**Environmental Issues Committee Meeting Minutes**

May 6, 2013, Noon to 1 pm

Coquille Room, EMU

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Christine Thompson–Campus Planning and Real Estate (ex officio)

Peg Gearhart – Oregon Humanities Center

Ellen Ingamells – student

Meg Mattson – Academic affairs

Mark Reed – Geology

Louisa de Heer – Student Sustainability (ex officio)

Steve Mital – Office of Sustainability (ex officio)

Andrew Louw – Office of Sustainability (guest)

Shelley Deadmond – Office of Sustainability (note taker)

**WELCOME, SELF-INTRODUCTIONS, AND REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Christine (substituting as chair for Alan Dickman who was not present) welcomed the committee back and committee introduced themselves. The committee approved the April minutes.

**GUEST SPEAKER; LAURIE JACOBY**

Laurie Jacoby, campus travel manager for Business Affairs, introduced herself and talked about her background. Laurie gave an in-depth explanation of the University policy for travel reimbursement, on which the University spends around $7 million annually. University related business and air travel accounts for approximately 40% of campus GHG emissions combined.

Laurie expressed the flexibility of the current reimbursement policy and how it costs the University more money to reimburse certain activities than others (e.g. personal car use gas reimbursements for trips are more expensive that staff using motor pool vehicles for travel).

Laurie also discussed that the University currently contracts with four travel agencies for air travel bookings. The contract expired in December ’12 but was temporarily extended (1 yr.) to December ’13 at which point the University will enter into new contracts. This provides an opportunity to consider new options that allow for better data collection and related services to track GHG and educate campus community about travel impacts.

Finally Laurie mentioned that University travel policy will be reviewed and updated in 2014. Two items to be considered are making carbon offsets a reimbursable travel expense, and allowing car share vehicles to be used for some business travel.

**GROUP DISCUSSION/Q&A WITH LAURIE JACOBY**

After Laurie’s briefing, the group discussed the implications of the renewal of the travel agency contract and made some preliminary suggestions. Laurie added that the University is considering the pros and cons of a singe travel management program for the University that would not necessarily limit staff options for travel, but rather serve as an easy to-use resource to simplify travel booking, planning, reimbursement, etc.

The group discussed issues of risk management (knowing who is where, when), incentives (or not) for people to find ‘rideshares’ for business travel, record keeping, making carbon offsets a reimbursable travel expense, making emissions information more readily available to faculty and staff weighing their travel options and voluntary offsets.

Finally, the group concluded with a short note about how these options are marginal steps compared to the overarching necessity of changing the travel culture of the University and of society in general to achieve the necessary emissions reductions to prevent the worst of scientist’s climate predictions for the coming centuries.

**NEXT MEETING**

Meetings Monday May 13 from noon to one.