

## **Environmental Issues Committee**

April 20, 2010

10:00 AM

Rogue River Room, EMU

### **Members in Attendance:**

Zach Stark-MacMillan, Dan Rottenberg, Terrie Scharfer, Christine Thompson, Jill Forcier, Lauren Wirtis, Steve Mital, Art Farley, Deborah Exton

### **Meeting Minutes**

Art first asked for comments on the March meeting's minutes and then a motion to approve them. The March meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

**Steve Mital opened the discussion of the UO's paper policy.** The policy was last revised in April 2003. In talking with Mark Dixon, the head of mailing and printing services, Steve discovered that the UO policy is outdated and no longer in compliance with the state of Oregon requirements.

One of the problems with UO's policy is the phrase in the first paragraph "priced competitively," which is undefined. The assessment of this standard is left up to individual departments. Also, the clause which states that the paper must be of a "quality to satisfy applicable specifications" has been a major deterrent to purchasing post-consumer paper. In the early stages of production, post-consumer paper was not very compatible with copying machines and often bunched up and jammed the machines leading departments to deem the paper's quality as unsuitable to the necessary uses. However, this is no longer the case, as copier vendors must provide machines that can accommodate the recycled paper. If paper gets jammed, it's up to the vendor to replace the copier, not the office manager to replace the paper. The UO paper policy needs to be more clear about this.

Another issue in the UO's paper policy is the regulations about the percentage of paper that must be post-consumer waste (PCW) and the chlorine-free requirement. Currently, paper is only sold in 30% and 100% PCW, so a new policy should reflect the market. (UO paper policy mentions 50% post consumer). The chlorine-free requirement needs greater detail. There are several chlorine-free categories to choose from (process free, total free, etc)

The next step Steve took was to get estimates of UO paper consumption. The UO got an estimated 60-80% of its paper from Office Max in 2009. Fifteen tons was 100% PCW paper and 84 tons were 30% PCW paper costing a total of \$122,000. In order to convert all of the UO's paper to 100% PCW paper the additional cost would only be \$26,000 or 17% increase (\$148,000 total).

Christine Thompson asked if these numbers were coming from Office Max. Steve Mital replied that the numbers came from Mark Dixon. Christine then asked if we were complying with all standards except the chlorine free clause. Steve answered that, yes, we were complying with current UO policy but that policy is not up to state standards. Steve continued to say that he

wanted Mark Dixon to come in to a meeting to provide more detail on this matter, but he had a conflict with the April date, so he might come in May. That way his input could be included in the final report.

Christine Thompson asked if Mark Dixon knows how the UO policy compares to state regulations. Steve answered yes, and Christine replied that the problem is then a matter of regulation. Steve affirmed this saying that the UO realizes that it must change its policy. Art Farley asked if Mark Dixon would be coming in with several proposals. Steve said 'yes'. Terrie Scharfer asked if state regulations require 30% or 100% PCW paper. Steve replied that he was unsure.

Deborah Exton asked if there would be a June EIC meeting. Art answered that this is possible if the committee has not yet come to a resolution. Steve Mital added that the committee could finalize issue by e-mail if need be.

Christine Thompson asked, "Who is charge of making sure people comply, because that person should be involved in the discussion." Steve Mital replied that it would make the most sense if Mark Dixon were in charge. Christine inquired if there were any other key people who needed to be invited to the next meeting. Steve said that he thought Amy Granger could come since she has been working with Mark. Art Farley remarked that there must be someone who is currently overseeing all of the departments. Steve said that this is not true, it is only the department officer who says "we're out of paper" and orders more of whatever is needed.

Jill Forcier suggested that the options on the ordering webpage could be limited. Steve Mital responded that he had thought of making a separate website for the UO where options would be limited and then tracking the progress of what was bought. Art Farley said that idea could be recommended to Frances Dyke. Steve added that he had already discussed the idea with Frances and she was supportive.

Steve Mital said his experience learning about paper policy at the bookstore was positive. The main paper product sold is spiral bound notebooks and all but one brand uses 30% PCW paper or better. The bookstore staff noticed that students will often buy greener products, but there is no extractable trend. The bookstore tends to make decisions based on consumer demand, but purchases tend toward the greener end. Steve discovered that the bookstore sells virgin computer paper and pointed out the UO policy that prohibits doing so and the bookstore will be pulling it from the shelves.

**Steve Mital passed around a list of product and services purchased by the UO to which the EIC may want to attach green policies.** Steve noted that he had highlighted several items he thought could be addressed (i.e. computer related purchases, food services, travel, and paper) and wanted the rest of the committee's input.

Art Farley asked what the paper meant by 'high risk' or 'low risk.' Steve Mital answered that the terminology corresponds to the purchase's monetary value and doesn't correspond to environmental concerns. Jill Forcier added that the labeling depends on the commodity code and 'high risk' items include those that are costly or contain important information.

