

Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2012, 11:30am Lang Center

Attendees: Carr Everbach, Clara Fang, Tom Cochrane, Eric Wagner, Nicole Selby, Joy Charlton, Nadine Kolowrat, Cameron French, Erin Lowe, Deb Kardon-Brown, Marge Murphy, Alison Holliday; **Guest:** Lee Robinson

Sustainability Staff Orientation

Lee Robinson, Employee Relations Manager, joined the meeting to discuss sustainability in staff orientation and Human Resources. Lee said that while her experience with staff perceptions of sustainability is limited, her sense is employees at Swarthmore are aware of the issue and interested in it. Whenever she organizes an event for staff she gets comments about sustainability. Staff members are often concerned with paper use and waste and many are interested in seeing the campus managed in an environmentally sensitive way.

Each year Lee holds orientations to Swarthmore for new employees. Last Fall Clara Fang participated in the new staff orientation and suggested that sustainability be added to the agenda. Lee thought that this was a good idea. Currently the new employee orientation is three hours long and includes an introduction to Swarthmore, facts from the Fact book, Swarthmore's Quaker heritage, the staff handbook, employee policies, benefits, equal opportunity, and harassment. To add sustainability to the agenda would mean extending the orientation into lunchtime, but since there are usually not many new employees, providing lunch for them would not be a huge cost. The new VP of Human Resources would need to approve changes to the orientation.

Nicole asked if new faculty are included in the orientation. Lee answered that faculty orientation is conducted by the Provost's office. HR mainly helps faculty with their benefits.

Deb asked if there is currently a statement about sustainability in the Staff Handbook. Lee responded that there is not but there is no reason why sustainability couldn't be included. HR is right now in the process of doing the yearly update of the Staff Handbook, and if SusCom wanted to integrate additional content, now would be a good time to propose it. Carr asked if the committee could propose some prose to be included in the Handbook, perhaps folding sustainability into the statement of Swarthmore's Quaker values. Lee said that the Committee should get its content to her in the next two weeks. Carr asked the Committee if they would like to form a subcommittee to put this together. Nicole, Nadine, Clara and Carr volunteered. Lee also mentioned that faculty get a different handbook. Nicole suggested that when SusCom comes up with the content for the Staff Handbook it could be modified for the faculty version as well.

Nicole asked what format should the sustainability orientation be in? Lee said that the presentation would be over lunch, could be as long as half an hour, and Powerpoint projection is available. Carr mentioned that SusCom members should attend the reception for the new VP of HR who was hired at the end of February.

Sustainability Website

Clara announced that there will be a group photo for everyone involved in sustainability this Friday March 30, 4pm at Scott Amphitheater. The photo can be used on the sustainability website, brochure, and other future publications. A photographer will take the picture and everyone who is involved in and friends with sustainability should come.

Clara had emailed the committee a draft of the new sustainability website. The new website merges the two current existing websites “The Greening of Swarthmore” and “Sustainability Committee.” It updates information on Swarthmore’s sustainability initiatives and contains new features. Clara has requested that the committee review the content of the website and approve its publication or suggest revisions. The committee members offered a few suggestions during the meeting:

- Upcoming events should be listed on the front page
- The “News, Events, Opportunities” page can get old very quickly if someone is not vigilant about updating it. Is there a way to create an RSS feed so that the events can be updated automatically? Nicole mentioned that all the events should also be listed on the college events calendar. Clara mentioned that a calendar that feeds into the college calendar is possible but the internships and opportunities would still have to be entered manually.
- Joy and others noticed that Crum Woods Stewardship Committee and Environmental Studies are not prominently featured. These groups work directly on sustainability and should be included in the About Us section of the website.
- Deb suggested that “Education” be changed to “Curriculum” in order to give more focus to the Environmental Studies program.
- Clara explained that the “What You Can Do” pages will provide suggestions of what students and staff can do in dorms, offices, and at home to improve sustainability. She plans on writing them before the end of the summer. Carr said that Ralph’s document on friends and neighbors has suggestions that can be used in those pages. Alison said that those pages need to strike a balance between being so detailed that people won’t read them and being too simplistic to be taken seriously.

Clara asked how does the committee want to provide feedback and when can she start posting the new content on the website. Nadine expressed that it is really important for the committee to read the content that Clara has developed so that Clara has the committee’s buy-in and stamp of approval when she presents the material to be launched on the new website. The committee spent a lot of time wording the original website and we need to be equally attentive to the language of the new site. There are also politically sensitive issues with who gets mentioned where. Carr said that it sounds like the other committees, such as Crum Woods and Environmental Studies, should also review the site. Nadine said yes but SusCom should review it first.

Alison asked if there was a way to preview the website without making it live. Clara responded that she has created the new pages in Ingeniux, however, you have to be able to log into Ingeniux to see it. There are a lot of folders you have to go through and it is not a one-click process. Ingeniux is also unavailable this week due to the relaunch of the website. Carr mentioned that not everyone on the committee has access to Ingeniux. The easiest way to provide comments is to do so on the Word document that Clara sent out.

The Committee discussed the process for submitting feedback on the website. Clara will send the content document to the committee again. Committee members should make comments on it directly using track changes and “insert comments.” They should email those changes to Clara by Monday April 2. Clara will compile the suggestions and bring the ones that need to be discussed to the next committee meeting. The committee should pay special attention to the Homepage and the About Us pages. Members of the committee involved in specific initiatives should approve language about those initiatives.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30pm.

Respectfully submitted, Clara Fang