Advisory Committee –
American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment

First Year Report

This ad-hoc committee was nominated by President Roush in late May and began meeting in earnest with the beginning of the fall academic term. We met nine times through the year (Sept 11, Oct 1, Oct 22, Nov 5, Nov 26, Jan 21, Feb 18, Mar 13, May 5) and enjoyed consistent attendance and high enthusiasm. Our first meeting began with a charge from President Roush and a free-ranging discussion of topics and issues that deserve exploration. Our last meeting concluded with a review of the year’s actions. Comparison of those lists revealed both gratifying progress and important future challenges.

Three Tangible Actions
The first target date of the Presidents Climate Commitment called for participating institutions to “create institutional structure to guide development and implementation of the plan” and to initiate at least two tangible actions from a list of seven possible strategies. The committee recommended and the President endorsed that Centre would set three actions:

1. All new buildings and major renovations will be designed and built to conserve energy and enhance the human environment as evaluated by LEED silver standards or equivalent. Certification through U.S.G.B.C. will be pursued as appropriate.
2. Energy consumption and life-cycle costs will be considered in purchases of all equipment and appliances. The intention will be to purchase E.P.A. Energy Star© products in all areas for which such ratings exist.
3. Waste minimization will be promoted and pursued by policy and practice. Specific activities will depend upon technical and economic opportunities. Current efforts include:
   a. A vigorous recycling program with collection in all major buildings of paper, cardboard, etc.
   b. Participation in the waste minimization component of the RecycleMania competition.
   c. A vigorous program of conservation of paper and other materials through a centralized mail and copying service.
   d. Incorporation of materials management information into new employee and new student orientation programs.
   e. Encourage use of re-useable drink containers by providing re-useable mugs to students and price discounts in café and grill.

Campus Recycling
Efforts in recycling continue to be a strength on our campus. We collect and process eight different waste streams. Our total amount recycled has increased steadily (04/05, 31 tons; 05/06, 46 tons; 06/07, 52 tons). Results to date suggest that we may exceed the 07/08 goal of 55 tons of total recycling. This year we participated in the RecycleMania program, and received a letter of congratulations from the Office of Solid Waste of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for that effort. During that 10-week period we recycled 18 pounds per person, a rate that ranked in the top third of all participating colleges and universities. For several years, the Student Life
Office has organized a move-out day yard sale held in cooperation with the Presbyterian Church. This year the proceeds of over $4,000 were the highest ever. An important part of a recycling program on any college campus is continuing process of engaging each new cohort of entering students. We look to establish a student recycling committee this year to increase awareness of the value of the program.

**Student Involvement**  We are pleased by the excitement our students bring to sustainability issues. The student organization ECCO has been particularly active this year. ECCO has met frequently for educational and service programs, has sponsored a green tips table in the library, and has brought speakers to campus on urban sprawl and mountain-top removal. Members of ECCO have conducted projects on worm composting, bagasse as a Styrofoam alternative, and explored opportunities for green roofs. Dana Kuhnline, a representative of Southern Energy Network visited our campus and spoke with student leaders on Oct 9. Dana shared background on student green fee initiatives at other schools. Justin Roush and Elizabeth MacNabb attended the Virginia Energy Summit in November at Washington & Lee. They brought back several good ideas for projects at Centre, especially the value of residence hall advocates. Both ECCO and Student Life organized Earth Day events that included planting an overcup oak in front of Sutcliffe and activities along Clarks Run. There were three student internships sponsored by ACS-Environmental Initiative (Roush, Saad, & Pratt) this year.

**Local Food & Alternatives to Styrofoam**  This is a topic of continuing interest. Individuals and informal groups have explored opportunities for “farm to cafeteria” relationships with local producers. An ACS student intern (Saad) investigated these questions during fall 2007. From Sodexho’s standpoint, concerns include product liability, reliability of local sources, and consumer acceptance. We should continue to explore these opportunities. A cost neutral compostable alternative was identified but has not been adopted consistently.

**Curriculum**  Our Strategic Plan calls for us to establish a sustainability component to Centre’s curriculum and to explore extending the Environmental Studies minor to a major. A key provision of the Presidents Climate Commitment sets a goal for incorporation of sustainability into our curriculum (1.c.iii. Within two years …actions to make climate neutrality and sustainability a part of the curriculum and other educational experience for all students.) As President Roush shared with us in September, “…the most important impact of this initiative will be how we influence the attitudes and understandings of our graduates.” This important challenge must be addressed in AY 08/09.

