

## **Environmental Issues Committee**

May 20, 2011

12:00 PM

Mckenzie 245

### **Members in Attendance:**

Peg Gearhart, Christian Pich, Heather Brinton, Nathan Howard, Steve Mital, Alan Dickman, Art Farley, and Louisa de Heer

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Art Farley began the meeting by saying Steve Mital had some news items to cover and then the floor would be opened up to announcements from other members.** Steve Mital said the Office of Sustainability had recently been working with athletics. The process started with Art Farley meeting with the former director of athletics, Loraine Davis, about progress that could be made in that department in regard to sustainability. The result was the first ever Division I athletics sustainability assessment, which was just turned in and presented to the administrators at the Athletic Department. The administrators were very receptive to the information they received and are looking to act immediately.

Heather Brinton asked if the report presented to athletics was available to the general public. Steve Mital replied that it is not yet and is still in draft form. Athletics made it clear that they would like to be transparent when it comes to this issue, but do not want to release the report until they have developed a response that includes a plan of action.

Alan Dickman asked if the report addressed the issue of bottled water. Steve Mital answered that reducing the amount of bottled water used by athletics was in the recommendations section of the report and ended up generating a fair amount of discussion at the meeting. Even though Athletics represents a small contribution to bottled water consumption on campus, they were receptive to the recommendation that they could use tap water at practices. The primary issue they're dealing with is the significant "on-the-ground cultural change that would have to happen," and deciding whether or not it is worth the effort.

Louisa de Heer commented that the Take Back the Tap (TBTT) campaign had a productive meeting with University President Lariviere who said he would take the proposal to ban bottled water on campus to his leadership team. Athletics was the "main sticking point" in terms of working with the vendors who make a significant amount of money off of selling bottled water.

Heather Brinton asked if Athletics discussed transportation. Steve Mital responded that they did not, because the meeting was primarily for communicating the findings and recommendations in the report but not for discussing future action. When possible the report provided the Athletic Department with a comparison to peer universities, their own past performance, or the rest of the University of Oregon. Peg asked if transportation was the Athletic Department's largest contribution to emissions, and Steve replied that it was. Steve continued by saying that the Athletic Department's next steps are to evaluate their values and decide how and to what extent they want to change their practices in order to reduce their impacts. For example, in the report there was a graph depicting energy consumption at Autzen where light usage by nighttime games uses a significant portion of Athletics' energy consumption. The line is relatively flat except for a huge drop in 2006. The Athletics committee is going to look into it, but

they predict that the only difference was that more games occurred during the day. This idea illustrates how simple reducing energy consumption could be: play more games during the day.

Art Farley mentioned that this effort seemed like a great “PR opportunity” for the Athletics Department as well as a chance for them to reach out and contribute to the University community by contributing to the same goals.

Steve Mital said his other news item was in regard to the Oregon Model for Sustainable Development (OMSD) on which he and Christine Thompson had presented earlier in the year. By now the OMSD should have “cleared all of its hurdles” and it is expected that President Lariviere will sign off on it this June. The last thing to do is have one final meeting with the Campus Planning Committee at which point they’ll vote whether or not to pass it and, assuming they vote ‘yes,’ the document will then go to the President’s desk. The OMSD “draws a line in the sand” and says that the University of Oregon will not purchase any more energy. Any increase in energy consumption will have to be offset through on-site generation or harvested through energy conservation projects on campus. This is an unprecedented program that was born out of the Climate Action Plan and seems to be the next step for the University.

**Art Farley asked if there were any other announcements from committee members.** Steve Mital did note that the Oregon Global Warming Commission is coming to Eugene Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at the Hilton Hotel from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm. The commission is essentially doing a road show and Eugene is the first stop on their tour around the state. The presentation is opportunity for citizens of Eugene to get a feel for what the city and state are planning to do to address global warming and to give their feedback.

**Art Farley said that the main item on the agenda was to finish the discussion about the Comprehensive Environmental Policy (CEP).** Since the last discussion of the issue in April, Steve Mital made some adjustments to the CEP and the plan for this meeting is to take it item-by-item and address any remaining concerns. Steve Mital said the primary changes since April included a restructuring of the section on *Environmental Education* and a tightening of some of the language due to the realization that there might otherwise be some overlapping in jurisdiction.

Steve Mital provided some background information on the history of the CEP. The CEP was created in 1997 by a group of graduate students in the Planning Department who were commissioned by the University to create a comprehensive environmental policy. Since then the CEP has not been updated and has been largely ignored. The policy library has a rule that policies like the CEP must be reviewed and updated. After the Environmental Issues Committee reviews the CEP it will go to the policy library and be reformatted. Some issues with the original document include:

- Having the Environmental Health and Safety Department at the sole responsible party
- Responsibility was too broadly spread (each department was required to create a sub-policy)
- Low enforcement and compliance

Steve Mital continued to say that, in accordance with the rules on policy writing the policy library established, he tried to make the language as “simple and clear” as possible. Art Farley added that it was also assumed that the finer details of each section in the policy would be covered by other more specific policies like the Climate Action Plan.

Steve Mital suggested that the committee start addressing the CEP by looking at the second page and going over the *Promotion and Implementation* and *Monitoring and Reporting* sections first. Steve read both of these sections aloud.

