

Swarthmore College Sustainability Committee
Meeting Minutes, Wednesday, 1/28/15
4:15 p.m., Lang Center Keith Conference Room

In attendance: Chris Chalaka, Giovanna DiChiro, Laura Cacho, Sheila Magee, Tom Cochrane, Ralph Thayer, Maurice Eldridge, Eric Wagner, Deb Kardon-Brown, Carr Everbach, Stephen O'Hanlon (notetaker)

Ecosphere Update:

Chris: folks are looking forward to the Charrette and are working to get sustainability champions from the student body. Ecosphere met with members of Swat Overlaps. The COP 20 Delegation will be presenting on our experiences on Friday, 2/6 at 12:30 in Bond Hall.

Stephen: Mountain Justice update: Since the announcement by Cambridge Associates that they are willing to help Swarthmore divest from the fossil fuel industry, MJ asked Gil Kemp and Chris Niemczewski multiple times for a meeting to present a proposal to bring to the February Board of Managers meeting. Based on Gil Kemp's suggestion, MJ met multiple times with Greg Brown and Mark Amstutz from the Finance and Investment Office to develop a proposal. The meetings with Mr. Amstutz and Mr. Brown have been constructive and MJ expect to continue refinement of the proposal at the meeting with 5 Board members on February 2nd, in preparation for it to be brought to the full Board in February.

Eric: This semester, SusCom meetings will be every other week to allow time for working groups to meet. Regular bi-weekly SusCom meetings will be bouncing between two times. Please refer to the email sent out on 1/19/15 with dates and times.

Update on the Sustainability Charrette (Cacho)

Excellent level of interest. Approx. 60 people confirmed to participate throughout the two days. The facilitator, Sandy Wiggins, is hoping to hold a smaller, "touchstone meeting" to get a group of people concerned about sustainability to cohere around a vision of what our goals and vision are for this meeting. Meeting is tentatively 4-6 pm next Thursday Feb 5th. Would people be available to attend?

(At least 6 people from SusCom can be there, so we will plan to meet then).

Carr: I am concerned that this might mean that a few people set the agenda for the larger group

Giovanna: facilitator should be responsive to different goals

Laura: I think this is about having a chance to sort through the goals and find a place to start the conversation. At a minimum, it will be good for him to get a sense of the opinions here at Swarthmore.

Eric: What is the origin of the Charrette?

Laura: It was brought up after President Hungerford made the call for big ideas to allow more community engagement. The point of the Charrette is to have buy-in from the community, and to come up with a few primary ideas that will be presented to the Board at the February meeting.

Ralph: Are they going to be annotated?

Laura: Working with students to prepare a summary of the ideas and fold similar ones together.

Tom: Could we have a summary ready for the meeting with Sandy?

Laura: We can have that ready next Tuesday.

Carr: Meeting with Sandy is the best way forward, but I think it should be sold very softly and say it is not dictating the process.

Working Groups

We would like for them to become more active this semester. There are four working groups: Zero Waste, Green Initiatives Fund, AASHE Stars, Communications/Community Engagement.

Green Initiatives Fund working group – we have already funded one project:

Carr: Things are going well with the solar car charging port. We are meeting with an outside engineer and can let you know when there are more updates.

Laura: The working group has met a few times and are working with other potential proposals.

Communications/Community Outreach working group:

Maruice: One of my ongoing concerns is how we can get the campus community personally involved in furthering our sustainability goals.

Eric: Would it be good for this group to find creative and new ways to spread the word about the Green Initiatives Fund.

Laura: I think it is more about lack of time than ideas.

Carr: One way to get around that would be to open up the process to a wider audience. Can people from off-campus propose ideas? For instance, folks from Serenity House and Chester?

Laura: We had initially thought about that, but that would need to be discussed by the committee.

Deb: The fund can only be dispensed for Swarthmore College community members.

Eric: I agree, it needs to be based at Swarthmore, but I do think there could be the potential for collaboration with external groups.

Deb: There are funds available through the Swarthmore Foundation that can be used for off-campus projects. This fund needs to be about the campus community.

Laura: One of the main goals of the fund is to get individuals on campus thinking about how they are using resources.

Sheila: Speaking to the time constraints point, I think it would be good to communicate with faculty to integrate these types of projects into the curriculum.

Laura: We also talked about the possibility of this funding a summer intern to follow through on the process.

Maurice: We want to make people more aware; we want to create a campus community where everyone is thinking about how they can be more sustainable.

Giovanna: It is important not to confuse broader political problems with personal choices. I think activities that focus on the inability to make some of these sustainable choices can push people to think about creating more sustainable systems. We need to push this broader systemic thinking.

Maurice: We need to get people engaged on both fronts.

Eric: Addressing campus wide behavior has been key to the goals of this committee. It speaks to the purviews of the specific working groups. It is easy to preach to the choir, but an important question is, how do we reach all the *other* people?

Ralph: It isn't just about reaching people, but it is about convincing people.

Eric: Yes, it is difficult because of different backgrounds, opinions, political views, etc. One of the things I have been working hard on is the "Garnet Go Green" program through athletics.

AASHE Stars working group:

Carr: I am thinking that it might be coming up this year and even if it isn't the year we are required to submit, we should now to make it easier. I think the working group should meet and start this process. I am happy to dig into this.

Laura: Many different parts of the college are involved (dining services, facilities, registrar, etc).

Eric: I know the next two weeks are going to be really busy with the Charrette.

Laura: We can try to get just a one hour meeting in the coming weeks to prepare to hit the ground running.

Eric: At the Feb 6th meeting we can get a report of where you are at and talk about how the committee can support.

Zero Waste working group:

Laura: I am moving forward on this on my own with the Green Advisors.

Eric: I met today with the persons who has spearheaded the "Garnet Go Green" group, which has been fairly dormant so far this year. There has been a competition proposed by Davidson College's sustainability office that melds sustainability and athletics. We brainstormed about some ideas and are planning to work on these ideas more and to flesh them out. I think we in the Sustainability Community have an opportunity to reach a lot of people through this group. They want to take ideas like the zero-waste game further in the coming months.

5:15 p.m. adjourn