

Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2012 8:30am Sharples Dining Hall Room 4

Attendees: Carr Everbach, Joy Charlton, Linda McDougall, Eric Wagner, Nicole Selby, Nadine Kolowrat, Mark Davis, Clara Fang, Alison Holliday, Deb Kardon-Brown, Maurice Eldridge, Patti Shields (Guest)

Environmental Services

Patti Shields was invited to SusCom to discuss with the committee issues about recycling and waste management. Members of the community are sometimes concerned that recycled materials get put in the trash by Environmental Services (EVS) Staff. Patti explained that when a bin of recyclables becomes contaminated it needs to go into the trash or it would not be accepted by the hauler or the recycler. Sometimes when someone observes that taking place, they assume that it is the norm and the rumor spreads that EVS does not recycle. Plastic bags in recycling are often a source of contamination. Plastic bags cannot be recycled, however EVS has to put plastic liners around the bins in order to keep them clean. Eric asked if the local supermarkets that accept plastic bags for recycling actually recycle them. Nicole said that to her knowledge it is not economical to recycle plastic bags so most recyclers do not take them.

Nicole had also asked questions of the college's recycling hauler. They told her that the decision to recycle materials is based on the commodity market. Sometimes it is not economical to recycle certain materials so the hauler takes it to the incinerator instead. Sometimes the decision is made by the Transfer Station rather than the hauler. Carr said that it would be good to know how often our materials are rejected. But as a community we should do as much as we can to make sure materials end up in the recycling bins.

Clara mentioned that recycling quantities at the College have gone down over the years and is low over all. We do not know whether this is because people are putting recyclables in the trash or there are fewer materials to recycle. A waste audit would help us figure out why our recycling rate is comparably low. Patti said that there are still people who are not in the habit of recycling so recyclables still end up in the trash frequently.

Nadine added that SusCom is looking to add language to the Staff Handbook that reiterates the college's policy about recycling and resource conservation. Carr followed by saying that he looked over the staff handbook and found no mention of anything sustainability-related except one phrase about "stewardship of the college's resources" under general guidelines. Even then the resources refer to things like healthcare, gym, and pool instead of energy, water, materials, etc. He said he plans to offer the Human Resources Office some prose to add about the college's commitment and expectations about sustainability and recycling in particular.

Eric asked about the placement of bins and composting. In some locations waste receptacles are available but not recycling bins, or waste bins and recycling bins are not next to each other. Patti said that people move them around and EVS

staff cannot find them and put them back. Eric said that in some places the college has stations built in so that they cannot be moved. Patti suggested that we could purchase bins that have both receptacles. Nicole said it is not a matter of whether the college can build these stations but how to go about the process of making them. Linda said that it usually comes down to money.

Before the committee moved on to the next item Eric agreed to follow up with Patti to walk through the spaces that are problematic and come up with some recommendations for the committee at its next meeting, which will be one week from today, Wednesday, April 19, 2012, at 8:30 am in Sharples Room 4. It is likely that we will be considering a more permanent and sustainable recycling bin arrangement, especially around the Field House and Mullen Tennis Center.

Alumni/Fundraising Subcommittee Report

Nadine explained that Development is interested in what SusCom has done this year to help with fundraising efforts and Communications is interested in sustainability stories for an upcoming issue of the Bulletin that will feature sustainability. Nicole therefore compiled the individual subcommittee reports in order to outline what SusCom has accomplished this year. The committee briefly reviewed the report, and Nicole subsequently put it up on SwatFiles to be edited by individual members. Carr suggested that the compilation also contain a description of what we accomplished at the whole committee meetings, such as the greenhouse gas report and logo. Due to the shortage of time to discuss specific edits during this meeting, the committee agreed to review the report and send comments by next Wednesday April 18.

Nadine gave updates on the fundraising situation. She explained that the college is working on an implementation plan for the recommendations in the Strategic Plan. The fundraising campaign will begin after the priorities from the Strategic Plan are determined. There are several items that the college has begun fundraising for as a “prequel” to the official campaign. These include the match for the Environmental Economist position, \$600,000 for the Crum Woods, and increasing resources for the Renewing Fund. These items are intended as a way to build donor relations and get more interest for the official campaign. The Sustainability Director is not on this shortlist, largely because it is a big-ticket item. Carr noted that when we were reviewing the Strategic Plan, the Sustainability Director was the most important recommendation that we wanted included. It may be time for SusCom to reiterate its strong recommendation that an Sustainability Director position be authorized early in the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Joy asked if there is someone who can speak for sustainability in the formulation of the Implementation Plan. Carr asked Maurice if he could help. Maurice said that he is aware of the committee’s priorities, and President Chopp is attentive to this issue as well.

Website

Clara showed a new version of the homepage for the Sustainability website based on the layout of the redesign. Nicole suggested that the intro text be moved to a subpage so that the homepage can retain its more horizontal look with multiple boxes. Mark added that he would like to see a rotation of pictures about sustainability in that front spot. Clara said that she may have to stage some pictures because we have very few pictures of sustainability and the ones we have are pretty old. She has incorporated many of the suggestions that the committee offered into the draft of the website, but there are still some items that need to be discussed with the whole committee. Nadine proposed that since the work of subcommittees has come to a close we cancel them for next week and meet as a whole committee to discuss the website. The committee agreed to meet next Wednesday, 8:30am at Sharples.

Clara said that she could update the content of the website in its current layout in the next two weeks after the committee's approval; but she would need to wait for Communications to redesign the layout. Would the committee be in favor of making the update as soon as possible or wait for the redesign? Mark said that he would like to know when we could get the redesign because it would be extra work to update the website twice. Nadine said that Communications knows that we are very interested in the redesign and we are in their queue, but there are a lot of other departments in the same situation. Linda said that Communications is not giving timelines to anyone at this point; so we might not get the redesign until next Fall. Carr said that since Clara's time is limited it would be a good idea for her to update everything now. That will mean less work for the committee if the redesign does not happen until later.

Deb asked how will the website be maintained after it gets updated? Mark suggested that we should make the content as static as possible so that it does not need to be updated frequently. Joy said that interns will have to handle some of it. Deb asked what if we convene a subcommittee next semester just to work on the website. Nicole added that it would be a good idea to review the subcommittees each year so that we do not add to the number of subcommittees.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30am.

Respectfully submitted, Clara Fang