

DU Sustainability Council

Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2011 – Room 1864, Driscoll University Center

Members, University Representatives and Guests Present: Lyndsay Agans, Kristin Altman, Jon Bortles, Christy Cerrone, Fred Cheever, Melina Hernandez, Bruce Hutton, Linda Kosten, Chris MacMillan, Stefani May, Tom McGee, Karen Paul-Masaoka, Shelley Popke, Rebecca Powell, Martin Quigley, Mark Rodgers, Saskia Sawyer, Mariah Shell, Chase Squires, Nicole Vilegi, Thomas Walker, Beth Walker, Brittany Wilhelm.

Next meeting: Tuesday, February 8, 8:30 – 10 a.m., 1864 Suite, Driscoll Student Center

I. Call to Order, Overview of Today’s Meeting – Powell

Becky Powell called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. She said that we might mix up the order of the agenda. Going forward, she would like to focus on a few STARS areas in more depth at each meeting. She welcomed newcomers and encouraged them to stay involved with the Council.

II. Approval of Last Meeting’s Minutes – Powell

Thomas Walker proposed an amendment to the Minutes in Section VIII, substituting the word “design” for “performance.” There was a motion by Lyndsay Agans, seconded by Fred Cheever, to approve the Minutes from December 7, as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Rocky Mountain Sustainability Summit Update – Cerrone, Bortles, Wilhelm

Christy Cerrone reported that there are now 40 registrations, with Early Bird closing January 20. Beth Walker talked about the program. All time slots are filled and the schedule looks good. There will be panels and long and short presentations, with students involved. She asked for volunteers to work during the conference and said that there will be a sign up on Google docs. She will send out the link through the listserv. The agenda should be available later in the week. There was discussion on how to drive attendance and incentives for students. The goal is 200-250 attendees. The registration fee is intended to cover costs, with no profit anticipated.

Brittany Wilhelm reported on sponsors and vendors. There are six sponsors signed up thus far.

IV. Website and Outreach Update – Wilhelm

Brittany Wilhelm gave an update on outreach. She said the main focus has been getting the word out about the Rocky Mountain Sustainability Summit. Kristin Altman has been doing a great job keeping the website updated. The committee is also working on drafting the plan for Pete’s List, the program through which DU units can exchange excess furniture and equipment.

Brittany said that Tiffany Hutchings is very involved with writing the STARS report. The next newsletter is ready to launch and will include information about AASHE, RMSS and the electronic W-2.

V. “Mixer” with Student Groups – MacMillan

Chris MacMillan reported that a small committee has met once to start planning for the mixer. The purpose is to get together students, faculty and staff who are involved with sustainability in some way so that we become acquainted with each other and aware of what is going on in this area.

VI. Earth Day Planning Committee – Shell

Mariah Shell said that a committee is working on plans for Earth Month and Day (April 22). They will focus on several events throughout the month. Ideas are welcome. The next meeting is on January 12 at 9 a.m. at the Law School. Fred Cheever suggested they coordinate with the various schools because they may be planning their own events.

VII. Discussion of the Definition of “Sustainability Education” – Agans

Becky Powell said that the Council has agreed on the definition of sustainable curriculum. We now need to agree on the definition of sustainable education and research. These are requirements for the STARS report. She said that Lyndsay Agans has drafted a statement, which is provided as a handout. The Council will vote on it at the February 8 meeting

Lyndsay Agans said that the statement was difficult to draft because it has to be both specific and broad at the same. She said she used CU Boulder’s statement as a guide. CU got three out of three stars for theirs. Other documents that guided her were the DU mission, vision and values, the Sustainability Plan and documents about the sustainability minor. She used the three pillars or tenets model. She plans to add a list of courses to the statement. The Curriculum and Research Committee is working on the logistics of doing an audit of courses. Another part of the effort is to educate faculty about sustainable education and research. The definition was not required as part of the original plan that we submitted. AASHE is also trying to figure out how to define these areas so it would be good if we figure it out first.

Lyndsay said that the statement will be circulated via the Green listserv. She asked for suggestions about how to conduct the audit or inventory of courses.

Becky asked everyone to read the statement carefully and to send comments to Lyndsay and/or her. An updated draft will be sent out in advance of the next meeting. She said it is clear we need to educate faculty internally and conduct an inventory of courses.

