

# University of Oregon Environmental Issues Committee Meeting Minutes

October 31, 2008 1:00-2:30pm, Umpqua Room, EMU

## Attendees:

Art Farley – Committee Chair, Bill Creswell – Biology Department, Mark Reed – Geosciences, Jill Forcier – Law School, Terrie Scharfer – Campus Housing Engineer, BJ Sorenson – MBA student, Steve Mital – Office of Sustainability Director/Committee Staff, Michael Latteri - Academic Senator for Sciences, Sarah Douglas – Computer Science Department, Fred Tepfer – Campus Planning and Real Estate, Jim Krumsick – consulting engineer, UO Standards Committee, Christine Thompson – Campus Planning , Alden Gray – Student, Environmental studies (elected rep), Mary Wood – Law School, Lynn Giordano – ASUO

## Agenda

1:00-1:15 pm Welcome and Introductions

1:15-1:45 pm Review of Last Year's Environmental Issues Committee Report

1:45-2:25 pm Presentation on UO Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Jim Krumsick

2:25-2:30 pm Questions and Closing

## Welcome and Introductions

There are several new members on the committee this year. The work of the committee is to make policy recommendations to improve UOs environmental performance. Last year and for at least part of this year we are focusing on policy recommendations that reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the University of Oregon. In 2007 UO President Dave Frohnmayer signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) to reduce greenhouse gases.

Note: If you receive meeting documents ahead of time, please print them for the meeting we will only bring a couple of extra copies of documents that are sent in advance to committee members in an effort to reduce paper usage and waste.

## Review of Last Year's EIC Report

Last year the EIC was very focused on the ACUPCC requirements. The main goal for the committee was to come up with plans and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). The committee opted to use 1990 for a baseline year in terms of measuring reductions in carbon emissions from the university.

EIC emissions reduction recommendations are to reduce and offset emissions 20% below 1990 levels by 2010, 40% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 100% below 1990 levels by 2050. This allows UO to benefit from its existing efficiency work up through the first two interim timelines. These goals are more aggressive than current goals for state owned buildings that aim for stabilization by 2010, 10% reduction by 2020 and 50% reduction by 2050

We classified GHGs into four categories based on standard protocol:

- 1) Physical Infrastructure - Sources owned or controlled by the University of Oregon
- 2) Direct Transportation - Emissions resulting from travel conducted on behalf of and/or sanctioned by the University of Oregon.
- 3) Indirect Transportation - Emissions resulting from travel to and from campus by current users not paid for by the University of Oregon. The exception to this rule is student travel to and from UO sanctioned Study Abroad program sites.
- 4) Goods and Services - Emissions resulting during any stage of the life cycle (manufacturing, processing, distribution, decay) of materials purchased for use by the University of Oregon.

Note on Indirect Transportation: Concern was expressed over the LTD decision to reduce their service to certain areas and how that will impact the accessibility of transportation for students, faculty, and staff. Committee members expressed an interest and a need on a policy level for the university to work with LTD on these issues.

Additional issues/notes on UO Carbon Emissions:

- What is the policy/responsibility for properties owned and leased by the University of Oregon? (To be resolved this Fall term)
- After we reduce as much carbon as possible we will purchase offsets. We need to make decisions about what are okay offsets and what kinds of offsets we want to purchase. Will we purchase offsets locally or internationally? Etc.
- Neutralizing the remaining class two emissions will be difficult. We will continue to provide and support low carbon alternatives, but we cannot force people to use them.

For more information please see the 2008 Environmental Issues Committee Report on the UO Sustainability Website.

The committee needs to address the following issues this year:

- Boundary or scope issues with buildings we either lease to or from other parties. How do you come up with green leases?
- How broadly can emissions be addressed? For example, class one emissions have a baseline as do class two, but it is difficult to measure changes in class three emissions.
- Monitoring and measuring is an important component to know if you are better off. There needs to be a measuring and monitoring goal. We haven't set one for indirect emissions because there is a no system of measuring and monitoring. We have a good 1996 baseline (?)

In terms of the committee we need to make recommendations for policy changes and find where the soft points are in our current policies. We have expert working groups that will develop a climate action plan that maps out a path towards emissions reduction based on the broad goals recommended by the EIC. We also have a reasonably well developed profile of the University's carbon emissions.

In the fall the committee will focus on two main issues:

1. Establishing the boundary issue recommendations
2. Criteria for (purchasing) offsets

## **Jim Krumsick's Presentation**

Jim gave a presentation focused on what the UO is doing to meet the goals for state buildings and what has already been done. We need to have strategies for updating campus standards and recommendations by the committee. A copy of the presentation will be available on the UO Sustainability Website before the next meeting.

Highlights:

- From that UO campus 14% of emissions are associated with electricity, 66% are from steam heating, and 20% are from transportation (including commuter estimates). Note: electricity is low because EWEB has a low carbon footprint.
- UO steam heat is powered by natural gas which has significant emissions.
- Oregon is in a group of several states that has relatively low emissions per capita. It is more of a challenge for Oregon because we are starting out at a lower level.

- Sustainability builds on itself. As a University we can push the envelope for what we can do here and elsewhere, apply strategies that have worked on campus and take advantage of the resources available.

## **Closing Notes**

In the future we will send out agendas a week before the meeting.

We will focus on the basic work for climate action plan and entertain ideas for new issues to focus on we in winter and spring.

Steve noted that staying focused on one or two issues during the year has been very effective and has made a huge difference in comparison to “taking potshots” at individual issues.

To clarify, the (above mentioned) standards committee was not a formal or sanctioned group, it was convened by Steve, Fred, and a few others (including Jim Krumsick) to identify some things we were doing and ways we can save energy. We have a lot of information organized and collated; the next step is to hire an external group to convert the information into a climate action plan.

## **Additional Questions**

If the focus of this group is energy, what committees or persons on campus address other issues?

It depends on the issue. Transportation is addressed by public safety; there is another group that manages campus recycling. Staff at the Office of Sustainability has a database online and is trying to keep up with who is doing what. If there are specific interests the Office of Sustainability is a good place to find out where to start.

What is the exact responsibility of the committee?

To vet issues and to advise through policy. Committee responsibility is recommending to VP of Financing. They have policies and our job is to (when appropriate) review and recommend changes. When the President signed the ACUPCC commitment it became appropriate for the committee to make campus-wide recommendations.

How can students help the committee?

The committee is focused on policy and while students want to be involved in immediate projects, a lot of these projects are huge and will take time. There are a variety of ways to get involved in something that is more immediate. The Office of Sustainability has some projects and can also help students connect with other projects on campus.