

Sustainability Committee Minutes

16 March 2010, 2:40 p.m.

Kohlberg 226

Attending: Nicole Lewis, Debra Kardon-Brown, Nadine Kolowrat, Carr Everbach, Eric Burgy, Camille Robertson, Mark Davis, Evelyn Strombom, Ralph Thayer, Maurice Eldridge, Eric Wagner, Kendell Johnson

Visiting: Andrea Packard (List Gallery), Yvonne Socolar (Earthlust), Bradley Flamm (Temple Univ.), Chloe Maher (Temple Univ.)

The first item of business is a discussion of the distribution of glossy print media by Departments at the College. Andrea Packard, List Gallery director since 1995 was invited to attend the meeting and describe how the List Gallery operates in this regard. Andrea said she puts on 5 shows a year advertised nationally or regionally in addition to showing student works. Artists see the paper advertisement as a form of compensation for their work. For months of preparation, shipping, cataloging, etc., artists are not paid, or maybe a few hundred dollars if they come to give a talk. Andrea pointed out that artists are using images to represent images, offering a glimpse in the fliers of what is being displayed. These paper copies are 300 dots per inch, as opposed to the 70 dpi maximum if the image is viewed on a computer screen, so websites are not equivalent to mailings. Essays, statements, and images are often included in the paper brochures. Ultimately, Andrea pointed out, the Art department is about making, creating things, the embodiment of the research, a learning process. By being something concrete, the brochure represents the goals of the Art department. The fliers serve as a physical record of the show, an educational resource, and archival document. The artists are brought to campus in the first place because their work embodies concepts that they want to convey to the students, current and core curricular ideas, and therefore it makes sense that professors reference them. Finally, the List gallery is to the Art department as the dance studios are to the Music and Dance department. In sum: promotional tool and physical, tangible record/documentation of show: high quality images are important to artists and faculty.

After Andrea's exposition, there was a discussion of water-based instead of oil-based ink in the fliers. Andrea offered to share information about the environmentally-friendly certification of printed goods produced by current contractors, and to look into more environmentally friendly printers. Currently Andrea spends about three times more time on PR because internet invitations are also expected. Another approach would be to target the mailings: now 500 are printed for the artist and some number for staff and students. What about an opt-in option for everyone else? Andrea asked who would manage the database of opt-in folks? Currently the List Gallery cannot use the mass e-mail system to send images. Perhaps make that system more elastic, giving permission to certain individuals to send out these kinds of e-mails once a month? The List Gallery has started a Facebook page. This is a transitional time: printers are reevaluating their practices, but not ready to give up everything before the new technological system is proven sound. Additionally, a problem with opt-in list is preaching to the converted; we want to foster interdisciplinary participation among students and Swarthmore community.

Mark agreed that artist promotion is important, that social networking sites have safety issues and are also temporary. He asked, how do we recognize the artist and their right to PR and do it in an environmentally-responsible manner? Mark mentioned that ITS has a bulletin board that everyone regularly checks, that perhaps could be a more efficient and equally effective way of advertising to his department (and may be similar for others).

Ralph commented that the “shotgun approach” is the problem, mentioning that over a hundred List Gallery fliers arrive at the Facilities building and most are left on the table. Is there a way to send a smaller number to some departments and one to each member in departments that are more interested?

Deb brought up a process several years ago during which the number of Phoenix newspapers were printed and distributed was reduced through a process of opt-in opt-out polling. No one present could say how that experiment worked out.

Andre noted that perhaps it would be best for SusCom to educate people as to why these cards are beautiful and graphics are important instead of putting in a large amount of energy into reducing the number of cards by 300. Compared to other sources of waste, this one is small and perhaps is not worth pursuing.

Nicole suggested that there might be a change that could be made at the database level to facilitate more directed and eliminate extraneous mailings without causing more work for those trying to mail things.

The gallery usually has about 500 copies of catalogs, often produced by the artists themselves. Andrea thinks that approximately 300-500 fliers could be eliminated if the campus mailing list were trimmed down.

The next topic was a presentation by Bradley Flamm and Chloe Maher from Temple University’s Center for Sustainable Communities. They are working with Carr on the Greenhouse Gas Inventory of Swarthmore College and the municipalities around it. Temple folks are the lead researchers, though much data has come from Carr and Swarthmore students. They have been working for the past nine months to inventory and create an action plan for greenhouse gas (Swarthmore College is the largest non-residential component of emissions). Mr. Flamm noted a downward trend in carbon-equivalent emissions from 2005 to 2009 but he cautioned that the data have not yet been normalized for weather over the course of four years and so cannot be directly compared. Mr. Flamm noted the difference in carbon intensity of fuel choices: #2 fuel oil and natural gas are less harmful than the #6 fuel oil. He noted a \$50-60 cost per metric ton of avoided emissions, a value that will change on a year-to-year basis. Current estimates indicate that global emissions need to be reduced by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 to stabilize the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere.

Copies of the pie charts and tables shown were sent to SusCom members by email. The next steps will be what to do with the information when it is complete, and how to reduce the carbon-equivalent emissions in future years.

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Camille Robertson and Carr Everbach

Future meetings this semester:

Wednesday, March 31, 8:30-9:30 am, Sharples Rm 4 (open meeting)

Tuesday, April 6, 2:30-3:30 pm – Kohlberg 226

Friday, April 9, 12:30-1:30 pm, Lang Center (open meeting)

Wednesday, April 14, 8:30-9:30 am, Sharples Rm 4

Tuesday, April 20, 2:30-3:30 pm (Everbach away; open meeting) – Kohlberg 226

Wednesday, April 28, 8:30-9:30 am, Sharples Rm 4

Tuesday, May 4, 2:30-3:30 pm (last meeting before Finals and Inauguration; open meeting) – Lang Center Keith Room