**Environmental Issues Committee Meeting Minutes**

April 15, 2015, 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

Columbia, Room 249

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

Erin Moore—Architecture

Shabnam Akhtari—Math

Holly Lynn—Biology

Marie Swarringim—Campus Planning, Design, and Construction

Doug Brooke - Environment, Health, and Safety
Christine Thompson – Campus Planning, Design, and Construction

Brian Gillis—Art

Michael Smith—Architecture and Allied Arts

Ron Lovinger—Landscape Achitecture

**Students:**

Erin Walker—Student Sustainability Coalition Board

Stephen Siperstein—English Department

**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 MINUTES**

Erin welcomed everyone. Committee members and guests introduced themselves. Steve announced that the Inaugural Sustainability Awards event was taking place May 21st and that he, Eric Beeler and Blair Hinton were all involved with the selection process for award recipients. Eric Beeler announced that the Student Sustainability Center in partnership with a number of other groups on campus is putting on over 27 different events and their schedule is on their website.

**COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY UPDATE**Steve gave an overview of the history of the Comprehensive Environmental Policy. The Comprehensive Environmental Policy has been in effect since 1997 was written at the request of then Vice President Dan Williams. It was created by a handful of students in the PPPM program. It stood for 15 years. Sometime in 2010 or 2011, the Office of Sustainability was asked to review and update it. It is considered a major update. They simplified it and turned it into 7 guiding principles. It took a long time to get approved as this process coincided with the turnover of many UO Presidents.

Once approved, the next step was to review the programs, practices, plans, and policies in place, whether formal or informal, and match them to the Comprehensive Environmental Plan principles to gain perspective on what was already happening on campus. In effect, the goal of the project was to see which principles are already well covered and which ones could use more attention. The EIC then reviewed that survey and Steve posed two questions for the group to focus on, as Steve and Sonya would be meeting with VP Jaime Moffit to discuss this work in a couple of days. The two questions were: 1. Do the programs, policies, plans, and practices fully cover the principle or are there gaps we should address? 2. Within the activities we already have, some are formal with a plan, reporting requirement, and goals and others are less formal (this doesn’t mean they are ineffective for example the Zero Waste program is less formal but is highly successful), should some of these that are less formal become more codified and are there any items that we are missing?

Principle: Planning and Construction

Steve described the Oregon Model for Sustainability and then asked Christine to elaborate on the water component of the OMS. She noted that the storm water component is not as strong as the energy side, but that they are shifting focus to options for treating storm water where it matters most. The City of Eugene requires storm water treatment for new buildings, which may be in relatively clean areas. Whereas a parking lot next door may be far dirtier, but isn’t modified because it is grandfathered in. Christine also noted that a third component of the OMS is the education side. New buildings are equipped with signage which educate building users about the buildings environmental and operating aspects.

Steve then briefly described how the Campus Construction Standards, Bike Plan, Campus Outdoor Lighting Plan, Campus Tree Plan, East Campus Development Policy, and the Long Range Transportation Policy all relate to Principle 1 on Planning and Construction.

Steve then opened the discussion up for comments and questions. Ron Lovinger commented about the need to prioritize these programs. He noted that there isn’t time to adequately cover them all and that the most critical is Franklin Blvd and how it severs the campus as UO grows in the same way 13th street used to. He noted that logging trucks used to drive down 13th and posed safety concerns and that an elderly couple was almost killed a few years back on the narrow side walks when a car jumped the curve. He thought that we should focus some time on the transformation of Franklin Blvd as it relates to the Planning and Construction and prompted Christine to comment. Christine responded that it was certainly a big issue and that it was a discussion underway as part of the year-long Framework Revision Plan Concept. She also thought that this group should focus on the goal to make UO a pedestrian and a bike friendly campus.

Brian then raised his concern about how new policies impact the money available for the total budget. He was curious if there were studies on the budget impact of these policies long term and how they relate to comparison Universities.

Steve responded by noting that the items listed in the spreadsheet are already in operation, so they don’t have a new budgetary impact, but that new items the EIC recommends could have budgetary impacts.

Brian then commented that even the policy to require every new building be LEED Gold may hold us back as it imposes huge costs. Christine provided history on the decision making process that in regards to the LEED Gold standard discussion and stated that there was a comprehensive review and many discussions about the costs and tradeoffs.

She urged us to take one step back and asked Steve to give his opinion on which areas the committee members should focus and where the largest impact was. Steve noted that he certainly had his own opinion, but had purposefully withheld it to allow the group members the opportunity to develop their own opinions. Numerous group members chimed in and urged Steve to provide his opinion. He chose to hold off for just a few more minutes to allow the group to have more dialogue.

