

## Sustainability Council minutes, June 20, 2014

Attendance: Mary Duda, Meter Maas, Kat Istas, Joe Zaborowski, Larry Hopp, Roselyn Cerutis, Mike Fleming, Curtis Paulsen

- STARS: Had we submitted, we would have a score of 41.94, which earns a bronze rating. A score of 45 earns the school a silver ranking. This will be discussed more at the next meeting.
- Guardians of Sustainability
  - The Faculty Committee on Innovation on Faculty Council was tasked with coming up with innovative ideas for the university. Among several ideas was one entitled “Guardians of Sustainability.”
    - From the document: “During the past two decades, we have dramatically expanded our physical plant and our physical footprint. As a result, we expect the focus of our capital campaigns to shift toward more mundane subjects, like maintaining, repairing, and sustaining our current infrastructure. There will be a need to incentivize and recognize support for infrastructure. We suggest that a concept — “Guardians of Sustainability” — be developed to support these endeavors from our donor base. The Guardians would endow support for maintenance, utilities, and other items necessary to sustain what we have built, which is essential to a successful future.”
  - This came to Mary Duda’s attention on the Deliberatio blog, where it was colloquially called “Greenbackers”: <http://deliberatio.weebly.com/home/greenbackers>
  - Rose Cerutis, one of the committee members that developed “Guardians of Sustainability” described the progression of this idea. The idea was approved by Fr. Lannon and goes back to Faculty Council to work out details.
  - A discussion of the proposal and how the Council can help ensued. The Council likes this idea and would like for it to continue; the idea needs champions to help move it forward.
  - Fundraising is currently very centralized but seems to be moving towards decentralization. Other schools have a “Green Fund” or similar to donate to. Need to figure out how to get people interested in donating to such a fund.
  - One idea is to have a tasteful sign, announcing the donor that is the “Guardian of Sustainability” for that building.
- Energy Awareness Committee
  - George Tangeman is retiring and the last meeting with him as chair was June 10. We’d like to thank him for his leadership these last 8 years.
  - Should the committee continue?
    - Larry Hopp is on the Strategic Planning Energy Savings committee that meets twice a month. This committee does much of the same work that the Energy Awareness Committee was doing. It is proposed that the Energy Awareness Committee be disbanded in favor of the new committee.
    - The new committee is looking for ways to involve the Sustainability Council.
    - There are several projects in the works, including fume hood energy savings in the science buildings

- Looking for immediate and significant energy savings
  - The committee is looking at the Verdis Group behavior change proposal. It is possible that the Energy Technology students could do some of this. What does the Sustainability Council think?
    - Verdis has presented their proposal to the Sustainability Council in the past and it appears to be a good product
    - It would be a lot of work for the students to get to the level of the product being offered, perhaps too much work for a senior capstone project.
    - There should be opportunities for the students to participate, however.
    - Larry to present to Energy Committee that the Council recommends going with the Verdis proposal with the caveat that students should be able to participate in some way.
  - The Energy Committee is also looking at the repair and maintenance of the alternative energy installations across campus
- Larry Hopp told the group about some of the initiatives the Energy Technology program is working on.
  - Repair and maintenance of the solar panels. Andrew Baruth is looking at prices to fix the inverters and hire certified electricians.
  - There's a retreat-style class August 18-22 for students; they will possibly do some repair work that week.
  - They are adding a course on the built environment.
- Omaha Commuter Challenge: It's not too late to sign up and enter to win prizes. [Heartlandcommuterchallenge.com](http://Heartlandcommuterchallenge.com).
- Discussion of the fact that Sodexo charges \$5/place setting for reusable china, but disposable is free. This is an incentive to use disposables, which are actually recyclable but typically don't get recycled. Personnel from Sodexo were available to address these issues.
  - Currently, their literature is contradictory and will be updated this fall.
  - The upcharge for reusable dinnerware can be up to \$5 for a large place setting but typically is lower. The charge depends on the amount of dishes and silverware needed.
  - This charge pays for washing, transportation, and labor associated with these operations. The labor is typically the most expensive part.
  - Sodexo is working with Scott Maas to provide china as a standard for functions in the Harper Center and Skutt Student Center.
  - Disposable, biodegradable bamboo plates are available but are extremely expensive and would not be composted anyway, as facilities for composting are not available here.
  - There is currently no Styrofoam in locations across campus, and the cups are made of recycled paper. All of the plastic items in the to-go locations are made of recycled plastic.
  - Sodexo's marketing department will be working to promote their current initiatives. The Council encouraged them to do so.
  - The council asked about having more recycle bins in locations in Skutt and Harper when meals are served on the plastic plates. Currently, the bins are sparse and small, forcing

people to throw away their utensils and plates. Sodexo encouraged us to speak to Scott Maas about this.

- Sodexo is looking at more Fair Trade items, but that is currently difficult. A conversation ensued about the difficulty/expense in getting Fair Trade bananas. A council member mentioned that discussions of Fair Trade are often ill-informed and that farmers may be treated better, from a social justice perspective, using other programs or processes.
- Sodexo continues to meet with the Division of Student Life to fund a reusable bag for every student . There was legislation passed by CSU that Dining Services can not get rid of the plastic bags because of the inconvenience to the students. To overcome this, interested students have collected over 2,000 signatures in a petition for this program. They are also trying to find groups to sponsor more bags for others that are not on the meal plans.

Upcoming events:

- St. Francis Day: October 3, 2014. Details to follow.
- “Business, Faith and the Common Good” symposium: October 3, 2014. Details to follow.

Next meeting is July 18, 2014 in the Energy Technology Space