

DU Sustainability Council

Meeting Minutes: December 4, 2008 – DuPont Room, Mary Reed Building

Present: Fred Cheever, Lisa Dale, Bruce Hutton, Mike Keables, Rebecca Powell, Alison Kapsalis, Buddy Knox, Jeff Bemelen, Mark Rodgers, Gregg Kvistad, Chris MacMillan, Gary Alexander, Peter Goff, Lyndsay Agans, Stefeni May, Tom McGee, Chase Squires, Buck Sanford, Zoe Turrill, Chris Short.

Next meeting: Thursday, January 15, 8:30 – 9:30 a.m., DuPont Room, Mary Reed Building.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

I. Introductions and Approval of the Minutes – Fred Cheever

Mike Keables made a motion, seconded by Gary Alexander, to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 4, 2008 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Fred Cheever commented that the committees are in the process of drafting their plans, especially the targets, which are very important to include in the drafts. Outreach efforts to communicate the draft plan to the DU community need to begin in January.

II. Amendment to By-Laws regarding Student Organization Representative Members – Fred Cheever

Fred Cheever provided prior to the meeting a draft amendment to the by-laws which would add five new organizational representatives to the Sustainability Council – Faculty Senate, Staff Advisory Council, All University Student Association, Graduate Student Association Council, Student Bar Association. There was a question about graduate programs such as Sturm Law, Daniels College and GSIS. Gregg Kvistad said they would be represented by GSAC. There was consensus to approve the amendment to the by-laws as proposed.

III. Pete’s List – A New Feature on Our Website – Pete Goff

Pete Goff said that a more efficient way to hand DU’s excess property has been set up on the sustainability website. If departments have excess equipment that is not needed in their own unit, they can “advertise” it on the website. The program might best be coordinated through the building liaisons. There were questions about whether students can use this site to “swap” furniture and other items. Goff said that it is not for that purpose at this time but other universities (e.g., University of Wisconsin) have such a program. Fred Cheever asked the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Committee to explore the concept and Gregg Kvistad requested that University Counsel be involved.

IV. 2009 Rocky Mountain Sustainability Summit – Lyndsay Agans

Lyndsay Agans said that DU’s proposal has been accepted for the program at this regional summit, which takes place in Boulder on February 12-13. She will put information about it on the Sustainability Portfolio. Anyone is welcome to attend.

Bruce Hutton commented that Robert Kennedy, Jr. is still scheduled to come to campus on February 12.

V. Committee Reports

Fred Cheever requested that each committee focus on the status of its draft report.

Outreach Committee – There was no representative present to report.

Facilities Committee – Tom McGee reported that the committee is working on the draft plan outline. The biggest issue is setting the greenhouse gas emissions target, which Jeff Bemelen will address later in the meeting. The committee has been working to come up with hard data goals.

Transportation Committee – Buddy Knox said that the committee has turned in its draft report. Targets are hard to develop at this point because there needs to be a balance between lost parking revenues and reducing car traffic on campus. The committee needs to work with the Provost's Office on air travel research.

He reported on the results of the recent transportation survey. They received 1,200 replies. He recited statistics about how many drove to work, walked or took public transportation, how many car pooled, and how many used their Eco passes. The main reason people don't use mass transit is that it is too much trouble and takes too much time. He said that the committee can now target behaviors from the information received.

Knox also reported on the purchase of a green electric tricycle for parking enforcement. There was discussion about recharging electric vehicles in garages and other options, such as combining parking meters with recharging stations. He said that Craig Woody and he meet with Enterprise to continue discussions of the We Car program. There are problems with profitability because there are long hiatus periods in the university calendar. He said it may work as a fleet car share program. He will continue to explore it as an option.

There was discussion about making it easier for students to pick up their Eco passes and providing more outreach to increase usage of the passes.

Curriculum and Research Committee – Buck Sanford said the committee has completed a draft of 13 STARS areas, six are still in progress and a couple areas have not yet been assigned to a committee member. They have developed about 15 goals in this area. They are in the process of figuring out where we are, where we want to be and then developing goals to get there. He said they need to go more in-depth in defining a sustainable curriculum.

Bruce Hutton said it is difficult to identify sustainable elements in research when they occur "one off" from the primary topic. A good deal of research relates to sustainability, but isn't thought of in that way. It is labor-intensive to identify both research and teaching. Lisa Dale commented that the development of the sustainability minor has helped to uncover this type of content throughout the curriculum.

Hutton added that Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s visit on February 12 might be a way of increasing our knowledge about research and the curriculum. He said the purpose of the day is to align business, sustainability, and society and will be titled something like "Sustainability at the Crossroads."

