

Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes

31 Mar 2010, Sharples Room 4, 8:30 am

Attending: Nicole Lewis, Ralph Thayer, Linda MacDougall, Maurice Eldridge, Camille Robertson, Carr Everbach, Debra Kardon-Brown, Mark Davis.

Maurice began the meeting by commenting on responses he received from an email survey he initiated regarding distribution of the New York Times on campus. Maurice received over 200 responses, mostly saying they appreciated having access to the printed version of the paper. Maurice further commented that the Times is printed using soy ink, and that, in response to his questions, Swarthmore College was offered \$500/semester by the Times for sustainability projects. These funds would be available for the Fall 2010 semester, and SusCom could use them to support student-initiated projects. The College receives a financial credit for returned newspapers, but returns are very low in general. Indeed, many people read the paper and put it back on the pile for others to use, and so although there are 250 copies delivered, there are probably more than that number of readers. We could reduce the number in the Bookstore, and instead put some in Sharples lobby. There was general agreement that balanced matchmaking between publications and recipients is desirable. SAC is taking up the matter of unwanted Verizon phonebooks and polling departments about how many each needs. SAC will get back to SusCom within the month, Maurice thought, and will be working with Vince in the Post Office. Other than newspapers and phonebooks, a further widely-distributed paper document is Career Services' newsletter, sent to every student in the form of a printed 2-4 page pamphlet once a month. This newsletter is tailored by student class, and advertises Career Services' own events and internship deadlines. Camille asked that Earthlust be allowed to look into the matter, then get back to SusCom with recommendations.

Debra pointed out the overwhelming need of departments and offices to communicate with students, and that e-mail not an easy option in many cases (e.g., job-hunting students may not look at Career Services' website). We need a timely mechanism for delivery of critical information. Maurice noted that Career Services' notices, for example, may be more important to students than the students themselves realize, so that a list-serve arrangement would miss many. Nicole observed, however, that now information flow is dominated by whoever pushes the most (and most-frequent) paper. Camille observed that Career Services is only office that continues to send paper notifications to students since the Lang Center switched over to email/website. Carr asked for brainstorming an alternate method for timely distribution of information, such as a scrolling LED banner in a public place. Debra rebutted that one can lead a horse to water, but if people don't want information, they won't receive it. Nicole suggested a Career Services postcard instead of a 4-page newsletter, a postcard that points to an e-newsletter website on which we count visits by students.

Camille turned the conversation back to the \$500 for student-initiated projects funded by the New York Times, and noted that this option would be attractive to student groups. Debra promised to send Carr a description of the Swarthmore Foundation's methods for choosing projects, to be used as an example for SusCom. Nicole asked if the money

could fund competitions, such as greenest dorm or recycling improvements. Camille suggested that applicants for the money should meet with SusCom members ahead of time (in an open meeting) prior to whatever proposal deadline we set. Linda strongly suggested that such a deadline be in April, 2010, so that the winning project could be implemented first thing in the Fall. Camille was chosen by acclamation as coordinator of proposals, to solicit draft applications prior to April 22 (Earth Day). She will place notices in the Phoenix, Gazette, etc.

Carr and Ralph were recently interviewed for an article in the Gazette regarding the Renewing Fund for Resource Conservation. Thus Carr solicited updates for each funded project, which discussion is summarized:

Priority 1: Mertz Organic Lawn. Swarthmore Foundation has funded a proposal to include an academic component in the Organic Lawn project, which funding will include support for public information (signage) and lab equipment to determine stormwater pollution changes, measure biodiversity, and examine soil health. Carr and Camille met with Jose-Luis Machado, who is interested in helping with the research. We are still waiting for paperwork regarding the hiring of a consultant, however. Grounds will begin making compost immediately for application on the lawn. Carr has met with Mr. Kanti Somani, a community member who was awarded a PA state grant to implement a solar-powered composter. Carr and some students will be working over the summer to make this composter part of the Mertz Organic Lawn project, and it will live behind the grandstand where the current compost is held.

Priority 2: LED lamps in Sharples large room. Ralph had made inquiries at several companies regarding the best LED product to replace the 6W bulbs in the wagon-wheel fixtures. Philips is coming out soon with some good choices but LEDtronics is still the best for now. It would be great to have the lights in time for students to help us install them by Rebecca Chopp's Inauguration on May 8, 2010.

Priority 3: Replacing florescent lights. The implementation is slow but steady, building by building. Ralph expects completion by the end of August, 2010.

Priority 4: Light sensors for atriums and hallways. Implementation has started with the Facilities building's break area. There is a problem with the ambient light getting too low before the lights turn on; Ralph is investigating possible increases in sensitivity of the light sensors.

Priority 5: Bathroom occupancy sensors. Full implementation by summertime but some have been changed already. Camille asked for a list so that this could be used in our PR and public education efforts.

Priority 6: ITS print-release software (no longer funded by the Renewing Fund; however we'll track the success of this idea with updates from Mark Davis)

Priority 7: Clothes drying closets in Wharton AB laundry room. Lockers are on order, and should arrive next week. Carr will work on designing the tubing to use electric dryer waste heat to help dry clothes hung in the closets. Probable implementation in May.

Priority 8: Carr will contact Alice B. regarding RDS Vending and “watt miser” devices.

Camille asked if permission was needed from the Administration for Earthlust members to camp out on Parrish Beach as part of Ride the Tide. She was told that permission is not needed but, as a courtesy, the Dean’s Office should be informed. Also, Nicole asked on behalf of Grounds that any grass-covering tents be moved daily to avoid killing the grass. There was some discussion of a Federal Climate and Clean Energy jobs bill.

Andrew Reuther (ITS) has been working on a building energy-monitoring web interface, and may be able to show us at an upcoming SusCom meeting.

Camille asked if pizza box composting was a success. Nicole said yes, so far, but the number of such boxes is small. We should continue this pilot project through this semester, and expand it in the Fall if all goes well.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Carr Everbach

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Upcoming meetings:

Tuesday, April 6, 2:30-3:30 pm – Kohlberg 226 - agenda: discussions regarding Rebecca Chopp’s Inauguration, ongoing projects

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