

DU Sustainability Council

Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2012

Members, University Representatives and Guests Present: Kristin Altman, Julie Andersen, Andrew Bishop, Christy Cerrone, Fred Cheever, Ethan Crawford, Cara DiEnno, Sharon Gabel, Brenda Goates, Tiffany Hutchings, Megan Kelly, Linda Kosten, Chris MacMillan, Megan Marshall, Jane Maurer, Stefani May, Don Mayer, Tom McGee, Ryan McCann, Saskia Sawyer, Vanessa Schoenecker, Scott Schrage, Mariah Shell, Mike Sickinger (by telephone), Chase Squires, Thomas Walker **Guests:** Matt Rutherford, Assistant Professor of Engineering, Joseph Lewis, John Falcey

Next meeting: Thursday, March 8, 8:30 – 10 a.m., Driscoll Student Center Room 1864

I. Call to Order and Approval of January Minutes (Fred Cheever)

Fred called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. He asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 12, 2012. Sharon Gabel moved to approve as presented, Thomas Walker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

II. Introductions (Fred Cheever)

Fred asked for self-introductions and said that the agenda was jam-packed today.

III. Announcement of Result in Sustainability Coordinator Search (Fred Cheever)

Fred announced that Chad King has been offered the position of sustainability coordinator, after a very long and hard search process. He is a faculty member at Ohio Wesleyan. If all works out well, he will start in June. Fred said the Council must continue all of its work in the interim and after Chad arrives. He thanked everyone for their involvement in the search. He also mentioned that DU is searching for a new Director of Housing.

IV. Vice Chair Report (Christy Cerrone)

Christy said she had information about opportunities for summer work for students. She said to contact her for more information.

V. Sustainability Educators Committee (Sharon Gabel, Saskia Sawyer)

Sharon said that STARS criteria include points for having a Sustainability Educators Committee. She, Samara Rasmussen, Lisa Bingham and Aimee Neu have formed such a committee and have met several times. They are planning a Green Educators kick off meeting and will invite people from around DU. The initial audience is staff but faculty are welcome. They are looking at March 27 at 3 p.m. Linda Kosten suggested inviting the student controller for organizations because they collectively purchase quite a lot. Fred mentioned that Lisa Bingham at Sturm Law is involved with the Green Audit Program at the State of Colorado. There will be a formal “green office” session in alignment with Earth Day (April 25).

Saskia said that the committee would like to have something for staff during Earth Week. She also said that they are developing a Faculty and Staff Handbook with tips and tools for maintaining a green office. She asked everyone to send in ideas.

VI. Take Back the Tap (Andrew Bishop)

Andrew Bishop gave a report on the “Take Back the Tap” campaign. He said that we have reduced the number of plastic water bottles (see handout with statistics). The campaign’s goal is to phase out bottled water altogether. He provided a draft resolution for the Council’s consideration which endorses the discouragement of bottled water at DU. The solution needs to involve Pepsi, Sodexo, the Office of Admissions, and Facilities Management. We need to renegotiate the Pepsi contract and get buy-in and cooperation from these groups.

There was discussion as follows:

- Admissions can ask families that come to campus for tours to bring their own reusable bottles, use compostable cups or give away small Nalgene bottles. There are concerns about the need to drink lots of water in the high altitude but Todd Rinehart in Admissions is willing to try different options.
- There is concern that people will migrate to soda if water isn’t available in vending machines. Andrew said there is no study showing this actually occurs but Linda said that Sodexo has observed this trend.
- The issue is single-use bottles, not water or other content.
- The campaign should focus first on encouraging and educating, then ratchet up to other measures, similarly to how the anti-smoking campaign has worked.
- We need to involve the Faculty Senate.
- We should reach out to Denver Water and other places that have banned bottles (e.g., Grand Canyon National Park).
- There is great research available on the impacts of bottles and we need to educate people. We should emphasize the health issue that switching to soda isn’t healthy.

Fred Cheever made a motion to support the resolution from the Council and the show of hands was unanimous.

VII. Smart Grid Presentation (Tom McGee, Matt Rutherford, John Falcey, Joseph Lewis)

Tom McGee introduced Matt Rutherford, Assistant Professor in Engineering, and John Falcey and Joseph Lewis, students in the Department of Engineering. Matt gave an overview of the Smart Grid project. The Smart Grid focuses on demand rather than consumption. Engineering students are using software to model the energy demand in Olin Hall as a pilot program to: (1) understand demand and consumption patterns, (2) empower people to change behavior, and (3) save dollars by timing energy usage. They had to collect a great deal of data to create the model. It is an interdisciplinary approach. Joseph and John then demonstrated various parts of the model and the data

they have gathered. For example, peak demand is during mid-day and they are looking at ways to disperse it throughout the day. They can plug in different scenarios before making decisions that maximize savings.

