

Ad Hoc Committee on Sustainability

Minutes for Inaugural Meeting – March 5, 2008

Introductions

Committee Members:

- Laura Skandera Trombley, President
- Jim Marchant, Dean of Students
- Paul Faulstich, Professor of Environmental Studies
- Melinda Herrold-Menzies, Assistant Professor Environmental Studies
- Andre Wakefield, Assistant Professor of History
- Scott McDermott '08, Student
- Josh Lipkowitz '08, Student
- Michael Rosenthal '11, Student
- Nicole Scheunemann '10, Student
- Lisa Rojas '07, Post Baccalaureate Urban Fellow
- Drew Herbert, Holden Hall Director
- Larry Burik, Director of Campus Facilities (represented by Arboretum Manager Joe Clements)

While not an official committee member, Emily Cavalcanti, associate director for marketing and public relations, was present to record minutes and help communicate the committee's work to the Pitzer community. Faulstich moved that Cavalcanti become a permanent member of the committee and Herrold-Menzies seconded. All committee members agreed to include Cavalcanti in the committee. Lipkowitz raised the concern that Cavalcanti inform the committee if anything from their discussions will be shared with the media or mentioned in College publications like *The Participant*. Cavalcanti agreed.

The topic of whether College community members would be welcome to attend committee meeting was raised. In the interest of time and maintaining focus it was suggested that others were welcome to attend but not to participate in the discussion. If an individual would like to raise a certain issue he/she could contact the committee beforehand and time could be allotted in the meeting's agenda to address this.

Charge to the Committee

The committee reviewed President Trombley's charge, which included:

- Document and assess the current sustainability initiatives of the College
- Review reports and studies of sustainability at Pitzer and The Claremont Colleges, including those produced in ENVS 94 and ongoing summer research projects
- Serve as coordinating body for reporting and implementation of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC)
- Investigate what other colleges and universities are doing in terms of sustainability, including practices and policies, and governance and administrative structures that have been developed
- Investigate the recommendations that have been made by groups such as the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)

- Recommend specific short- and long-term sustainability goals and practices to the President for incorporation by the College
- Communicate sustainability efforts to the Pitzer community, and beyond when appropriate

Sharing of Current Initiatives on Campus

Rojas noted the campus-wide effort to switch to energy efficient lighting. She stated that two students are currently working on a project to reduce the College's use of paper. Rojas, who has been recently appointed to the City of Claremont's Sustainability Task Force, also shared that the city is eager to build a partnership with Pitzer and the other colleges in implementing programs that promote sustainable practices. Currently, Rojas is also working on a list of sustainability efforts in the Inland Empire as well as with a sub-group of the USGBC to connect students with professionals in the environmental field.

As a student representative for the Scott Lawn Project, Scheunemann shared that they are in the process of creating a landscape design that incorporates native and drought tolerant plants. Different landscape designers have been invited to present their ideas and the community will have the opportunity to vote on the designs. During the fall 2008 semester the design will be implemented as part of a class project. She also indicated that there is student interest in cleaning up the outback and creating a map for it.

Herrold-Menzies noted that this spring, one of her classes, with the assistance of Clements, is currently working to plant native and succulents plants in the stone planters leading up the grand staircase to the new residence halls.

Lipkowitz reported that the Green Bike Program is working to incorporate solar power into the new facility. He raised Pomona College Professor of Geology Richard W. Hazlett's current proposal to create an environmental graduate institute to preserve the Bernard Field Station. Faulstich and Herrold-Menzies added that they are co-authors on this project and that the proposal would be for constructing new facilities that do not increase the footprint of the existing structures on the property. They also stated that the proposal is for the middle forty-five acres of the property, otherwise it would not have been considered by CUC. Lipkowitz continued that the organic garden and the composting program are ongoing, but he raised concerns about their continuation with several student leaders graduating this spring. He also suggested that the committee take a closer look at where food being served in the dining hall comes from and that it work to make more of these selections both locally grown and organic. Additionally, Lipkowitz stated that he would like to see the committee investigate a more effective use of its outdoor spaces, whether it is reducing lawn space to decrease water usage or allocating more space/resources for food grown and consumed on campus.

