

Sustainability Committee Minutes 10/26/2009
Sharples Room 4

Attending:

Sustainability Committee members: Rebecca Ringle, Evelyn Strombom, Nicole Lewis, Nadine Kolowrat, David Burgy, Linda McDougal, Kendall Johnson, Eric Chaing, Eric Wagner, Joy Charlton, Maurice Eldridge, HG Chiselle
EarthLust members: Zein Nakhoda, Jacob Socolar, Elan Silverblatt-Buser, Camille Robertson

The joint meeting of the Sustainability Committee and EarthLust began with introductions around the table. The purpose of the meeting was to share the priorities of both groups with each other and determine what SusCom's role should be. It was agreed that other groups such as Good Food should have similar joint meetings with SusCom, or equivalently that some meetings would be open to any interested parties [n.b.: SusCom's remaining meeting schedule for the semester, including which meetings are open meetings, is published at the end of the previous minutes and copied at the end of these minutes].

Zein gave a short report on the success of the PowerShift PA conference that he and other EarthLust students had attended last week. He reported that Swarthmore had one of the highest attendance levels of schools at the conference (which included both big state schools and small liberal arts colleges). Overall, attendance was a little lower than in previous years but that made the discussions/lectures more involved and intimate. PowerShift is still focused on the environmental problems of extraction of natural gas/coal in Pennsylvania and the pitfalls of national legislation. There were good panelists (activists and professors) with whom Swarthmore students talked after the conference. There were campus organizing workshops about different initiatives occurring on different campuses. A goal is to create a so-called "Key Coalition" consisting of youth groups across PA that would inform each other on campus initiatives and increase attendance at future PowerShift conferences. Swarthmore's was the most diverse group ever sent; 23 Swatties attended. The EarthLust website will have more description and followup articles.

The conversation then turned to on-campus priorities and goals for environmental sustainability. Zein was excited to have a symbiotic relationship between SusCom and EarthLust, since EarthLust has human power and can set that to good work. EarthLust members are interested in communication/creating cross-dialogues before putting effort into initiatives that SusCom determines will not get off the ground. A goal is to find the student body's niche in initiatives: "We need the campus to be behind this, so EarthLust should be aware and engage the student body." However, EarthLust does not currently have preliminary recommendations in a priority list

Jacob asked which low-cost recommendations (on SusCom's website) are available now for EarthLust? Which medium-cost recommendations can EarthLust start campaigning for with "Suscom's blessing? The reason for these questions is that people would

presumably take EarthLust's requests more seriously if backed by the Sustainability Committee.

Maurice asked if SusCom needed to clarify its charge.

Jacob replied yes, but not necessarily at a top-down, administration level. It could happen through working together.

Rebecca disagreed, insisting that SusCom's charge needed to be clarified for the benefit of the entire campus community, not only for EarthLust and SusCom.

Linda expressed concern that the Good Food club was not represented at today's meeting.

Jacob said that Jamie Hansen-Lewis of Good Food was definitely on the same page, as were other groups such as Environmental Justice.

There followed a discussion of a previous meeting (when?) with President Chopp attended by Elan, Jacob, Rebecca, Jamie, Michael Roswell, and Maurice:

- 1) SusCom was confirmed as functioning as a clearing house and legislative body without a budget or direct access to funding.
- 2) President Chopp noted that SusCom's recommendations can be directed to the curricular side of sustainability because students need to be exposed to sustainability academically as well as extracurricularly.
- 3) President Chopp agreed further that SusCom and student groups should work together on campus to make initiatives happen. To ensure good communication, the President's Office, SusCom, and student groups should regularly interact.
- 4) The notion of how leadership will work was discussed: how does SusCom go forward with those items using EarthLust/GoodFood students as implementers?
- 5) The structure of SusCom and its configuration was discussed.

Jacob noted that, among SusCom's lower-cost recommendations, there are plenty of items that EarthLust can do now, for instance, clarify recycling with labels. Another good suggestion that EarthLust could take on immediately would be bike racks that are covered from the rain. This would require approvals from Stu Hain's office, however, which would be easier to obtain with SusCom backing. Linda added that in the meantime they could explore the possibility of parking bikes *inside* Sharples on one of the upstairs balconies.