Erin added that focus could shift to the construction of the building rather than the operation of the building as the materials used in construction have a significant impact (possibly even half of the life cycle emissions) in relation to the emissions associated with the operations of the building.

Principle: Purchasing

Steve then decided to steer the group to the principles that seemed to have the most opportunity for improvement. Purchasing appeared to have the least amount of programs and policies and those in place were not formally tracked for effectiveness. The Construction Standards are most fully developed, but the Recycled Paper purchasing policy has no reporting or enforcement mechanism. The Copier Fleet program is new, so it could be really effective, but it is too early to tell. The Outdoor Lighting Plan calls for LEDs so that is good. The wood products purchasing policy falls largely under Planning and Design and thus is covered in other ways. There are a few reuse type programs for second hand-use and housing is doing some work to purchase local and organic goods. There are a number of ways to encourage purchasing like the Reverse Vendor fair, but outside of the Construction Standards, the decentralized nature of purchasing on campus makes it difficult to enforce standards and track types of purchasing.

There was some discussion about the requirements about using purchasing cards at locations other than office max and that some restrictions could be lifted, others noted that p-cards could be used anywhere. Erin wanted to figure out if we could do a rough calculation of the carbon input on the calculation of materials purchased on campus. Good Company did an order of magnitude estimate. If you added up the GHG of the emissions of all the stuff we buy, then it would be roughly twice as much as the emissions from our energy use. Christine asked about what purchasing categories stood out. Steve said certain ones do. Construction is one of the largest and noted that he would send the Good Company Report to the Committee and that there was probably some information he could pull together. In the past they have focused on high volume items, which may not necessarily have the highest environmental impact which on a per product basis is still difficult to quantify. You can argue that is not the best way to undertake that work, but it was a place to start.

Brian asked if there was a way to quantify the cost and environmental impact of deferred maintenance? There is a cost of regular quick band aids for small fixes and a waste stream and health problems associated with these problems. He wondered if there was a way to quantify the cost so that we could have a rationale to allocate the appropriate budget to squash the underlying problem. Christine noted that there is a list and that the costs are astronomical and that raising funds for deferred maintenance is not easy. There are funds from donors for constructing the buildings but then funds to operate them are not raised at the same time and the costs associated with new buildings then takes away from existing buildings.

Blair suggested that there should be some reporting requirements and recognized that Campus Printing and Mailing handles the majority of the printing on campus and that it would make sense to have some reporting from them, but that enforcement on a wider range would be difficult as they have been implementing a program within Athletics on this very topic. Marie noted that there were some misconceptions about how recycled paper jams copier machines that could be an impediment. Blair said that she believed that all copiers could now take 100% recycled paper. Sonya then described the new copier paper program being implemented. Blair also noted that since the copies can now take 100% recycled paper, it may be good to update the policy to reflect that instead of the current 30% requirement.

Steve highlighted that another easy area could be to require appliances be Energy Star rated. Brian asked if Federal Funding could be subject to these requirements. The short answer is no. It can be encouraged but not required. This is the same for Foundation dollars.

Before moving onto another category. Steve noted that Hazardous Materials Management performed in large part by EHS seems to be an area that is well covered. Of course it is compliance driven, so you would expect it, but it has requirements, tracking and reporting and a great breadth of coverage. So from a policy perspective is well covered.

Waste and Recycling does a remarkable job and is very effective, but through no fault of their own, does not have explicit goals. They have been around 20 plus years. He knows that they want to improve, but is not sure that they can without express goals. This may even help them out, as it would trigger reporting and budgeting. Marie raised an issue that came to her attention, that the campus catering provides compostable dining products, but that they aren’t actually composted, they are just thrown away. This is just bizarre and it is not advertised when choosing the compostable option. Eric noted that another problem is that Zero Waste only manages recycling and that they don’t manage the trash and if you really want a comprehensive program, then you have to have those combined. He agrees with setting goals, but thinks that without doing the upfront work to analyze the waste then you don’t want to set unreasonable goals, like some institutions have.

Principle: Green House Gas Emissions

We have a Climate Action Plan. It is more of a statement and less of an actual plan. It says that we will eliminate emissions by 2050 to be in compliance with the ACUPCC, but there are no concrete steps or budgeting outlined to accomplish this goal. One thing that we are floating is the internal carbon tax to move forward on that piece. Steve’s recommendation to date is to put more money into the revolving loan fund to help fund deferred maintenance targeted at reducing emissions and saving money on energy bills.

Christine noted that the survey of the Comprehensive Environmental Policy needs a broader view of the gaps such as the Air Travel Impact. We need to add in the areas that have the biggest impact. For example adding in a “Goal Tab”, could help the EIC determine which projects should be focused on.

Steve said the next steps are to take this work to VP Moffit, then to get that response and move forward from there.