

WKU Sustainability Committee

Meeting Minutes: 9.29.09

In attendance:

Greg Fear, Cristin Lanham, Dale Dyer, John Osborne, Nancy Givens, Ouida Meier, Fred Siewers, Helen Siewers, Jennifer Tougas, Tammi Beach, Mark Pendley, Denise Gravitt, Sara Ferguson, Terry Wilson, Robin Hume, Christian Ryan-Downing

1. **Greening of the Campus VIII conference review** – *attended by Christian Ryan-Downing, Greg Fear, Cristin Lanham*
 - A. The conference is hosted bi-annually by Ball State University, this year co-hosted by Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) in Indianapolis Indiana.
 - B. Cristin attended various workshops on campus recycling
 - C. Greg and Christian attended workshop on using Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) buildings for education and student engagement. The US Green Building Council is seeking ideas on how to use LEED for educational opportunities. There is much potential for WKU to act as model. Christian will submit projects created and implemented at WKU to USGBC for use as models.
 - D. Take-aways from conference:
 - i. We should be presenting! Operational programs, student and faculty research, student life and other sustainability efforts at WKU.
2. **American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment**
 - A. The question of whether WKU is a signatory comes up frequently.
 - B. President Ransdell has considered carefully and does not feel it is appropriate to sign.
 - i. It is very difficult to achieve zero net emissions.
 - ii. While the commitment does not require the university to become climate neutral within a specified time period, it does require a climate action plan which includes a target date for climate neutrality.
 - ii. WKU is already doing many of the tangible actions required in the commitment including:
completion of greenhouse gas emissions inventory,
participation in waste minimization efforts including [Recyclemania](#), commitment to LEED building standards,
encouraging use of public transportation
adopting an energy efficient appliance purchasing policy
 - C. The committee discussed the possibility of coming up with a climate action plan of our own for WKU and members seemed to agree that this would be a good plan.
 - D. Denise raised the question of where the commitment enrollment fee of \$4000 goes. Good question and another “con” for signing onto the

commitment.(we'll try to get an answer for what the fee is used for and will report back.)

- E. Ouida suggested, following discussion about the tangible actions we are taking toward climate neutrality/sustainability, that we need to itemize and describe the qualifications we are meeting... which led to next agenda topic...

3. AASHE STARS program

- A. The AASHE [Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System](#) (STARS) is a self-reporting program for assessing and measuring campus sustainability progress, developed by AASHE. Greg and Christian have been researching STARS and recommend it for use by WKU.
- B. The data gathering for the assessment would be under Christian's coordination but would require cooperation and information from a variety of people and places on campus.
- C. We have one year to complete the assessment.
- D. This is a good opportunity for student research and engagement.
- E. The committee agreed that this is a good tool for WKU and we will begin the STARS program immediately.

4. Energy update by Dale Dyer.

- A. Dale reports great success in energy reductions over the past fiscal year. We have reduced our use by over 4 million kWh as a result of the winter shut down, temperature setbacks, consolidated scheduling, and adherence to the new Energy Policy.
- B. The cost savings have been invested in a new natural gas boiler for the Central Steam Plant that will allow us to be less dependent on coal for steam heat.
- C. [HRL energy dashboard](#) site up and running. Reduce Your Use! competition for the month of October.

5. [Office of Sustainability Website](#) Development update

- A. Google Calendar – accessible for posts and updates by all
- B. Twitter application – follow us at GoGreenWKU

6. [Learn and Serve America grant](#) secured through Center for Environmental Education and Sustainability by Terry Wilson

- A. KUPÉE (Kentucky University Partnership for Environmental Education) will share the \$1.5 million grant to use “Earthforce” model in K-12 schools across the commonwealth.
- B. Trip to visit UC Boulder and Earthforce Headquarters in Denver by Terry, Nancy Givens, Robin Hume and Christian Ryan-Downing was very educational and inspiring. Brought back ideas!
- C. Possibility of relocating the Center into a retrofitted house to serve as a community model discussed by Terry. Keep you posted...

7. Pollution Prevention Subcommittee Update by Mark Pendley

- A. Stormwater management interviews complete. Mark will update as we progress.
- B. Outline of potential emissions reductions through gas boiler operation. Use of natural gas boiler will significantly reduce our dependence on coal combustion for heat on campus and will reduce our carbon emissions.

8. Fundraising Task Force update by Nancy Givens

- A. Establishment of Green Fund
 - i. Payroll deduction now an option for Faculty and Staff
 - ii. Green Fund brochures are complete and very, very nice.
- B. Two stimulus grants submitted
 - i. solar
 - ii. Ecovillage with Habitat for Humanity **see amendment*

9. Curriculum Subcommittee first meeting review by Nancy Givens

- A. Mission statement: To build, promote, and advance the study of sustainability at WKU (rough). **see amendment*
- B. Introduction of Portal to entire committee, and request for input...
- C. Name change for the portal per Ouida's request is understood and will be considered.
- D. Discussion about appropriate housing and ownership ensued... Nancy had to leave so discussion was tabled for next meeting.

10. Priorities and goals for Sustainability Committee for upcoming year.

There was not enough time to discuss this very important topic so a discussion board will be posted on our [Blackboard](#) site. Christian requests that all committee members submit their ideas for the coming year, to be compiled and discussed as first agenda item at next meeting, November 17th, 9:30 am in Faculty House.

***Amendments submitted by Nancy Givens:**

- 1) The HFH Ecovillage grant was not submitted for Stimulus funding, but rather a KY Division of Water grant program - we have been invited to resubmit.
- 2) The Sustainability Curriculum Committee mission is to build, promote, and advance education for sustainability across the curriculum at WKU (for now.) The committee will continue to work on refining the mission statement.