McDermott also mentioned the composting program and his fear that the project may be abandoned with several key student participants graduating. Marchant added that he has been working with students and the staff on maintaining the composting program and that currently plans are to downsize composting in order to make it more effective.

Discussion of Presidents Climate Commitment

President Trombley signed the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment last year, which is a high-visibility effort to make campuses more sustainable and to address global warming by garnering institutional commitments to reduce and ultimately neutralize greenhouse gas emissions on their campuses. So far Scripps Colleges is the only one of the 5Cs that has not signed this yet. Marchant

indicated that Burik will be able to provide more detailed campus emissions information at a future meeting.

Marchant also raised whether Pitzer College would like to join the U.S. Green Building Council. For an approximate \$750 yearly fee, this would provide a discount on workshops and joining USGBC-affiliated groups. Faulstich questioned whether allocating these funds to on-campus efforts would be a better use of College funds.

Discussion of Priorities for the Semester

Faulstich stated that since sustainability is and will continue to be an ongoing concern, the “ad hoc” nature of the committee is not sufficient. He suggested that by proposing to College Council that this be made a standing committee it would give more weight to the committee’s efforts and communicate that sustainability is a priority for the College. Herrold-Menzies added that by making this a standing committee it would also allow faculty members to more fully commit in light of their other committee involvement.

Rojas raised the possibility of hiring a Sustainability Coordinator at the College and other committee members expressed a similar interest. It was suggested that the committee might work best as a vehicle for input, but that a central person is needed to help coordinate sustainability efforts to make them most effective. Additionally, it was stated that the College needs to more fully commit to being sustainable by allocating resources and hiring a point person. Marchant noted that the committee is charged with making recommendations to the President and any suggestions, including making the committee a standing one or hiring a sustainability coordinator, would have to go to her in the form of a recommendation before going through the College’s governance system.

Wakefield questioned the committee’s timetable and what might be possible to accomplish before the end of the semester. He pointed out the dangerous nature of an open-ended timeline and suggested that the committee focus on developing a structure or process to handle sustainability on an ongoing basis. Marchant concurred and encouraged the group to identify and focus on a set of concerns that might feasibly be addressed this semester. As seniors, Lipkowitz and McDermott agreed and noted their sense of urgency (as well of that of other involved students) to see certain sustainable programs be put into place before they graduate.

Other Business

Marchant distributed information regarding membership in the USGBC. A brief discussion ensued and it was determined that Marchant could decide if it was worthwhile for the College to join or not.

Marchant announced that the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), of which Pitzer is a member, was seeking proposals for their annual conference in November. He passed around materials and suggested that some members of the committee may want to attend, even if they weren’t presenting at the conference.

Marchant announced that President Trombley had been invited to attend the Clinton Global Initiative event at Tulane University on March 14. He said that if anyone on the committee was interested, they may be able to attend as her delegate. Rojas expressed interest and agreed to review the materials and then decide.

President Trombley reported that she had recently met with a representative from Miles Electric Vehicles. Miles produces light trucks and passenger vehicles that run on batteries charged by regular household electrical current. President Trombley said that she believes they would like to work with Pitzer to showcase some of their vehicles. Marchant and Burik have received materials from Miles and will investigate further.

Marchant discussed the College Sustainability Report Card 2008 that he recently distributed to the committee electronically. Published by the Sustainable Endowments Institute, it evaluates the sustainability of campus operations and endowment investments. It was noted that Pitzer was not included because the report only assessed colleges and universities with endowments over \$230 million. It was suggested that the Office of Public Relations lobby for Pitzer to be included in the future.

The group decided to meet again soon due to the large amount of work to be accomplished in a relatively short amount of time. It was agreed upon to meet on Monday, March 10 at 4:00 p.m., location to be determined. Since Marchant will be out-of-town, and the group was interested in further clarification of the charge, President Trombley offered to attend the meeting.