

DU Sustainability Council

Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2009 – Renaissance Room, Mary Reed Building

Present: Fred Cheever, Lisa Dale, Bruce Hutton, Mike Keables, Becky Powell, Tiffany Hutchings, Buddy Knox, Matthew Bosquez, Mary Jean O'Malley, Julie Sutor, Linda Kosten, Chris MacMillan, Ethan Crawford, Meredith Ward, Lyndsay Agans, Gary Alexander, Christy Cerrone, Chase Squires, Tom McGee, Zoe Turrill, Ben Waldman, Valerie Dascenza, Monica Kumar, Steve Sander.

Next meeting: Thursday, June 4, 8:30 – 10 a.m., DuPont Room, Mary Reed Building.

Fred Cheever called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

1. Introductions and Approval of the Minutes – Fred Cheever

Fred Cheever announced the death of Erik Bluemel, law professor and great friend of sustainability, in a bike accident. The Council paid tribute in a moment of silence.

There was approval of the Minutes of April 2, with the change of the word “major” to “minor” in reference to the sustainability curriculum.

2. The Sustainability Plan – Lyndsay Agans

Lyndsay Agans reported that the Plan is on schedule for its review and approval. The Provost has made some final corrections and it will be presented to the Board of Trustees in June.

3. Election of New Council Members – Fred Cheever

Fred reported that there are a number of applications to fill vacancies on the Council. According to the By-Laws, students must select student representatives. He requested that the student representatives get together and decide how to elect new student members.

The voting members of the Sustainability Council elect faculty and staff representatives. He suggested that the applications for the vacancies be posted on the Sustainability Portfolio so that members can view them. A poll will be set up in about a week for the actual vote. The vote should be completed by late May, in time for the next meeting.

The new Council must then vote on officers. There are two: Chair and Webmaster. Cheever asked that people who have an interest in being considered to submit their names to him. The Council may be able to complete the vote for these officers by the June 4 meeting. The incoming Council will vote on the officers.

4. Meeting Schedule – Fred Cheever

There was general agreement to meet through the summer, even though attendance may drop. The summer should be used to plan for the activity during the next academic year. Meetings have been set for (all on Thursdays from 8:30 – 10 a.m.):

- June 4
- July 2
- August 6

5. Sustainability Website – Ethan Crawford

Ethan Crawford said he has finished designing the new website and will send a temporary link via Fred so that people can review it and make comments. The website will reside in a new location (ctl.du.edu/green) although the general public won't be aware of the change. The move allows for easier use and updating of the site.

Cheever thanked Ethan for his work on the site. He also asked the people in attendance to give some thought to how we want to use the site. To date, it has been a repository of information. We may want to use it more advantageously for marketing and news. Linda Kosten suggested putting the "green" link on other websites to drive more traffic to it.

Chase Squires said the DU website is in flux and it is unclear who to contact about getting a presence on the DU home page at this point.

6. Campus Garden Report – Ben Waldman

Ben Waldman reported that the community garden is close to planting. They are currently installing irrigation. There will be a dedication ceremony on May 30. Volunteers, including students and neighbors, are working every Saturday in the garden. Linda Kosten commended Ben and the others involved for a great job.

Buddy Knox cautioned that people should be careful where they park in the neighborhood. There are bike racks at Halls and Towers.

7. Bike-Sharing Program – Mary Jean O'Malley and Zoe Turrill

Mary Jean O'Malley and Zoe Turrill provided an update on the bike-sharing program and introduced Steve Sander, from the City of Denver. The City has delayed the implementation of the bike-share program until Spring 2010, probably to coincide with Earth Day. Sander explained that the program is large and comprehensive and the City realized it needed a sustainable plan with all the logistics tied down. They want to launch with 600 bikes and 40 stations. Smaller systems are not as successful. The Mayor, the City and RTD remain very committed to the program. They will launch with a great deal of visibility and fanfare.

Turrill said that the students are disappointed in the delay because they wanted to see results before they graduate. Therefore, DU will probably start a small "bike library" this summer, using existing funds to purchase the bikes. People can check out bikes, keys, and helmets at Nagel and Halls residence halls in four-hour time blocks. They are working through Risk Management issues and any concerns the residence halls might have with the additional workload. The program would be free to students, faculty and staff. The City of Denver has agreed to maintain the bikes through its agreement with Bicycle Village. The Provost is supportive of this approach, once Risk Management and other issues are resolved. O'Malley and Turrill asked for the continued support of the Sustainability Council.

Ellen Shew Holland, DU's Risk Manager, was in attendance at the meeting and asked some questions about the program. O'Malley commented that riders will be required to sign a waiver. The bikes are very user-friendly and have built-in locking systems.

