

Green University Coordinating Committee

June 18, 2008

Meeting Notes

9:00 am – 10:00 am

Conference Centre 6-305

Attendees:

Allan Berezny, Executive Director, University Advancement
Dr. Annie Booth, Associate Professor, Ecosystem Science and Management
Rob van Adrichem, Director, Media and Public Relations
Dr. Balbinder Deo, Assistant Professor, Business
Godfrey Medhurst, Director, Campus Planning and Capital Projects
Dr. Jim Randall, Acting Provost and Acting President
Dr. Ron Thring, Acting Vice-Provost, Research and Graduate Programs
Danielle Smyth, Graduate Student
Dr. Bill McGill, Dean, College of Science and Management
Mark Thompson, Molecular Genetic Support Specialist and Graduate Student (CUPE rep)
Dr. Ken Wilkening, Associate Professor, International Studies

Regrets:

Eileen Bray, Chief Financial Officer
Dr. Arthur Fredeen, Associate Professor, Ecosystem Science and Management
Dr. Ian Hartley, Associate Dean, Graduate Programs
Shelley Rennick, Director, Facilities Management
Dr. John Young, Acting Dean, College of Arts, Social and Health Sciences

Recorder: R. van Adrichem, Office of Communications

1. Approval of Agenda

- No additions proposed.

2. Approval of May 12, 2008 minutes

- No changes suggested.

3. Business Arising

No discussion.

4. New Business

4.1 Evaluation of Green University Coordinating Committee

- J. Randall suggested a roundtable discussion.
- R. Thring suggested the group started with good intentions but suggested sub-committees with a smaller coordinating committee.
- B. McGill suggested that the committee should continue but be more focused on deliverables; membership should be comprehensive from the President to faculty, staff, and students. A clearer mandate would be accompanied by authority and/or budget.

- D. Smyth pointed out that the UNBC experience is not unlike what other universities have experienced in the formative years of a green committee. Following example of UVic, she suggested a half-day, “open space” forum to bring focus to planning.
- A. Berezny agreed with Dr. McGill that authority is a big issue, as is dissemination to the broader community. Suggested that the committee should be concerned with macro issues and use sub-committees to translate these into actions.
- M. Thompson agreed with D. Smyth that engagement with the university community through a workshop would be useful. Referred to a report of the CUPE Green Committee (included with these minutes) that highlighted various key issues: budget, authority, and integration with the campus Master Plan.
- B. Deo suggested that there are a large number of faculty who have expertise in environmental issues and that effort should be placed on integrating the environment throughout the curriculum.
- A. Booth expressed frustration with the committee, suggesting that good intentions are the road to hell. While the committee has ignored the opportunity for engaging with the university community, it needs to decide whether it will play a leadership or coordinating role. Many faculty are cynical of the “Canada’s Green University” trademark and she contemplated getting off the committee a number of times because it has no purpose.
- J. Randall expressed his belief that the committee has served as a forum for thoughtful discussion and he didn’t think the university would be as far advanced on some of the green issues if it hadn’t been for the committee. Proposed the Space Allocation Committee as a model. Suggested that environmental issues could be embedded throughout the University’s teaching in much the same way that Indigenous Peoples’ Knowledge has been identified in the AVI.
- R. van Adrichem said that there are two main issues: the green committee and the green initiative and he believes that the green initiative has value in distinguishing UNBC among its competitors. As for the committee, he said that the members of the committee must use their influence more, in addition to considering whether the committee should play either leadership or coordination roles.
- G. Medhurst added that the University has no choice around many green initiatives in that government is requiring that changes to be made to reduce carbon emissions and be more energy-efficient.
- J. Randall then suggested a discussion of specific actions.
- A. Booth said that shared directions and overall goals are necessary.
- R. van Adrichem had three proposed actions: 1) increasing membership to include NUGSS, Purchasing, and IT, 2) creating a “fund” to accept donations and store “taxes” that we collect on campus (through parking, water bottles, paper coffee cups, etc), and 3) agreeing on specific actions (under the goals) that would then be funded through the creation of the fund.
- B. McGill suggested that what is needed is a “Strategic Sustainability Plan.”
- M. Thompson proposed that a workshop should be held and enlist external help.
- A. Berezny agreed with the workshop but that government expectations should first be clearly identified to ensure that our goals were consistent with policy/funding directives.
- A. Booth suggested that money is required for some initiatives: the coordinator, student assistants, and conference travel, for example. The Sustainability Plan would help us identify what we should spend on and fundraise for. It must prioritize activities that may take decades to achieve.
- J. Randall agreed that the workshop is key to moving forward and should be guided by a “self-study” document that would integrate a number of reports: the CUPE green committee report, the sustainability audit, the University’s green report, relevant Government legislation, green surveys conducted by Drs. Connell and Booth, the results of the Facebook green survey, and the Green Day report. The Provost Office would contribute \$2500 to this activity.

- General discussion followed and it was suggested that D. Smyth will contact her UVic colleague to lead the workshop in late September.