Presidents Climate Commitment
November 13, 2008

Those present: Fabritius, Hamm, Jamison, Lubbers, MacNabb, Messer, Noltmeyer, Miles, Norwood, Nyerges, Perkins, Sweis

Announcements: Mike reminded us that Wed Nov 19, Tom Fitzgerald will present a convocation. Preston distributed copies of trip report from the AASHE national conference.

Rohit Ohri from the Information Technology discussed with us energy use by computer technology. Some of the steps that have been taken to reduce electricity usage are: (a) increasingly use of laptop machines rather than desktop, (b) most desktops now have LCD monitors, this saves about 200%, (c) stockpiled LCD monitors will soon be used to replace the remaining CRT monitors, (d) the new MAC machines in the library will have an automatic “time-out” from midnight to 8am, (e) all printers on campus are EnergyStar®. Ro is currently investigating a software called “Power-Save”. The manufacturer claims a saving of $25/yr for a per station cost of $10. IT and Ikon have investigated double sided printing. Their conclusion is that the increased wear and tear on hardware from a default setting of double side is not justified. It is still appropriate for individuals to select double sided printing when they know the number of pages is large. When computers are in their standby/sleep mode they still use 4-5 watts. All of our technology hardware is recycled with by a reputable third party. Ro reminds us that our WebCT system offers an electronic alternative for distributing information and receiving assignments that has potential to save paper and electricity.

We continued the discussion begun at the last meeting about the environmental impact of study abroad programs. Endre presented a DRAFT of a possible resolution. He emphasizes that international programs are a defining feature of life at Centre and we have no interest at all in restricting the valuable benefit of study-abroad. Rather we should balance the academic and carbon costs. In discussion, we decided that the second point of the resolution (investigate internal offsets) was something our group should do rather than become the responsibility of the International Programs committee. One suggestion is that trip leaders carefully consider the amount of “in-country” travel and consider public transportation. Liz said the international programs committee had discussed this question and she felt that group would be positively disposed to this suggestion. The resolution was passed unanimously. Nyerges and Miles were delegated to polish specific wording and communicate with Prof. Reigelman.

Jamison reported the results of a trash analysis conducted by ECCO and Facilities Management: 40% bottles and cans, 40% paper and cardboard, 10% potentially compostable, 10% material that really should go to a landfill. This pattern is worse than a similar study performed in 2000. This information can be publicized and used to stimulate increased recycling by everyone on campus. ECCO is planning a fund-raising project and would like to use that money to purchase occupancy switches for restroom lights. Scott will investigate the costs and installation of those switches.
In discussion the question of strategic planning came up. We felt that energy conservation should be articulated as a specific goal of the current Strategic Plan. A motion to that effect passed unanimously. Hamm and Miles were delegated to polish specific wording and communicate with Prof. Wyatt.

The big one – how to tackle the climate action plan. Suggestions were: (a) an annual workshop to educate everyone about the little things we can all do, (b) Days of Concern to highlight environmental issues, (c) investigate projects that have an attractive return on investment, ROI, (d) use energy costs per ft$^2$ as a means to identify good projects, (e) energy costs are likely to rise so building retrofits that aren’t attractive now may become attractive in the future, (f) our committee should investigate costs for a consultant to conduct an energy study of the campus, (g) our committee should study tangible strategies. (h) some experts suggests that individual behaviors can lead to 5-10% reductions in energy costs. We need more discussion here. Miles will distribute models from some other schools.

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 4, afternoon.