**New Construction**  The period 2005 through 2011 will be one of major investment in campus facilities at Centre. The major renovation and expansions of the College Center project was completed in fall 2007, Pearl Hall in fall 2008, new Student Center fall 2009, new science center and remodeling of Norton Center in early 2010. The College Center project (Sutcliffe and Crounse) incorporates many “best practices” for
energy conservation and sustainable design. Features of these buildings include: site selection, stormwater control, water use reduction, energy performance, construction waste management, recycled materials, low-emitting paints, sealants, and carpets, daylighting, and advanced lighting and ventilation controls. Though LEED certification was not pursued on this project, it is reasonable judgment that standard could have been met. Pearl Hall construction has been highly visible this past year. From the beginning LEED certification has been a major objective for this project. Final evaluation does not occur until months after project completion, but conversations with our consultant, Heapy Engineering, indicate that silver level certification is likely. Partly through the discussions of the PCC committee but primarily through the increasing public awareness arising from the Pearl Hall project, interest in USGBC certification for future buildings has increased on campus. The two advisory committees helping to plan the Student Center and the new science building have included LEED certification as one of the objectives for those buildings. As before, Hastings & Chivetta assures us that best practices incorporates most if not all of those features. As reflected in the wording of our tangible actions commitment ( . . . as evaluated by LEED silver standards or equivalent. Certification through U.S.G.B.C. will be pursued as appropriate), it remains an open question on our campus whether or not the additional expenses necessary for USGBC certification are justified relative to other important institutional objectives.

**Green e Initiative** This spring our Student Government led a student initiative for the purchase of Renewable Energy Credits through the E.ON green energy plan. Through this program an 80-year old low-fall dam and generator on the Kentucky river, now named Mother Ann Lee Hydro, will be refurbished to produce an eventual 8.3 million kWh per year. The student initiative specified that each student be assessed $5 per semester to purchase the REC’s. Based on assumptions of enrollment and future energy use, these funds will offset approximately 10% of Centre’s electricity consumption. The measure will be submitted for Board approval in fall 2008. What is remarkable about this action is the support it received from students. The initiative passed with an 82% to 18% approval ratio and the proportion of students voting was the highest in memory. Additionally, a Faculty resolution asked that a faculty/staff donation program be established to support the student green-e initiative. That program is in place and payments will be coordinated with the beginning of the tuition increase (anticipated fall ’09).

**Public Awareness** An objective of our committee’s work has been to increase campus awareness of environmental and energy consumption issues. This academic year there have been nine web articles (Aug 23, Sept 20, Nov 21, Dec 6, Dec 13, Jan 24, Feb 7, Feb 28, Apr 17), three concerned PCC, and four concerned recycling efforts. There were three convocations (Nov 1, Feb 28, Mar 6) that concerned sustainable development and energy issues and one that discussed biological conservation. Eight feature articles and two editorials/letters appeared in the CENTO, two relating to the student green-e initiative, two on the bike program, and two covered dining hall concerns.
Progress toward Green House Gas Inventory  A preliminary version of GHG inventory was presented at our May meeting. This preliminary data suggested that our total impact is approximately 11,000 tons of CO$_2$ equivalent. Of this total 14% is natural gas, 44% is electricity, 33% is transportation, and 3% each for solid waste and refrigerants. Our discussion revealed some uncertainties in some of the data sources. Work continues during summer 2008 to answer those questions. If we are to meet the target dates set our by PCC it is important that we have a reliable GHG inventory by this fall term. Our discussion also clarified the relative importance of scope 1 (direct emissions), scope 2 (indirect emissions from purchased sources) and scope 3 (other indirect emissions). A reliable GHG inventory is essential for the major task of your second year task -- developing an institutional action plan.

Faculty & Staff Business Travel  We have found that collection of information on faculty and staff business travel is particularly problematic. With our current General Ledger system and all of our various mechanisms for reimbursement (travel expense report, departmental charge cards, reimbursement memos fro all the special grant accounts) there is simply no central system that collects ground and air travel. One approach would be to manually audit as many travel expense reports and credit card receipts as could be found. (There are some potential privacy issues with this approach.) Since that information would be in terms of dollars, assumptions would still be necessary to convert dollars into miles or gallons. Another suggestion is that our current travel expense form could be modified to require individuals report actual ground and air miles. Since these forms are electronic, presumably a method to totalize the data could be developed. A strength of this approach is the potential educational/behavioral impact. The process of recording the information would make all of us aware of the financial and environmental impact of our travel decisions. Anticipated disadvantages include compliance resistance and the point that a significant fraction of travel (credit card and travel supported by FDC) would still not be captured. Finally we recognized that this is a Scope 3 category. Though none of us are completely satisfied, we essentially tabled this discussion and will not include this category in our first year green house gas inventory.