Fred Cheever asked the Outreach Committee to discuss ways to publicize the bike library.

Steve Sanders complimented the hard work of O'Malley and Turrill in keeping this program going. There is energy around the project and the bike library is a great interim system. The City of Denver appreciates the effort and supports DU. Denver is hoping to be the first to launch a comprehensive system (Minneapolis is close). Cheever said that the bike program, coupled with the ECO pass, makes it easy not to have a car to get around town.

O'Malley commented on the recognition DU received in the EPA energy rating.

8. Committee Reports

Overall Approach

Fred Cheever asked the Council to think about how we can best move the Sustainability Plan forward during the coming year. The Council needs to prioritize its work to be the most effective it can be.

Reduce/Reuse/Recycle – Mary Jean O'Malley, Ben Waldman

O'Malley reported that they are continuing to work with Sodexo and dining hall managers through regular meetings. Sodexo is using more local and organic food options and have stopped using non-recyclable cups. The group has realized there are too few recycling bins outdoors and are working with Mark Rodgers to locate some more. O'Malley said they gave away 500 metal water bottles on the Driscoll Bridge recently and plan to order more for the May 20 Carnival. They will also have an educational recycling game at the Carnival.

Cheever requested that recycling be made a major topic at the fall orientation for new students. Julie Sutor commented that "Trayless Tuesdays" seem to be catching on around the country.

O'Malley said there is no update on how DU did in Recyclemania, although DU was very active and visible.

Cheever and Kosten commented on the need to let everyone know good news about sustainability. It is important for those who fill out ranking questionnaires and sustainability report cards. DU should do well on those types of rankings in the coming year.

The RRR committee is continuing to meet with Alpine and Sodexo about establishing a composting presence. They are currently assessing Nagel as a location to start next fall. Sodexo will be using compostable utensils going forward.

Transportation Committee – Buddy Knox

Buddy Knox announced that Parking Services is holding its semi-annual bike auction on Saturday, May 9 at 1 p.m. There are not as many bikes this time because the registration system is working.

The committee is working on a palette of ideas regarding transportation but most need some funding. The Transportation Committee should work with the Outreach Committee on these ideas.

Outreach Committee – Tiffany Hutchings

Tiffany Hutchings said the Committee met with Erin on the Eco Cup. The Committee has been discussing how to get the word out on the Strategic Plan. They thought it might be a good idea if the Outreach Committee members attended other committee meetings so that they know what is happening. She said the main problem is that the Committee is now a small one with no marketing expertise. They are looking for ideas. Chase Squires, DU OCM, said he would be happy to help the Committee. Zoe Turrill asked for help in getting the word out on the May 30 garden dedication and the bike library.

Facilities Committee – Tom McGee

Tom McGee said that the Committee is continuing to explore alternative energy options. They are looking at the feasibility of locating a photovoltaic cell in a parking garage. Buddy Knox said he is interested in using it as a recharger for electric cars. McGee said that there is stimulus money available in this area which would cut down on the 10-12 year payback that most energy conservation measures require. DU is shooting for options that pay for themselves within five years. DU has \$300,000 earmarked for energy conservation.

McGee commented that he is going to set up a meeting with a DU alum regarding the recharger or photovoltaic cell and would invite Knox. He also said that DU would probably get LEED credit if we proceed in this direction. Excel Energy is offering funding for photovoltaic but are requiring that recipients turn over carbon credits in exchange. If DU self-funds the cells, we can bank all the carbon credits. McGee said he is checking with the Chris Smith (who replaced Tim Martinez), City of Denver, on the stimulus money. There may be an issue with being a private university.

Curriculum and Research – Mike Keables

Mike Keables reported that final approval on the undergraduate sustainability minor is expected on May 22. It will hopefully launch in the fall. One course is already on line. Lisa Dale will be teaching Sustainability and Human Society. There is nothing to restrict Daniels College students from taking the minor. At some point, Keables hopes that the Daniels faculty will be able to participate in teaching in the minor.

The Committee is currently working along two tracks: (1) graduate level sustainability curriculum and (2) faculty research.

Best Practices – Becky Powell

Becky Powell said the Committee is discussing how to best approach its charge at this point.

Lyndsay Agans said that this might be a good time to look at restructuring the committees, perhaps around different initiatives. It might be better to have task forces rather than standing committees. The Sustainability Council needs to have discussions on the best way to move forward.

Chris MacMillan suggested that a mini retreat be held over the summer focusing on this issue. There was agreement but concern that many students would not be able to attend.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.