Fred said this program is important to meeting our carbon neutrality goals. It is very innovative. He asked how the Council could help.

Matt said that funds are needed to migrate it across campus. They need funding for students and research applications. There was a suggestion to coordinate with green audits. Matt asked everyone to get in touch with him with ideas and questions.

VIII. Solar Initiative (Mike Sickinger, Andrew Bishop)

Andrew Bishop said that Mike Sickinger would be joining from Costa Rica by phone. He said that the campus currently does not have any solar/photo voltaic applications. DU is spending wisely on energy conservation measures that have a short breakeven period. Solar does have benefits for the environment and greenhouse gas reduction. There are educational opportunities for research, information and behavior.

Because DU does not want to invest in solar at this point, the proponents are proposing fund raising through crowd-sourced means. Donations are made through a website with the goal of raising \$400,000. The slogan would be “buy a watt” to offset personal consumption. The location for the first installation is proposed for the roof of Driscoll. They would like to dedicate a solar panel at the Presidential Debate. There were questions about what would happen if a better technology came along. Andrew said that solar has probably reached maximum efficiency and the price is going down. There was a question about what would happen if not enough funds were raised. Andrew said the project could be scaled down in that case.

There was a question about whether this approach fit into DU’s fundraising campaign. Kristin Altman said that DU is in the loop. Donors would be handled the same as any other through University Advancement and donations would be tax deductible. Saskia Sawyer said the project has to go through the Board of Trustees and, in the past, such proposals have run into issues around financing and tying up the roof for 20-25 years. Tom McGee said that a structural analysis of the Driscoll roof has to be done. Also, the roof needs to be replaced sooner than later and timing could be an issue. There were questions about other locations, such as parking lots.

Linda Kosten emphasized the need to make sure the proposal has been fully approved by various entities at DU, including Scott Lumpkin and Chancellor Coombe. Mike Sickinger said that they have met with the Chancellor and he said it was alright to proceed as a voluntary fundraising effort not using DU resources.

There was a question about how this proposal differs from those in the past that DU rejected. Tom said that it is not framed as a power purchase lease so is very different. There is now very limited government funding for solar. We could keep or sell the RECs for about \$10,000 a year. Andrew said the project is financial sustainable. The maintenance is projected to be \$80,000 in year 10.

Thomas Walker commented that he thought there would be interest in this project but that he was concerned with the scale.

IX. Furniture Sharing (Kristin Altman)

Kristin Altman reported that the furniture sharing program is almost ready to launch. She asked for help in spreading the word.

X. Committee Reports (Chairs)

A. Website and Outreach (Brittany Wilhelm)

Brittany asked that every committee chair send one Face Book or Twitter idea to this committee each month. She thanked Samara Rasmussen for managing the Green Listserv and Chase Squires for providing such good content. She said Mollie Doerner is updating the sustainable campus map. Christy Cerrone is the committee liaison on Earth Month. She also reported on employee orientation and education. She said they will make a push on the Bicycle program for spring.

Megan Marshall asked if we were going to have a spring mixer to re-connect the community, especially juniors returning from study abroad. The last mixer was held in the fall. There was no discussion about this proposal.

B. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (RRR) Committee (Megan Marshall)

Megan Marshall said that the committee is focusing on composting and recycling awareness and improving the practices of Sodexo in Ritchie and elsewhere. They want to expand composting to the Joy Burns Center.

The committee is also working on Earth Month and would like more volunteers. The summit is tentatively scheduled for April 20.

C. Social Sustainability Committee (Cara DiEnno)

Cara DiEnno said that they need to reschedule their meeting.

D. Food and/or Mindful Consumption Committee (Megan Kelly)

Megan Kelly said the committee is meeting on Monday, February 13 at 11:15 a.m. ECO Conscious (GSSW) is hosting a Food and Justice Summit on March 3.

E. Facilities and Energy (Tom McGee)

Tom McGee said that he is meeting on February 23 with Sightlines. The vending machine power miser project is continuing to make progress.

F. Transportation (Ethan Crawford)

Ethan Crawford report that the We Car program is going well. They are planning to add a third car. The committee is working with the Land Use Committee to get bike and pedestrian routes included in the plan revision. The committee is also working on something for Earth Month.

G. Education and Research (Don Mayer)

Don Mayer said that the committee is reaching out to faculty and will plan some information gatherings. The committee needs additional members. Linda Kosten said that Chad will be helpful in coordinating these efforts because of his academic background.

H. Best Practices (Tiffany Hutchings)

Time did not permit a report.

XI. Announcements

Don Mayer asked for more attention to snow shoveling at the bike racks.

XII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10 a.m.

Meeting Schedule (All meetings are Thursday from 8:30 – 10 a.m. in Driscoll Room 1864)

- March 8
- April 12
- May 10
- June 14
- July 12