**Environmental Issues Committee Meeting Minutes**

October 22, 2015, 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

Columbia, Room 249

**MEMBERS PRESENT**
**Faculty and Staff:**

Erin Moore—Architecture (By Phone)
Brook Eastman– Geography

Fred Tepfer – Campus Planning, Design, and Construction

Melynn Bates – American English Institute

**Students:**Megan Knox

Nicole Hendrix

**Ex-Officio:**

Eric Beeler—Student Sustainability Coalition

Steve Mital—Office of Sustainability

Christine Thompson – Campus Planning, Design, and Construction

Blair Hinton—Athletics

**Other Attendees:**

Sonya Carlson—Office of Sustainability

**WELCOME AND WORK REVIEW**

Steve Mital convened the meeting and each member introduce themselves. Steve then discussed the 2014-15 Annual Report and noted that he and Erin reviewed it for accuracy and then sent it to Vice President Jamie Moffitt. The EIC work from the last year resulted in two recommendations. The first was to preserve and maintain the chimney Vaux Swift Chimney as a migratory habitat. The second was recommendation to adopt an Internal Carbon Pricing Policy to curb air travel, which accounts for roughly 40% of campus emissions and create a fund to invest in campus energy efficiency projects. Vice President Moffitt would like to have more information regarding the projects that the Carbon Price would support and had some concerns about the burden placed on untenured faculty who feel they need to travel to achieve tenure. The next course of action would be to convene a work group to review these issues and he is working with Campus Operations to fund a study with Energy Studies Building Lab to do a study of potential campus projects. We are waiting to hear back from Vice President Moffitt regarding the Vaux Swift Chimney recommendation.

**ELECTION OF EIC CHAIR**

Brian Gillis sent an email nominating Erin Moore to serve as EIC Chair. Erin was a member of the EIC three years ago and also served as Chair last year. Steve asked if Erin accepted the nomination. She accepted and then Steve asked if there were any other nominations. No other nominations were put forth. By unanimous vote, Erin Moore was elected to be the 2015-2016 EIC Chair.

**REVIEW OF EIC CHARTER**
Erin then summarized the charge and responsibilities of the EIC. Christine Thompson then added that the Climate Action Plan and the Comprehensive Environmental Policy guide the work of the EIC and suggested that the committee review those two items in future meetings.

**AASHE MEMBERSHIP REVIEW**

The American for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) is an association of Universities involved in sustainability. The organization is supported by dues from member organizations. Membership benefits include a small reduction in annual conference fees, access to resource center on AASHE’s website, and reduction in fees to use Sustainability Tracking and Rating System (STARS). Each year before authorizing the payment for membership, which is roughly $1700, Steve brings the decision to the EIC for discussion about the value and whether or not the membership should be renewed. Steve mentioned that no one he has talked to has used the website resources section, but that conference fee reductions are utilized and that STARS is used every two or three years. Steve asked about 10 people across campus about renewing the membership.

Eric raised a concern that UO has a strong reputation in the higher education sustainability community and thought that there might be difficulty maintaining that relationship if we were no longer a member of AASHE. He also noted that there is approximately a $100 conference registration fee reduction and five or six people attending this year which is roughly $500 or $600 of benefit in addition to the STARS savings. Eric noted that AASHE does produce a number of reports but that he received information on sustainability internships which he distributed.

Blair Hinton suggested that the cost does not seem that high and that Athletics also has memberships, which may not be utilized to the fullest extent, but that give access and are needed to maintain a reputation in the sustainability community. Steve noted that Karyn Kaplan and Bill Casper both advocated strongly to renew the membership. Steve then discussed his concern with the membership is that the benefit doesn’t out-weigh the cost. AASHE has gotten complacent and they know they are not as responsive to member concerns as they should be. Without sending a message through reduced memberships he wondered if they would actually change.

Fred Tepfer also raised concern about cost and what we were giving up to gain membership. He then suggested that we should contact AASHE and let them know that there was a serious discussion about the value of membership before renewing.

Christine asked if there were other organizations that compete with AASHE or provide similar services. Steve noted that Second Nature, which created the America Colleges and Universities Presidents Climate Commitment and which spurred the creation of our Climate Action Plan. ACUPCC had voluntary memberships, but announced recently that they are switching to a mandatory membership.

Sonya asked what the cost of STARS was and Steve said that in this coming year they are offering a $500 discount in part because they know they have membership problems and are trying to entice universities to renew memberships. In the past the discount on STARS has been much lower. Christine noted that we were getting roughly $1000 in benefits from the conference registration reduction and the STARS discount. Steve summarized that it appeared people thought we should renew, but that we should express concern about the value.

**2015-2016- EIC INITIATIVES**

The main initiatives include: Review and approve CEP and EIC charter minor edits, Sustainability units review, STARS Reporting, Internal Carbon Tax, and

Climate Action Plan update.

Steve noted that he would bring some housekeeping edits on the EIC Charter and the Comprehensive Environmental Policy for review to the next EIC meeting. There are roughly six units that are mainly responsible for the sustainability efforts on campus and Vice President Jamie Moffitt requested a review of the roles and responsibilities of each of these units in regards to implementing the Comprehensive Environmental Policy.

Steve asked if members had other issues they would like to raise. Eric noted that Portland State University was holding an Intentional Design Endowment Forum which the UO Foundation would be attending and thought it would be interesting to get an update and information on how they align sustainability goals.

**PRESENTATION: STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY CENTER – ERIC BEELER**

Eric covered the center’s mission, staffing, leadership development, coordination of student groups, resources available for student projects, revenue from EMU, and challenges.

Adjourn (Chair)