Presidents Climate Commitment  
March 30, 2010

Members Present:  Crowley, Fabritius, Hamm, Jamison, MacNabb, Messer, Miles, Noltemeyer, Perkins, Werner.  Guests: Edwards, Howard

We have received approval for a summer employee. Laura Hansen, member of our committee currently studying abroad, has accepted the position.

Brett reported the work of Jason Parks in constructing three or four composting barrels. Jason will be producing material for use on our campus.

Brett also described the work of a new campus organization, Garden Research through Organic Ways of Sustainability (G.R.O.W.S.). They have found a location behind the Jurassic Park building and have built eight raised bed boxes. Facilities Management has delivered topsoil and loaded the 3ft x 6 ft boxes. The leaders are planning to plant within the next few weeks. They hope to deliver some greens to Cowan before the term ends. Obstacles with Sodexho have been addressed. Jami Hester of Governor’s Scholars has been contacted to continue harvesting through the summer months and make plantings that will mature for fall.

RecycleMania. Scott reported that RecycleMania competition ended this week. At this point Centre ranks #258 among about 350 total participants. Our results are limited by the categories of recycling that are available in our region. Even more encouraging is the fact that our total recycling this year (7/1/09 through 3/24/10) has been 41 tons, relative to 35 tons at this point last year.

Bethany sent a report from the waste audit performed by ECCO March 18. Overall, 36% of the waste stream could have been recycled. The best performance was 7.4% of waste being recycle-able (Pearl Hall) and worst performance was 80% of waste being potentially recycle-able (Bingham). Previous, and equally unscientific, audits have shown overall 50% and 80% of waste stream as recycle-able. Scott finds these results encouraging in that they show our awareness of recycling has improved and at the same time we have great potential to recycle much more material. This “dumpster diving” event is featured on the college website this week as “Sights and Sounds.”

Terry described the efforts of Danville City Commission to bring curbside recycling to our community. Terry is advocating a program mandatory recycling with a modest fee. The advantages of the mandatory recycling approach are (1) community-wide recycling will increase and (2) that homeowners will have opportunity to reduce their charges for waste disposal. The new waste disposal contract is due for renegotiation and the RFP includes recycling provisions. The new contract will begin July, 2011. Terry asked that a representative of our group appear before the Commission to share the work of our group with the Commission.
Aaron Edwards and Elizabeth MacNabb presented the conclusions of a work group that is developing a sustainability knowledge and attitudes assessment survey. The group recommends the survey be delayed till fall 2010. The full report is attached.

Elizabeth reported that Abby Malik is developing a booth for the local Earth Day event April 23. Her exhibit will dramatize the phantom load issue. Jason Parks will also display his composting project. Patrick Noltemeyer is coordinating student volunteers to support the event.

Carbon Mitigation System for Global Air Travel (CMSGAT) received a lot of attention. Liz reported that the program was adopted by the International Studies committee and announced to students and faculty.

Aaron and Patrick reported that several students have questioned the new program. Primary objections seem to be over the timing and perceived absence of adequate prior information. The surprise of this as a new fee has led to the resistance. Two Facebook groups have been formed (Jason Bouldt and Greg Brooks). In discussion, the concern emerged that this resistance may reduce the momentum our group has developed toward sustainability and become a speed bump to further progress. A strategy was proposed to inform/discuss with leaders and through them to communicate with general student body.

Steve noted there was no communication of this new program to staff and suggested that they also be kept in the loop. As an example, Judy Bowell in the Cashiers office was caught off guard when she started getting questions and complaints.

A campus-wide colloquium/public forum was suggested.

The question was raised about the surcharge for the air travel of the participating faculty? Our committee suggested that all faculty leading overseas programs be encouraged to purchase the CMSGAT. Liz will bring this question to the International Study committee and request clarification of program with the Finance Dept.

Terry pointed out that the confusion and resistance we are experiencing with CMSGAT is not surprising, since our sustainability effort is only 2 ½ years old and sustainability issues are not well understood by the general public.

Steve said that establishing an appropriate restricted account would be straightforward and the account could certainly accept voluntary contributions from anyone across campus. Preston expressed enthusiasm for the “back side” of CMSGAT-- the selection and execution of energy efficiency or conservation projects. He suggested a sub-group composed of students, Facilities Management, and PCC members will select projects. The challenging aspect will be assuring CO₂ integrity of projects.

Elizabeth brought up the importance of incorporating sustainability material into the general education curriculum. Given the timing, this topic will be carried forward to our April meeting.