

ESC Meeting Notes

November 1st, 2011

Members in attendance: Saira Hasnain, Information Technology (for Tom Furlani); Joseph Raab, University Facilities; Jeffery Reed, Employee Relations; Tricia Kandler, Procurement Services (for Dan Vivian); Kenneth Tramosch, Research; Paul Stephan, Student Association; Ryan McPherson, Office of Sustainability; Alan Rabideau, Undergraduate Education.

Absent: Jean Wactawski-Wende, Strategic Strengths.

Excused: Jordan Dalton, Graduate Student Association; Erin Moscati, Office of Sustainability; Mary Alice Coffroth, Graduate School; Robert Shibley, chair; James Nadbrzuch, University Life and Services; Michael Dupre, University Facilities.

Staff and others: James Simon, Office of Sustainability; Al Gilewicz, Utility Operations; Fred Stoss, University Libraries; Emily Gibson, Office of Sustainability, Dominic LoTempio, Purchasing, Ashley Welsch, SA Environmental.

Review of meeting notes: Additions or corrections on October, 4 2011 meeting. Minutes approved for posting online.

Student Update: Paul Stephan—sub-committees are prepared to assist with committees. Emphasize importance of the committees meeting. SA Environmental is promoting recycling and working with the Commons to get Styrofoam out of there.

AASHE Review: McPherson—great representation from UB. Two staff and three students attended. All walks of higher education attended—from the community colleges to Harvard. McPherson and Simon had dinner with Brown, Harvard, Yale, UNH, Middlebury, etc. Great networking opportunity. They also attended the sustainability coordinators workshop run by Leith Sharp (formerly of Harvard) and Julie Newman from Yale. The whole day was on change management and how you can get institutions to push change through the entire institution. Discussion spanned systems change to individual change. The Students are pulling together a public event to share the main themes of the conference later this month/early December. Curriculum is becoming a big ticket item.

Tree Planting and Solar Strand Update: Sunday October 23rd—beautiful day for a tree planting. Had a lot of fun. Attracted a wide pool of students from across the campus. Mix of staff and faculty as well. Had a tremendous response from volunteers. Over 100 people came out. The work of Al Gilewicz contributed to this in a [big way](#).

- Gilewicz—Planted Catalpas and Autumn Blaze Maple, serviceberry and witch hazel. All bloom throughout the year. Anticipate additional plantings in the spring on the other side of the array. Should have a significant visual impact.

- Gilewicz—Rain has had an impact on construction. 1/3 should be online by the end of the year. Still moving forward albeit a little bit slower.
- McPherson—In an ideal world, we have an event in early summer or late spring. Trying to figure out whether we can start some pre-k-12 efforts. Working these pieces as we move forward. What's the timeline? We've had challenges with the weather and looking forward to completing the strand as soon as possible. Beta testing throughout the winter. Gilewicz—expect to be done with everything before graduation in May of next year. Working to get the Strand a web based reporting dashboard tool. This will be customized for UB. This tool is specifically designed for the web and is easy to use. There is an interest in the tours. Key to set up programming before it is done. UB should cover some of the cost of tours. There is a fear that people will just show up.
- McPherson—trying to reinforce that this is open and inviting to the public. Ownership amongst students, faculty, and staff. Use this visual to promote a broader sustainability message. Gilewicz—had a great walkthrough with University Police to identify issues of security and personal safety. Very productive. All balanced with the need to protect the investment.

AASHE STARS Update: McPherson—once the data is in there, it's easier to submit annual reports. In Saratoga and in Pittsburgh—saw that AASHE STARS is made by higher ed and that it can be a teaching tool. Recommend that ESC supports this. There is a risk that our rating may not reflect what we want it to. We shouldn't be afraid of what it says. It's transparent on both ends. We know what we are putting in and we have an idea of what will come out.

- Simon went through a powerpoint explaining what STARS is, pros and cons, if we should participate in the ranking system. Participation would avoid survey fatigue and the STARS system would better reflect the quality of the work we're doing. STARS is an opportunity for teaching-met with the director of the Environmental Studies program, who is very enthusiastic about having a course, through the program's internship program. Would be composed of about 10 students, who would help in finding the necessary data. Course would identify weaknesses in subcategories of rating system, and determine ways to gain points in the rating system. Princeton Review, Sierra Club, and other rating systems are recognizing that the AASHE STARS program is high quality
- Stoss—what do you think our ranking will be? McPherson—hard to predict. Would be shocked if we were less than middle to high. Stoss—measure of creativity and inventiveness? Simon—likely found in the Education & Research Category. McPherson—institutions need to think broadly about what will be caught in the STARS rubric. Let's get all the data in one place and then there is a review of the data, and then another review to make sure we were thinking broadly enough. Doing it not just for the score, but to know what we have on campus. Risk that we receive a ranking that shows there is room for improvement.
- Raab—Moscati reviewed and thought we might be in the Silver range. Simon—not sure if Erin's review was comprehensive. McPherson—right now, we aren't even in the game. The perception is that we aren't even in bronze because we aren't in the game. A number of our AAU and APLU peers are using this. We are starting to be the exception to the rule by not participating.
- Reed—we are left out there now with poor rankings that we think are not accurate. We want to participate in a rating. McPherson—no more one off rankings. If we get a ranking we don't like, say, from Newsweek, we can refer to our STARS rating. An

