PCC Meeting
May 12, 2010

Members present: Hamm, MacNabb, Messer, Miles, Noltemeyer, Nyerges, Werner, Visitors: Edwards, Roush, Stephens

President Roush talked with us about his perceptions of our work. He encouraged us to keep doing those things that have a good impact, for instance recycling. John reminded us that “the most important thing Centre can do is send out about 250 graduates a year that ‘get it’ with respect to sustainability. Sometimes we (the committee) may tire of continual internal education efforts, but each year over 350 new people join us and we should continuously inform them. The student “green fund” that is purchasing renewable energy certificates sourced at Mother Ann Lee hydrostation is another example.

The campus garden, GROW, is good but there is anxiety. It will be important for us to have an evaluation and see how it works. We should not continue unless we see real evidence that it matters.

The new science center will be submitted to USGBC for LEED certification. We have learned that the Norton Center renovation is “LEED qualified” but have decided not to spend the $75,000 required for the formal certification process.

The College has incorporated the sustainability perspective into our decisions regarding on-campus projects. Renovation of the Wiseman third floor for student housing, and a major renovation of Walnut House, will provide room for additional students without any new construction. Whenever we can re-purpose existing buildings and avoid new construction, we are dramatically reducing our environmental impact. The project list for facilities management will be distributed in the next several months and among those projects will be: demolition of the International House on St. Mildred’s Court, new windows and HVAC in Nevin Hall, remodeling of the Navy building. Combs Center will be used only for special events.

Patrick reported on conversations with Clarence Wyatt and Richard Trollinger. The Climate Action Plan goals have been incorporated into the College’s Strategic Plan. There is reluctance to incorporate sustainability into the Mission Statement, since that might encourage other minor additions that eventually dilute the impact of the statement. Since the Strategic Plan is the governing document for the College, it has greater impact than the mission statement (aside from the visibility). Consideration will be given to double-side printing for the Board Book. There are reservations about an electronic format since that might lead to increased susceptibility to inadvertent distribution.

Brett announced his intention to organize a fall event that promotes sustainability and climate impact issues. This idea was endorsed enthusiastically, with suggestions of student tie-ins, connection to the farming/agriculture (Community Farm Alliance and local food producers), mountain-top removal, an essay contest connected with Berry’s poetry, a campus walk of green list conducted by Facilities Management, support from Student Government Association. This could be multiple sessions over several days, modeled after the genocide series this past month.
Chris Williams of the Berea Coalition to oppose chemical weapons disposal was suggested. Chris Barton (U.K. Forestry) was suggested. Mountain top removal was suggested as a topic.

Caroline and Mike reported about the Mother Ann Lee field trip on May 9. Seven students and two faculty participated. David Brown Kinloch presented an informative and inspiring tour and discussion. He was particularly appreciative of the involvement of Centre community both in initial licensing process as well as the continuing purchase of REC’s. [http://www.centre.edu/news/2010/mother.html](http://www.centre.edu/news/2010/mother.html)

ECCO plans to sponsor a similar event next year.

Elizabeth brought back the idea of student environmental representatives. She acknowledged the already full responsibilities of residence assistants, but pointed to the good success at Sewanee as a model. There the eco-reps promote recycling and conduct one or two promotional events each year. An alternative vision that emerged was a student group (presumably ECCO) serving as an “ambassadorial” group. This would be similar to SMART Peer Educators with respect to alcohol. In this model, ECCO would present educational/background information to residence assistants. Discuss with Sarah Scott-Hall.

A brief discussion of how to advance sustainability into our curriculum. We agreed this change should be encouraged but not a mandate to all faculty. By consensus we decided to HOLD the memo to CCAS that was approved at our last meeting (PCC Notes April 27 2010) and continue this discussion again next fall.

At the campus forum on April 13 the suggestion was made to include each student’s travel to and from campus and home as part of the institutional GHG inventory. Our discussion included the following points: complexity of accounting, benchmarking with CA/CP and the practice at other institutions, and the balance between what is an individual’s responsibility vs what is the responsibility of an institutional. After discussion, by consensus, we decided to continue our practice of leaving this out of the institutional GHG inventory.

By email, Bethany encouraged the committee to “make sustainability visible in actions and words . . . integrate sustainable projects into the classroom . . . if Centre does not begin acting to create a larger community goal of sustainability, we will fall very short of our institutional goal of being a leader in higher education.”

We moved to a review of the year’s actions and goal-setting for next year. Meat-free days should be pursued; energy competitions between dorms will now be easier that SchoolDude software is operational, we should contact Carey Thompson to consider some sort of sustainability scholarships, contacts have been made about installing wind meter on nearby cell phone tower, we must continue to work on CMSGAT, contact new Sodexho manager about re-vitalizing sustainability in Cowan operations, our vegetarian offerings are not good, the third week of September was suggested as date for our first fall meeting.