

Environmental Issues Committee Meeting

December 3, 2008
Alsea Room, EMU

Attendees:

Art Farley, Steve Mital, Christine Thompson, Michael Latteri, William Cresko, Jill Forcier, Lynn Giordano

Agenda:

Review the Carbon Offsets Policy Proposal from Art, make changes

Proposal for Carbon Offsets:

The Committee made changes to the proposal. The goal of this meeting was to develop a policy to vote on next time.

Since the last meeting the ACUPCC came up with a carbon offsets purchasing protocol that all signatories should adhere to in order to be in good standing. The group agreed to use the ACUPCC policy as the first criteria.

Additionally, the committee can add criteria to strengthen the ACUPCC policy, but cannot weaken it.

There was a brief discussion and decision that the recommendations would be “guidelines” not “criteria.” The purpose being, to allow flexibility for the person/body that will actually purchase offsets.

Given UO’s status as a state institution for higher education, we have additional criteria –

- a. Oregon-based projects
- b. Projects would be public in nature (projects that have ancillary beneficiaries as public as possible)
- c. Projects offer education benefits to faculty and students

There was discussion over the word “AND” versus “OR” in the policy. Will we try to hit all of the guidelines or just one or two? Because these are guidelines the committee said “OR.”

The guidelines are listed in order of importance.

“Projects should meet as many as the following criteria as possible...”

Should projects only have public beneficiaries?

The committee decided that we should leave it considering that it is a guideline.

Projects are public in nature with auxiliary benefits to fit the public as much as possible – funded with public dollars, we should not establish projects that have benefit to small number of people.

Note: All projects will have a financial benefit and the carbon offset benefit. We take the offset and the financial benefit goes to “the public.” Projects should be consistent with the mission of the University.

Order of guidelines:

1 Educational benefits –

#2 Local –

#3 should provide for the general welfare of the community by...

The funding piece:

How will this be funded? What is this as a part of the policy? Foundation funds? Earmarked?

Once it is donated it is public, it becomes public funds.

Climate Trust – local and developed projects largely have financial benefit that flows to a small group/individual – separate carbon offsets and financial benefit goes to a small group of folks, consider it strongly

Priority be given to projects to Oregon or in a larger area? –We want to be more specific about the vicinity. Low income neighborhood in Eugene rather than a Courthouse in Salem.

What is local?

Eugene, Lane County, Oregon, and Pacific Northwest

Following guidelines are important for offsets – less important to get the wording precise because there is flexibility – meet them to the best extent possible

Switch the numbering of 3 & 4

#1 will be replaced by the ACUPCC guidelines

Reword the guidelines so that it says “public service.”

Committee discussed visibility, but decided that is not a good guideline. Better to have a website that describes the projects – use PR not necessary to have something visible.

Most likely we will select a provider to develop and manage projects for us...

Most likely try and find an offset provider that can offer projects that fit guidelines

It seems like 1 and 2 are not parallel in their language – coordinating and monitoring? Do we become our own offset provider? Calculate – credit - finish them, monitor?

What situations would lead to the UO purchasing carbon offsets?

We can maybe get 80% done, but there will always be some we can't do.

Cost of eliminating GHGs may be really high. If we come across something that can't be eliminated like refrigerants or faculty and staff air travel.

Quantifiable term for number three, "substantially more" (case by case situation) – how much money is substantially more, leave it to be vague so that it can be molded for the future.

We will purchase offsets if:

Interim carbon reduction goals are not met – fairly confident that there is only one 2020, (state carbon reduction goal)

10% less than 1990 level – OUS is going to piggyback, and then by 2050

What about 2025 and 2030? We are not required to buy offsets in 2020.

Does the UO want to set other interim goals? We will likely track the state's. There may be other goals or triggers

Offsets work annually, they can't be banked, but if we do projects we can bank those and take the yearly savings.

Single cheapest way is to wait to 2050 – If you invest in a campus project that would get us to our goal would that investment get us to there in the future – invest in project, lot less than in 2050.

So far we have not decreased our GHGs, we have increased – keeping them flat till 2003, now that has changed they have risen.

Is it total or is it per student? – It's all in absolute terms – per student could be our own internal measurements. – If you expect to grow, how do you stay constant? We have to switch to non-carbon forms of fuel.

If you go back and look at those benchmarks and goals that we set – measure ourselves internally on a percentage basis up to a certain point in time.

When do we look at the carbon offsets? We set 2010 for ourselves, but ours may fold into the OUS. Reflect interim institutional goals.

Ongoing benefits from offsets – you pay more, more expensive than paying an annual fee.

Climate trust spends \$3 per ton, they charge \$11 per ton... administrative costs in managing and accrediting those projects, due diligence, etc.

Bus Stop Items:

Karen Kaplan – policy discussed by the committee last year regarding the university not selling bottled water due to recycling and cost issue is having issues. we can talk about this in February and/or March

We made some progress, we will work on this and then vote on it at the January meeting.