- immediate story. Upfront capital—will be a lot of going to the subcommittees to work to get data. Stoss—separating the wheat from the chaff.
- Rabideau—would like the technical manual. Happy to endorse a recommendation that has resources in it. Supports the idea of getting students involved in gathering data. but they will need to be managed closely to have data worth utilizing. McPherson—will have staff person on point. Rabideau—give some thought to the timing of this. Crazy time of 3E—investing in energy and the environment. Timing of investments could impact our score.
 - McPherson—is there a motion in the group to move forward with becoming a STARS university if senior leadership is on board? Yes. Rabideau—not sure to what extent this is a fully informed decision. If you get the question back to you whether you have a good recommendation, can you answer that? McPherson—looking for confidence in the recommendation that we proceed. We are here to provide capacity to bring those pieces there. The risks are so low compared to the benefits.
 - Tramosch—we don't need another mediocre recommendation. 59% of the AAUs not participating is a statement. What is built in is that we can see where we are. Raab—don't they all go public? McPherson—what do we have to hide? Don't we want to know where to go? Tramosch—you would want a reasonable starting rating and the commitment to improve that over time. McPherson—I would offer that we've committed to this by heading towards carbon neutrality.
 - Rabideau—we aren't starting from zero. We have a five year process that starts with a carbon analysis, the work with E&E. Been trying to count things for years. Tramosch—why don't we just publish that? Rabideau—Princeton Review—we weren't in there—our lack of presence counts against us. This seems to be the best one out there. McPherson—we are the ones that are doing this, this is a self reporting mechanism. We are recommending this because there is a framework here that will help our efforts.
 - Hanain—are the 41% of AAU those that compare with us? McPherson—roughly reflective of our peers. Can we see how the other AAU institutions that are doing it are rated? Gilewicz—can we see where we'll be before jumping in? At what point are we headed towards rating vs. just STARS Reporter. McPherson—let's be transparent. Gilewicz—but can we postpone a decision? When do we have to commit to being a Reporter vs. STARS Bronze-Platinum. McPherson—akin to a LEED building. We jump in. Gilewicz—With a building, we meet before we even go into the detailed design.
 - Raab—make the committees familiar with the workbooks. Sense of whether we are missing elements or if we have them. McPherson—let's collect data and get a sense of where we are. Will set up a call with Jillian from AASHE.

Sustainability Office Update: McPherson—Shared the Draft Priorities—Wish List.

- Ashley Welsch—Where is outreach and communications? McPherson—mostly in items 4 and 5 listed in the priorities. How do we infuse this across campus? Welsch—what about our subcommittee? McPherson—infused this into the work of the sustainability office. Simon—working with your rep and he's aware of our work. Rabideau—Gen ed reform on the back burner. Regarding other courses—it's a patchwork and we are still trying to connect dots. There is still a hunger and a need for more information. McPherson—so the outreach, communications, and grassroots component is more of a priority? Rabideau—your office can do more to advance #4 than 1-3.

- 3E Proposals—Office of Sustainability submitted 2. First for the priorities that were shared. Second, for creating a Sustainable Living & Learning Experience. Create a sense of community as well as other teaching and community activities. Work with external partners like the Massachusetts Avenue Project, etc.
- P2-student competition. 2-3 groups currently interested. 1 more week before application is due.
- University of New Hampshire visit—learning from Tom Kelly at UNH. Done great work there over time. Ryan got a great education. CORE. Curriculum, Operations, Research, and Engagement. Climate, Education, Culture, and Food Security. Interesting way of thinking. Will package some of this to share with the ESC.

Lightning Round Committee Updates

- Research, Teaching, and Public Service
 - Rabideau—Shifting focus of the Discovery Seminar—focus on different majors, different ways to get involved.
- Information Technology and Human Resources
 - Hasnain—Working on data center rehab. There is the business as usual method and the green way. One is cheap and one isn't. Looking to create a middle ground. Continuing on virtualization of servers.
- Materials
 - Kandler asking about our Kwh cost. Gilewicz--7.5 cents.
- Energy
 - Stoss—see energy waste. Gilewicz—submit a work order. Call Sustainability Office.

New Business: ACUPCC Update—McPherson—Simon will be contacting committee chairs in advance of due date on January 15th. Think about our carbon neutrality date compared to others.

Adjournment