Alan Dickman recalled a question from the last meeting about the “units charged with implementation” and how any person reading the document would figure out who those responsible parties are. Steve Mital said that it is not expressly in the document, because he did not want to pass on a document to central administration telling them whom to appoint. However, once units are appointed that list could be made public.

Heather Brinton asked why it isn't the Office of Sustainability who is charging appropriate units with the responsibility, so that the reader would know what central office he or she could go to in order to find out what department was in charge of any particular issue. Steve Mital said that he certainly hopes that the University Vice President, to whom the departments answer, would consult him about which units to charge with responsibility, it is not within the purview of the Sustainability Director to assign responsibility. Peg Gearhart commented that she thought the *Promotion and Implementation* section made it clear that the Office of Sustainability would be the manager of this policy.

Steve Mital asked Alan Dickman if there was a particular solution he had in mind. Alan said that he thought there was some way to structure the document so that the information would be readily available. Art Farley agreed that the list of responsible units should be easily accessible in a way that did not require amending the CEP every time responsibility shifted to a different unit. Alan Dickman said that he thought there needed to be one place in which to view what unit(s) is responsible for each principle. Peg Gearhart added that, perhaps, after the assignments have been made, the list could be turned into an appendix. Heather Brinton commented that wording could be added saying that it is the Office of Sustainability's job to maintain a list, so that the reader knows there is a list and where to find it.

Next, Art Farley led the discussion in which the EIC went through each of the principles. Art Farley read the introduction and asked for comments.

Heather Brinton said she thought that the original policy's mission statement sounded stronger: “In keeping with this vision [the University mission statement] and to maintain the campus effectively while also working to preserve the rights of future generations the University affirms its commitment to environmental excellence and actively promotes the public's right to a healthy, quality environment.” Art Farley said he agreed and thinks the statement would fit in well after the University mission statement. Louisa de Heer added that if there was precedence for such strong language, there would be no reason for the policy library to take it out. Steve Mital agreed.

Art Farley read the first principle, *Planning and Design*, and Steve Mital mentioned that the responsible party would be Campus Planning and Real Estate.

Louisa de Heer noted that the principle referred to both operations and planning and design, which seemed to be two different responsibilities. Steve Mital answered that he had constructed the principle to reflect the fact that Campus Planning and Real Estate addresses the initial design and appoints personnel to facilitate construction that complies with all necessary codes and procedures. However, none of the principles are completely isolated and it is true that it is the role of Facilities to look after long-term maintenance of a project.

Heather Brinton asked if there was a way to better define “high performance standards.” Steve Mital replied that doing so is difficult because it's a moving target. Heather continued that it might be useful if

there was a sustainability qualifier added to the requirement. Alan Dickman suggested that they refer to Campus Planning and Real Estate documents to see if there was an example of better wording in there. Heather said that saying “high *environmental* performance standards” would even be sufficient and mentioned that the word ‘stringent’ could also be used rather than ‘high.’ In the end, the committee agreed on “stringent environmental performance standards.”

Art Farley read the second principle, *Operations and Maintenance*.

Alan Dickman asked about the title of “operations and maintenance” when the principle itself seems to focus mostly on energy and water. Peg Gearhart said that she thought Steve Mital’s goal was to make it evident which campus unit would be responsible, in this case: Facilities. Alan asked why then not just be explicit about the unit in the document. Steve Mital said he agreed. Heather Brinton asked if that could realistically be done since the EIC can’t assign tasks and that there may be units created later on that would be better suited to address a certain principle.

Heather Brinton said that she thought the 1997 CEP was stronger in this section because it stated “the University commits to minimizing the consumption of energy, water, and resources by eliminating wasteful practices and promoting efficient use. The University strives to maximize energy efficiency in existing buildings during renovation and new construction.” Steve Mital agreed.

Steve Mital said that it seems the conclusion about this principle is that the title “operations and maintenance” can remain and some of the more stringent language from the 1997 CEP should be reinserted. The committee agreed.

Art Farley read the third principle, *Green House Gas Emissions*.

Art Farley noted that this principle incorporates the concept of the University “recognizing” something, which several of the other principles also use. Art suggested that, stylistically, it might be beneficial to incorporate the same pattern of recognition followed by policy for all of the principles. Alan Dickman added that, in the principles with “recognition” components, what is being recognized could often apply to all of the principles and would perhaps be best placed in the introduction. It was agreed upon by the committee that the recognitions would be pulled out and acknowledged in the introduction section and to include goals stated in the Climate Action Plan, including that the University would “work to achieve carbon neutrality.”

Art Farley read the fourth principle, *Transportation*.

Louisa de Heer suggested changing ‘students and staff’ to ‘University community’ as a more inclusive phrase. The committee agreed.

Art Farley read the fifth principle, *Purchasing*.

Alan Dickman asked if this was one of the more diffuse principles in terms of responsibility. Steve Mital answered: yes and no. No, in the sense that Purchasing can write a comprehensive paper policy; however, yes in the sense that individual departments can spend up to \$25,000 with limited oversight, so there has to be a way of encouraging smaller entities to comply as well.

Art Farley mentioned that the meeting had reached the end of the hour and asked the other members present if they would like to have another meeting before the end of the year. The EIC members unanimously agreed another meeting would be beneficial. Art suggested that all of the members present send to Steve Mital any remaining comments on the last three principles via email.

**The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM.**