

Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes  
Monday November 21, 2011, 11:30pm Lang Center Keith Room

Attendees: Nicole Selby, Tom Cochrane, Clara Fang, Marjorie Murphy, Alison Holliday, Erin Lowe, Cameron French, Deb Kardon-Brown, Eric Wagner, Satya Nelms

Nicole opened the meeting by going over the agenda sent previously through email: 1)Carr had invited several students to come talk about a sustainability engineering project they are working on, they will arrive at some point 2)Clara will talk about her proposal for Green Advisors, 3)The Committee will divide into subcommittees and discuss those agendas.

### Green Advisors

Clara presented to the committee her proposal for institutionalizing Green Advisors. Green Advisors are currently a volunteer student group that works to raise awareness of sustainability in the dorms. Clara's proposal, which she has discussed with the heads of Green Advisors and with the Head of Residence Life, is to make Green Advisors a paid position with staff supervision and make it a part of the residential program at Swarthmore. The number of Green Advisors would be raised to the number of Student Academic Mentors (26) and distributed throughout the dorms. If each Green Advisor were paid \$500 a year, a budget for 26 Green Advisors would be \$13,000 a year. The details of the rationale are in her handout "Rationale for Institutionalizing Green Advisors." Clara asked if the Sustainability Committee would be willing write a letter to recommend this program.

Nicole asked whether any of the proposed GA goals overlap current RA responsibilities, such as workbox requests and posting informational flyers. Marjorie asked if instead of creating a new program, could the current RA program include coordinating and delegating these sustainability duties, perhaps with help from volunteer Green Advisors. She suggested that with limited financial resources, strengthening existing programs may be more beneficial than creating new ones. She also suggested that coming from RA's, sustainability information might have more authority and clout.

Clara said it would be worth finding out if the RAs currently do some of those things. What she gathers from the current Green Advisors is that Green Advisors are the ones that produce the posters and digests about sustainability that go up in the dorm bathrooms and bulletin boards, they take out the compost, and they also organize events in the dorms to help educate students. It would be a lot to add these things to the RAs' responsibilities as they are already stretched pretty thin.

Marjorie said that the RAs wouldn't be responsible for doing these things, but they could be trained to help Green Advisors do that job.

Nicole asked where would the funding come from.

Clara said that she thinks it should come from the Dean of Student Life. But they have also asked

to consider other sources, such as the President's Office, the Lang Center, or raise funds through Development. Eric pointed out that this new allocation would have to take away from another program, so it would be preferable to work within an existing structure.

Marjorie said that it would be a good project for the leaders of the Green Advisors to work on finding funding for this program, rather than leaving it to the college. Could they apply to Lang Center grants?

Deb said that Lang Center grants wouldn't fund this project because they are geared towards students that want to do social action in disadvantaged communities, and the Swarthmore Foundation Grant only gives money for supplies, not student wages. Another option is that Green Advisors could be paid through Federal Work Study. Eric and Alison said that that would rule out half of the student body that doesn't qualify for Federal Work Study. Deb said that Federal Work Study could be a component of the funds, with the rest coming from other areas of the college. Clara should talk to the Financial Aid Office to determine whether the GA job would qualify for federal matched funds. Alison also said this would be a good thing to bring up with Development.

Clara said that she would be willing to inquire with the Financial Aid Office if that could work.

Tom asked why would 26 Green Advisors be needed if there are 16 dorms, and how would they be recruited. Clara said 26 is the current number of Student Academic Mentors. The dorms that have more students have more SAMs. The amount of work that SAMs currently do (2-3 hours a week) would be about what Green Advisors would do. Because Green Advisors are not doing one-on-one advising, the number could be fewer. Erin, who is a GA, said because the larger dorms have several compost buckets, it would be a lot of work for one GA to pick them all up each week. A larger dorm should have more than one GA. Clara said that currently Green Advisors take whoever volunteers, but in an institutionalized program there would be a formal recruiting and selection process.