Nicole reminded the group that collection of new ideas for the Green Loan fund was to be complete by Dec 1, and then SusCom will vote on the winners. By the end 2009, SusCom's goal is to have a plan to be implemented starting early in the next semester. This plan opens the door to EarthLust to submit ideas that would provide a monetary payback.

Jacob stated that all of SusCom's recommendations are excellent but priorities need to be established based on what we can realistically get done.

Maurice suggested compilation of a complete a list of suggestions, ones that fall into the category of "can implement without permission" and others that "require permission."

Jacob noted a third category: big things that SusCom doesn't have the capability to do without a budget, but that EarthLust and Good Food can look into campaigning to secure funding. Some of these may be long-term fundraising projects. The best way to begin would be for the student groups to obtain SusCom's go-ahead to start.

Nicole suggested that SusCom meetings should officially include a period devoted to reports from student members of the committee and, for open meetings, representatives from student environmental groups.

Jacob said it was time to start really looking at suggestions, knocking them out, and reporting back progress to Suscom. Some suggestions, however, require access or expertise from committee via Grounds, Facilities, and Departments.

Nadine offered that if EarthLust were to make the lists of recommendations, then SusCom could direct them to the various entities on campus. For example, Grounds has taken responsibility for campus recycling pickup, so EarthLust would be directed to Jeff Jabco to resolve frustrations on both sides. Many SusCom members experienced the heat plant tour last week led by Tom Cochrane and Ralph Thayer—they have great expertise to tap. Collaboration between student groups and SusCom should be as great as possible.

Maurice commented that SusCom recommendations for the curriculum are on hold, not dead—it is clear that CEP (the committee that deals with new positions) will get back to those recommendations after the downturn ebbs. There is a college-wide commitment to improving the quantity and quality of interdisciplinary faculty positions.

Joy thought it would be helpful to think about creative ideas to stimulate the curriculum, and support other efforts. For example, a Lang Center visiting professor could focus on sustainability; faculty curriculum grants could support revising or initiating single courses; Swarthmore Foundation grants might fund some kinds of projects. It is useful to continue to think creatively about ways to make progress even with limited resources.

HG addressed the students with two thoughts:

- 1) We have another meeting like the Sustainability Forum planned called "Action Plan 09" outlining when we can get started on and accomplish sustainability tasks together. There are resources available that may help it be "a quick and dirty process" instead of a slow process.
- 2) Another meeting for Earth Day—crossing things off SusCom's recommendations list together that will show actions speaking louder than words.

Jacob noted that it should not be the student groups' sole responsibility to formulate the agenda; SusCom could also bring a list of priorities. As regards the longer-term planning and higher-costs recommendations, those will require more expertise and time. If SusCom could get behind them in a way that helps things move forward it may shorten the time.

Elan offered that EarthLust can compile a list based on SusCom's website list of recommendations; SusCom can compile a list also—a great building block to move forward.

Nicole asked about the process of appealing the StuCo shortage of EarthLust appointments to SusCom. Jacob replied that that would mean suggesting that the elected StuCo reps should not have been elected and removing someone from their current assignments—so it is not the approach to take. Maurice suggested that SusCom maintain an extra, unofficial seat for a student rep from Earthlust/GoodFood who can attend all (even closed) meetings.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Ringle (edited by Carr Everbach in absentia)

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Carr has proposed and confirmed the following slate of meetings for the remainder of the term:

Wednesday, November 4, 2009, 8:30-9:30 am Sharples Room 4: closed meeting for SusCom only to discuss Ralph's Green Revolving Loan Fund ideas and any proposals from the previous joint meeting

Wednesday, November 11, 2009, 8:30-9:30 am Sharples Room 4: open meeting joint with EarthLust to discuss specific projects, especially Green Revolving Loan Fund nominees.

Monday, November 16, 2009, 11:30 am-12:30 pm Lang Center Keith Room: closed meeting for SusCom discussion

Wednesday, November 25, 2009, 8:30-9:30 am Sharples Room 4: open meeting with EarthLust

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.

