

Southwestern College Sustainability Council 11/26/11

Members present: Steve Wilke, Richard Cowlshaw, Allyson Moon, Sydnee Nelson, Sara Weinert, Trenton Williams (by phone), Shea Wilson, James Mastrangelo

Steve called the meeting to order at 11 a.m.

Accomplishments

Steve reported that the new Green Map is now available. It is on the web at www.sckans.edu/greenmap. It can be printed in poster form or front-and-back. This will be used on campus tours and posted around campus.

New bike racks have arrived as of this week. They have been placed at the top of the 77 near the Builders Around the World, and one at the south entrance of Beech. These can be moved if necessary. This was an initiative of the Green Team, and the racks were built by the shop class of the high school as a community service project.

Updates

AASHE Conference: Three students and two faculty attended. Rick reported that compared to the previous meeting, this seemed more focused on students. The event attracted a large contingent of students. Rick was pleased by this because the implementation of sustainability eventually must be accepted by the culture of the institution. As a small college we have an advantage in this. Water was a big theme. Rick attended many of the meetings for teachers-of-teachers, focusing on getting sustainability incorporated into coursework. Rick and Jason Speegle plan to put together a summer workshop to talk with local teachers about how they can incorporate sustainability while meeting standards. Shea added that some schools have started a green fund that collected funds for use in sustainability projects from each student. These schools have done amazing projects in sustainability. Steve suggested a brown-bag lunch to discuss these results.

Green Team: Sydnee reported that the year is wrapping up. A year-end clothing drive is underway. Furniture drives and other activities are ongoing. National Green Week will be in March, and most of our activities will be at this point.

Sustainability in the Syllabus: Rick talked with faculty chair Stephen Woodburn about this. Woodburn had questions about how this would be incorporated into syllabi across disciplines. Does sustainability merit a stand-alone paragraph in all syllabi (similar to the one now included on disabilities)? Woodburn also felt faculty might feel pressured by the inclusion of this statement. Steve suggested a voluntary inclusion, rather than mandatory inclusion. Allyson pointed out this is not an issue faculty has recently discussed. She suggested running this through faculty development committee. Steve said the administration will not be making this a crucial issue. It will need to come from the faculty in order to happen. Trenton said that easing into this is a good approach, and will make it less threatening.

Paper Reduction: Steve brought in a group from across the school to brainstorm about paper reduction. Our registrar's office is nearly paper-free, and admission will be moving rapidly toward paper-free record-keeping. We have strategic issue we could work on, including paper usage on the printers in the library. Most students print because faculty require them to. If the professor would take the homework on BlackBoard or through e-mail, students would print less, the focus group said. Faculty recommended that each division be represented in an exploratory group to consider paper reduction. Shea suggested we promote use of the paper in the library that has been printed on one side. James recommended finding out who is using BlackBoard and making sure all faculty are well-trained on this software. We are working with Staples, but the quality of their all-bamboo paper was not good enough yet.

Year-End Waste: James led a class during which students reported they must clean out their rooms in order to receive their diplomas. This means valuable things are thrown away (mini-refrigerators, furniture). He will get in touch with Sarah Hallinan to see what kinds of products are thrown away.

Culture of Sustainability: Rick applauded the suggestions that have been made today for creating this kind of culture—working through faculty development committee, having sustainability on the syllabus, etc. Shea pointed out that at Boston College stats on resource usage are on the web site and always available. Rick suggested Jason be at the table for these talks, as he tends to be aware of the pulse of sustainability. James brought up the reality that textbooks are contributing to the sustainability problem as students buy new books instead of used. Used books, e-books, and other systems should be explored. Shea described a school where students were able to check out some of the more expensive books. At one of James's former schools, students ran the used book exchange.

Minutes submitted by Sara Weinert