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Committee – Zoe Turrill reported on behalf of Mary Jean O'Malley, who is studying abroad this month. Turrill did not know the status of the draft report. She said the Undergraduate Sustainability Committee has a number of initiatives starting winter quarter, including a bike-sharing program and Trayless Tuesdays (in cooperation with Sodexo). Fred Cheever asked for and received the consensus of those present to support these initiatives. They will also be gearing up for Recyclemania,

working on composting and developing community gardens. Buck Sanford suggested a Webcentral message be sent from the Provost's Office soon informing everyone of the main links to sustainability. There was also a suggestion to produce a "low tech" brochure with this information, with each committee providing a paragraph about its efforts. Fred Cheever agreed to follow up with Grace Stanton in OCM about this idea.

Chris Short, Director of DU Environmental Health and Safety, said that DU will have a battery and cell phone recycling system starting January 5. There will be bins in Driscoll, Sturm Law, Penrose, Sturm Building and Olin. The bins have to be collected every 90 days. He is also looking into recycling hazardous chemicals, but there are many roadblocks. He said it would be beneficial if DU researchers could publicize unopened bottles of chemicals that other researchers could use.

Best Practices – Becky Powell reported that portions of the report have been submitted and the committee is continuing to draft others. Fred Cheever added that this committee is charged with writing the summary of the whole plan.

VI. Setting a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Goal – Time for Numbers – Jeff Bemelen

Jeff Bemelen said that, as we have worked through the issues, it is becoming clear that everything falls under the umbrella of carbon reduction. He said that AUPCC has just issued a publication on how to deal with offsets, which gives some good advice on how to go about reducing greenhouse gases. For example, they suggest going after low-hanging fruit first, focusing on efficiencies and behavior before considering buying credits. He said there are some constraints locally about reducing carbon. The average cost is to offset is \$12-15/metric ton. We have to reduce about 50,000 metric tons, which will require a big investment. Costs may go up in the future so we have to decide whether to lock in prices now. We have to deal with vendors carefully. Credits do not provide any direct benefit to DU and may not actually do any good to anyone. Bemelen said the bottom line is that we need to put all the elements together, and then predict our reduction/renewal target.

Tom McGee said that other entities have typically set a goal of 10% reduction by 2012-14. Denver has a goal of 10% reduction by 2012. Colorado has set 20% by 2020. Colorado College has set a 30% reduction, which requires about \$10 million to achieve. A 10-15% reduction for DU may cost more than \$5 million. It is important DU establishes a realistic goal both in terms of carbon reduction and cost. Technology in the future may impact our ability to reduce more easily and cheaply than we can now.

Bemelen commented on the steps taken in the past 10 years to reduce consumption. The current Sturm lighting retrofit in the mid-1990s cut costs in half and reduced 15,000 lbs. of carbon. Davis auditorium may reduce another 15,000, with a 2.5 year payback. It will be a challenge to reduce in the context of a growing infrastructure and amenities. For example, we are adding a new building for College of Education and may be installing air conditioning in Halls, which increase consumption overall.

Gregg Kvistad commented that the Board of Trustees is not in favor of buying offsets. Bemelen agreed we cannot buy our way into reaching goals. Offsets are a last resort after everything else has been done.

Zoe Turrill commented that Ft. Collins school district reduced their consumption through training and behavioral changes, showing much can be done for not much investment. Bemelen said we are shutting down most buildings during the break which will save money and carbon. McGee said that students are being moved to one residence hall over break to save as well. Cheever said it would be good to have solid policies in this area, such as keeping thermostats low, which can then be publicized and enforced.

Cheever suggested that one method for setting our goal is to track with Denver but somewhat lower. It would keep us credible. Bemelen said we need to take into account our specific energy needs, such as nanotechnology which has a high energy usage. Sanford agreed, saying we have a relatively closed system and should base our goal on our own situation. Cheever said this would work only if we have the right data and projections of growth and technology. Kvistad said another approach is to have the same goal, but push the deadline further out in the future. There were also comments on the need to be transparent and practical and start with a good baseline. There were comments that in order to reduce air miles, we must look at changing the way in which we do business (e.g., professional meetings).

VII. Announcements and Other Business

Workplace Law Updates – Chris Short said he has added a slide about sustainability to his presentation at workplace law training.

Sustainability Career Expo – Stefani May, Daniels College Career Services, said that they are sponsoring a career expo with about 20-30 employers on April 2 from 12 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Draft Sustainability Plan - Lyndsay Agans asked committees to e-mail her their drafts and post them on the Sustainability Portfolio as soon as possible. The draft plan should be completed by January 8 so that outreach efforts can begin after that date.

The meeting was adjourned at 10 a.m.