There were several comments, including: (1) expand on the “costs of sustainable practices,” and (2) further emphasize the social justice aspect and that DU is an urban university and integrated with the community, and (3) the definition articulates well with the DU vision, values, mission and goals.

VIII. STARS Reporting Update

a. Transportation – Cheever

Fred Cheever said that the committee is working on its portion of the STARS report. He said that the quest for data can be maddening and doesn't always fit the criteria. He said we should probably do well with alternative transportation and the bike sharing program, including bike storage and showers, but not so well in the area of planning, especially with bike paths. Mark Rodgers commented that the DU Land Use Plan needs to be updated and that the bike path component will be addressed during 2011.

Fred said we need to have policies on condensed work week, telecommuting, carpooling and local housing, prohibiting idling on campus in order to achieve more points. There was a comment that Denver does prohibit idling in the City. Saskia Sawyer and Beth Walker commented that the Chancellor does support the concepts around flexible work weeks and telecommuting but doesn't want to have a formal DU level policy. Thomas Walker suggested have a statement affirming the support.

Tom McGee asked if AASHE reviews the data and makes adjustments or if the assignment of the points is basically automatic. Becky said she would try and find out. She said the STARS process has been helpful in learning what data we have and what we need to track. There was a question about how many total points there are in the STARS system. Becky said she did not know the total points but that they are normalized to a 100-point scale.

b. Facilities and Energy – McGee

Tom McGee updated the status of some projects. He said that lighting retrofits were completed in December in several buildings and some more projects are currently underway. There is a deadline of January 15 to submit a comprehensive report on greenhouse gas emissions, including offsets, air travel, campus activities, and electricity purchases. On Thursday, January 13, DU will kick off energy retro-commissioning. The campus has experienced significant energy savings over the years.

Tom McGee reported on the operations portion of the STARS report. He explained the points for existing buildings, building design and construction, air quality, greenhouse gas and energy, and environmental health and safety. STARS uses 2005 as the baseline year. He said we should do well on our energy consumption. 2009 was 10% lower than 2005. We can also get points for integrated test management, LED lighting, and storm water management.

Mark Rodgers added that Boettcher East has been demolished. Until a new building is constructed on the site, we will have an experimental lawn grid to test sustainable turfs. Martin Quigley is coordinating the project, which should be started this spring. Donors are being sought. *There was a motion by Becky Powell, seconded by Fred Cheever, to endorse the experimental lawn endeavor. The motion passed unanimously.* Fred suggested that the site be put on the sustainability website and added to the tour map. Martin said that they will do something with the former cooling pond to create "wetlands." He is also working with the City and County of Denver's Parks and Recreation.

There was a question about why flower beds are sometimes dug up before the flowers are through blooming. Martin said that annuals are sometimes removed prematurely and the beds replanted to keep the campus appearance good for prospective students and other campus inhabitants. Mark said the goal is to minimize having just bare dirt in the gardens.

Fred asked about the Colorado Carbon Fund. Becky said it is in the beginning stages.

IX. Other Committee Reports

a. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – Shell and Others

i. Recyclemania – Mariah said that the students are getting the details together for this competition. It kicks off February 6. Students will need to be educated about it. Christy Cerrone suggested rejuvenating the “get caught green-handed” campaign from several years ago. Chase and others will try to find the original graphics. Becky said the campaign should focus on what can be recycled.

ii. Campus-wide three-bin system – There is still movement toward getting a three-bin system on campus (compost, recycle, trash). Mark Rodgers said that he supports having recycling bins but doesn’t want to proliferate the number of receptacles around the campus. There are now 250 or so bins. He suggests repurposing bins, similar to the interior building system. Karen Paul-Masaoka said we should be using biodegradable trash bags. There is also a continuing concern with contamination, especially with outdoor bins since there are so many visitors to the campus.

b. Curriculum and Research – Agans

There was no separate report for this committee (see Section VII above).

c. Best Practices – Powell

There was no report for this committee due to lack of time.

X. Next Meeting date and place

The next meeting will be on February 8 in the DuPont Room, Mary Reed Hall, from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 10 a.m.