiselle, Mark Davis, Eric Wagner, Debra Kardon-Brown, Eric Chiang, Evelyn Strombom, Rebecca Ringle, Jacob Socolar (EarthLust), Zein Nakoda (EarthLust)

The main order of business is to review the document prepared by EarthLust and other student environmental groups that had been sent in advance of the meeting to SusCom members: "Student Groups Proposal of Actionable Projects to Sustainability Committee." It is appended to these minutes.

Carr read the Preamble and verified the goal of the document, which is to facilitate communication between student groups and SusCom, and to help SusCom better implement some of its recommendations.

Carr then read the "Education" section of the document and all agreed that the goal of disseminating information to the Swarthmore community is a high priority. It can best be accomplished through the Green Advisors (GA) digests.

Eric Wagner asked if the GA digests are email-based or web-based. Zein said, that, on the contrary, they are printed out on used scrap paper and posted in bathroom stalls. Eric W. objected to using resources (ink, paper and energy) to advocate for resource reductions, but Rebecca noted that people really read the digests (captive audience?). Carr noted the difficulty of implementing email-based or web-based digests in bathroom stalls, and pointed out that resource reductions due to behavior change will more than offset the resources used for the digests.

Mark brought up the larger issue of printed fliers generally at the College. He said he met recently with ITS head Gail Barton to have small number of fliers from ITS posted on bulletin boards in the Beardsley lunchroom rather than sending one to every employee. However, he noted that this method is not possible for department because some do not have a centralized mailing location. Carr mentioned that he had discussed with Andrea Packard of the List Gallery the issue of printed fliers stuffed into mailboxes. Andrea is willing to come to a future SusCom meeting and discuss the reasons why this is done. Mark announced that he is working on a draft of a proposal to have ITS no longer support printing by departments on 3rd party printers (mostly ink-jet). It is difficult for ITS to repair them and they tend to break sooner than large printers (which are under service contracts). One problem with the proposal is some departments' desire to retain 3rd party printers for reasons confidentiality or to accommodate workers with disabilities (who couldn't walk easily to a main printer). Carr noted the aspect in this issue of states' rights (departmental autonomy) versus federalism (efficiencies born of centralization). Mark noted that it is also a sustainability issue because small printers consume more paper (if they can't print double-sided), and he would like Suscom's input on proposal. There are limited resources at ITS, and dealing with the waste and inefficiency of 3rd party inkjet printers is something the College needs to address.

Ralph announced that progress is being made to have building electrical use on-line. ITS has successfully implemented a graphical way to show (some) buildings' electricity use. More information will be provided in December.

Carr returned to discussion of the next section of the student groups' proposal: Trash and Consumption Reduction. After summarizing the bullet points in the document, Jacob asked if Green Advisors could have small-scale composting operation for post-consumer (plate scrapings) veggie waste on campus.

Linda thought that Jeff Jabco, Director of Grounds, needed to be part of the discussion since the current composting site (behind the grandstand) is not that big. Also, it is important that no meat be included in the post-consumer mix, so the scrapings bin would have to be monitored carefully. Carr suggested a test period of a week to see what quality of compost would result, and Jacob clarified his suggestion by requesting an out-of-the-way bin for scrapings by people who are especially fastidious (not the general student body).

A long discussion on composting issues followed, which focused on the need for a dump truck to transport compost to the Nursery/Leaf Composting area. Eric Wagner noted the smell of the current operation behind the grandstand and said it was a problem for people attending games.

The next topic was recycling bins and the need for an interactive website map of the campus buildings showing bin locations. Jacob noted that there are many trash cans that are not paired with recycling bins, and ask if EarthLust could re-label some trash cans as recyclable bins? Linda replied that it is not only the bins, but also the work flow of the EVS staff that must be considered. Patti must be included in the discussion. Jacob noted that paper waste dominates classrooms. Ralph suggested removing trashcans from classrooms, so that the participants have to carry out their own trash/recycling (like hiking in the wilderness). Jacob recalled seeing printers with no paper recycling bins near them: for example, Science Center 256, an electronic classroom, has no recycling bin. Mark noted that in Essay May's there is a recycling bin near pool tables, but not elsewhere, so people have to walk out of their accustomed path to get to it.

Debra suggested that, for each area, an interview needs to occur with the people who work there to find out how the space is used, then get their input on what would be helpful (not only bins, may include drains to pour out liquid). She is familiar with how many items get moved out of place at the Lang Center, and this problem must be the same elsewhere. There is a need to lock in some bin locations somehow.

HG broke in to remind the group that Thursday Dec 3, at the Rum Bar located at 20th and Walnut, there is a 7:30-2am dinner and then DJ and dancing. Though the chicken coop project is being negotiated, this party can raise funds for a recycling truck or something else that would materially advance sustainable practices on campus.

Jacob reported that he had sat in on budget-related meetings, whose organizers asked for student input on paring down the budget. He wanted to know if students needed to push for sustainability despite the fiscal belt-tightening. Carr noted that often sustainability efforts are congruent with fiscal belt tightening, at least in the long run.

Linda gave an update on Dining Services' plans regarding water bottles included in bag lunches. 2 weeks after Thanksgiving break, EarthLust will begin an information campaign explaining the case against including bottled water with each bag lunch. Current plans are to phase out the bottles after January, 2010.

Mark asked again that the ITS proposal for 3rd party printers be looked over by SusCom members, who he requested provide kind, helpful, and confidential comments for improvement of the proposal.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Carr Everbach

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Remaining SusCom meetings this semester:

Wednesday, December 2, 2009, 8:30-9:30 am Sharples Room 4: closed meeting for SusCom discussion of finalists in Green Revolving Loan Fund proposals received Tuesday, December 1

Wednesday, December 9, 2009, 8:30-9:30 am Sharples Room 4: open meeting with EarthLust to discuss preliminary ranking of Green Revolving Loan Fund projects.

Monday, December 14, 2009, 11:30-12:30 Lang Center Keith Room: meeting open to the public for final tallied voting by SusCom members on Green Revolving Loan funding of projects.