

Environmental Affairs and Sustainability Committee—Minutes
November 29, 2010
572 Bond Life Sciences Center

Members Present: Jason Hubbart, Chair Teresa Long
Peter Ashbrook Kevin Petersen
David Beversdorf Christopher Peterson
Rachel Brekhus Troy Rule
Steve Burdic Christopher Starbuck
Tina Casagrand Zachary Treece
Leah Christian Jan Weaver
Steve Keller

Guests: Mike Burden Hermanta Kafley
Taylor Dankmyer Hunter Maret
Ben Datema Janet Moreland
Rose Eppensteiner Paul Rolfe
Monica Everett Karlan Seville
Tyler Hutcherson Melissa Vatterott

Jason Hubbart called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed.

Draft Climate Action Plan

Peter Ashbrook gave some background about the Draft Climate Action Plan, hard copies of which had been distributed to Committee members during the past two weeks. In January 2009, Chancellor Brady Deaton signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. Very briefly, the Commitment required that MU submit by January 15, 2010 (which was done) a greenhouse gas inventory, and by January 15, 2011 submit a Climate Action Plan for eliminating greenhouse gas emissions. MU hired Sasaki and Associates to help the campus prepare the Climate Action Plan.

Ashbrook stated that he identified two major features of the Draft Plan: 1) it establishes a structure of rolling five year plans highlighted by an annual campus forum on the plan, much like the annual forum on the Campus Master Plan, and 2) it lays out a process to reduce the campus' greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 20% in five years. Further, Ashbrook said he understood that in three years (spring 2013) the annual forums on the Climate Action Plan and the Campus Master Plan would be integrated into a single process. Sasaki and Associates, which is familiar with campus planning and sustainability activities at many universities, has indicated that this approach is unique among American universities.

The following are highlights of the discussion that followed:

1. Is the Medical Center included? Ashbrook said that for data tracking purposes, the Plan addresses the contiguous Columbia campus excluding the Hospital. This decision was made to help make MU's data more comparable to that of other universities. This does

not mean that the Hospital will be ignored in plans going forward and, in fact, many of the activities will have very positive impacts on Hospital operations. Burdic pointed out that the Hospital was helping to lead the way for campus by obtaining LEED certification for two buildings (Missouri Orthopaedic Institute and the new Patient Care Tower).

2. Why was 2008 chosen as the base year? Ashbrook explained that this was an arbitrary decision. The hope was that this would be the peak year for greenhouse gas emissions. He also explained that the selection of a base year is of lesser importance than the primary goal of getting greenhouse gas emissions to zero.
3. If the plan covers just the contiguous campus, why do we mention the use of trees on other MU property for sequestration of carbon dioxide? Ashbrook explained that the Plan really applies to all campus properties; however, measurements need to be on an “apples to apples” basis and the best data were thought to be available for the contiguous campus.
4. Who is the audience? The current draft plan is a highly technical document. This may be fine for some on campus, but maybe less so for some members of the campus community and the general public. Consideration should be given to preparing several versions of the Climate Action Plan depending on who the audience might be.
5. There is too much use of acronyms. Spelling out some might help. Preparing a Glossary of acronyms might also help.
6. The graphs on pages 12 and 13 were difficult to interpret for some Committee members. Use of acronyms doesn't help.
7. A concern was expressed about campus vegetation. There ought to be a statement that the campus wants to preserve as much green space as possible. Emphasize the Missouri Botanical Garden.
8. How will the Climate Action Plan be disseminated and implemented? For example at the end of page 6, it states that each unit or department is expected to evaluate current policies and practices on a regular basis with the goal of adopting and improving environmentally sustainable practices. How will departments find out about this commitment? How will these reviews be conducted? Who will hold departments accountable for doing these reviews? It was noted that the annual Department Chairs retreat might be one option for getting the word out and that it would be helpful if someone could prepare a checklist or other guidance to help departments with their reviews.
9. A question was raised about why the Burns & McDonnell study on energy alternatives did not consider conservation options with energy generating options. It was noted that Campus Facilities Energy Management has an active energy conservation program and has recently extended their desired payback period from a 5-year payback to a 10-year payback. It would be helpful to clarify the role of energy conservation with respect to energy producing options.
10. The plan seems to be short on behavioral modification strategies—things that people could do to use less energy or produce less greenhouse gases. One example is that it would be helpful to have guidance or assistance from the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) on energy conservation related to computer use.
11. The campus should work with Admissions and the Visitor's Center to publicize the Climate Action Plan.
12. On page 24, the Telecenter Network is given a paragraph. Hasn't this operation been closed down due to recent budget cuts?

13. Can the Draft Plan be distributed at this time? Ashbrook said that the Committee should not share the Draft Plan until it is actually submitted to the ACUPCC. There could be some significant changes between now and then, and those changes could prove confusing on a variety of levels.

Ashbrook said that Committee members could submit written comments to Jason Hubbart, Steve Burdic, or himself, and these comments would be passed along for consideration. Since the Climate Action Plan is to be submitted by January 15, 2011, comments should be submitted as soon as possible to enhance the chances of being incorporated in the first plan. Ashbrook noted that since this will be a continually evolving plan, comments can really be made at any time.

2009 Sustainability Report

Ashbrook mentioned that he had distributed a draft of the Committee's annual report for 2009 to Committee members for comments. The report has been prepared by the Committee on an annual basis for almost ten years to help document various environmental statistics for campus. This report may eventually go away as the Climate Action Plan takes precedence. In the past the report has been used by Sustain Mizzou and others to help promote sustainability on campus and provide baseline information for various purposes. Ashbrook requested that Committee members send any comments they have on this report directly to him.

Environmental Studies Program

Teresa Long asked whether the Committee had taken any action in response to the news that Jan Weaver will be stepping down at the end of the academic year from her role with Environmental Studies. The Committee has not taken any such action. It was suggested that the next Committee meeting might be devoted to the future of Environmental Studies at MU and that perhaps some presenters could be brought on to address various opinions and considerations.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the committee has yet to be scheduled, but will be sometime next semester.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m. PCA