Steve Mital said he had talked with Amy Granger who pointed to several issues in the document. Primarily the fact that the terms were very ambiguous and it would be hard to track any one particular item such as paper.

Deborah Exton said she thought janitorial supplies might be a good section to address, because it doesn't span different departments. Dan Rottenberg added that Fred Tepfer had the idea of requiring energy star appliances only. Terrie Scharfer noted that UO Housing buys its own janitorial supplies and has a committee addressing green options, but she didn't know if there is a written policy. Christine Thompson commented that Facilities Services has looked into the issue as well. Steve Mital added that Facilities Services usually sets the standard for buying cleaning supplies.

Christine Thompson said she thought one way to approach the different categories would be to evaluate their centralization within one department, the amount of control that department had, and potential environmental benefit. For example, issues surrounding energy would have larger effects. Also, the committee should explore simple solutions such as individual products and compost availability.

Steve commented that, at the time being, the EIC's role is to "set up for next year's agenda" because the paper regulation issue will usurp most of the committee's time through the end of the year.

Christine Thompson noted that the committee should explore actions that are already being taken but may not exist in policy form, because if the person directing that action leaves the practice would leave with him/her. Art Farley added that this job seems suited for someone in purchasing who deals with these issues regularly. Steve Mital agreed, saying that creating an organized system could be costly, but it's a long-term investment. Steve added that if anyone had any further thoughts on this topic later on to e-mail him.

**Art Farley opened up a discussion about carbon neutrality in relation to research- and athletics-related travel.** Art mentioned that, in the Climate Action Plan, emissions from travel jumped out as a major contributor (30% of total emissions) and as a place for intervention. Primarily he has been looking at contributions from research and athletics. Art will soon have a meeting with Loraine Davis, the interim athletic director) who seemed receptive to the concept of a carbon neutral athletic program. Art's idea is to add a surcharge to each athletic event ticket in order to create a pool of \$250,000 or so to be used for carbon mitigation. Also, Art will ask the Sustainability Council, headed by Brendan Bohannon, to work with the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Office of Research Services and Administration (ORSA) to address the issue. Hopefully, ORSA will be able to provide an annual budget indicating the portion of grants that contribute to travel so a carbon footprint could be created.

Deborah Exton noted that breaking the grants down systematically could be difficult, because those numbers were often variant and ambiguous. Art Farley agreed, adding that by working with ORSA he hoped to disentangle that issue and that eventually the information would be known. Steve Mital said that it is also currently unknown how much of the emission from travel come from athletics, research, etc. Breaking emissions down by sector would also aid in tackling the issue. Steve continued to say that the airlines tracks the money the UO spends and, with little

additional effort, could make note of the destinations, which would indicate miles flown.

Art Farley asked Steve Mital if he'd be willing to meet with ORSA about these issues. Steve replied that he would. Christine Thompson added that a lot of discussion has been going on about travel. All amassed data would probably be the focus of next year's committee. Christine continued that configuring a clearer picture of what the UO was doing would help frame new policies.

Zach Stark-MacMillan asked what the Sustainability Council's role is. Steve Mital replied that the Sustainability Council was first established to review the UO's Big Ideas and makes note of what is useful from a sustainability perspective. The council has been reconvened to track sustainability from a curriculum and research framework. So, they keep track of who is doing what research-wise. This body could develop policy surrounding research transportation issues. Steve concluded by saying that he will be the staff person who attends the meetings and otherwise the council is composed of faculty.

**Art Farley then began a discussion about the field trip out to see the carbon offset-funded truck stops in Coburg.**

Steve Mital said that his office would be happy to organize the trip. He reminded the committee that they gave money to Cascade Sierra Solutions whose carbon offset project was installations at truck stops that allow truckers to turn off their engines instead of idling all night long. The group would plan for two and a half hours on a Thursday or Friday afternoon. Steve said an e-mail would go out to EIC members gauging interest and a Doodle would follow so that a common time could be determined, hopefully before the next meeting.

**Art Farley said the final topic up for discussion is to determine what we're doing at the last meeting.**

Dan Rottenberg said the ASUO is working on creating a student sustainability center with a professional staff person. Dan said he had met with President Lariviere and Vice-President Dyke. They had told him that the path of least resistance would be to pick up money from Campus Recycling since new fees are difficult to create. The goal is to have student-controlled sustainability money.

Art Farley responded that he thought a large portion of the final meeting will be allotted to the paper issue, but there would also be some time to discuss the green fee and asked Dan Rottenberg to send information to the committee about the current situation at that time.

Art asked for any last comments.

**The meeting was adjourned at 10:59 AM**