Eric asked who would supervise the GAs?

Clara said she would, though she would have to get it approved to be a part of her job description. She would also make it one of the Lang Center Intern's duties to work with Green Advisors.

Cameron French said that Earthlust had looked into making sustainability a part of freshman orientation last year. They were not able to make it happen, but it would be great if the College did that.

Marjorie said she doesn't like the word "institute" because it implies a mandate. She said we can encourage and educate, but institute sounds like something we are imposing on everyone.

Alison said that more than the work that Green Advisors would be able to do, establishing this program would send a strong signal that sustainability is a priority for the college. It wouldn't just be student activism, but a college program. "Institute" is the right word because it shows that

the college is invested in this issue.

Eric added the program would really spread sustainability through the campus. Instead of having sustainability be limited to the Sustainability Committee, Earthlust, or and other groups all working separately, a Green Advisors program would bring sustainability to the campus community in a broader and more cohesive way.

Deb said that institutionalizing the GA program would be a positive step, in line with the college's professed commitment to sustainability. It is a structure that encourages cultural change without mandating personal behaviors.

Clara said that this program would bridge the college's efforts with students who want to be involved in sustainability. Currently, if a student group wants to spearhead a sustainability project, they have to approach the college through the Sustainability Committee or other staff members. Green Advisors have in past years approached Facilities for guidance on energy conservation and recycling, and every year new Green Advisors have to repeat the process. If the college would just reach out and train them, they would be much more effective in what they do.

Nicole summarized by saying that it sounds like the Committee thinks institutionalizing Green Advisors is a good idea, but it's not comfortable asking for the dollar amount for the program, yet. Could Clara do some more research about possible funding sources? This seemed to reflect the sentiment of the Committee.

Clara said she would investigate at Financial Aid and other places and update the Committee at a future meeting.

### Student LPAC Green Roof Project

Three students (including Darren Weinhold) who are seniors in an Engineering class had been invited to come to the meeting and get some feedback about a project that they are working on. They introduced themselves and explained that they are doing a project to examine the potential to install solar panels on the roof of LPAC. The LPAC roof is going to be replaced soon and plans are in place to install a green roof. The group wants to see if solar panels could be installed instead of a green roof with plants, or at a later time when funds for solar panels become available. Eric asked if there are any issues with installing solar panels on LPAC, and why did they choose that building? The students said that LPAC was chosen because the roof is going to be replaced anyway, it's a very large space, much of which doesn't get shaded, and LPAC uses a lot of electricity which the solar panels would help to offset. Tom explained that the support structure for solar panels penetrates the roof, so it should be done when reroofing is already planned. Clara asked if costs will be a part of their analysis. The students said that they will be looking at costs, payback, carbon reduction, and electricity generation. The students asked about the cost of the green roof plans, and the committee responded that those numbers could be sought from the Facilities Department. Nicole said she understands that the cost of solar panels right now is about equal to the savings generated over the life of the system. Eric said that the Renewing Fund doesn't have enough money to support a project like that, but possibly in the future the Renewing Fund could pay for this kind of project. The students asked if they could

present their finished project to the Committee on December 1. Nicole said she would put them on the agenda.

### Subcommittees

Deb said that it is hard to find time to work within subcommittees and requested that we designate one of the remaining SusCom meetings of the year to just small group work. The committee agreed. The group spent the remaining minutes of the meeting splitting into subcommittees and discussing those agendas.

Curriculum: Marjorie, Alison, Eric  
Greenbox, Renewing Fund, Outreach: Nicole, Tom, Clara, Erin, Deb, Cameron

The meeting adjourned at 12:30pm.

Respectfully submitted, Clara Fang and Nicole Selby

\*\*\* Future planned meetings of the Sustainability Committee \*\*\*

Thursday, December 1, 2011, 8:30-9:30, Sharples Room 4  
Monday, December 5, 2011, 11:30-12:30, Lang Center Keith Room