University Sustainability Council

DRAFT Meeting Summary

February 4, 2010

Attendees
Ann Wylie, Vice President for Administrative Affairs (Chair)
Sally Koblinsky, Assistant President and Chief of Staff
Mahlon Strashein, Associate Provost, Academic Affairs
Mary Ann Ottinger, Professor and Associate Vice President for Research
Chris Arkell, Associate Director, OIT
Scott Lupin, Associate Director, Environmental Safety and Office of Sustainability
Joan Kowal, Energy Manager, Facilities Management
Monette Bailey, Senior Writer/Editor, University Relations
Matthias Ruth, Professor, Public Policy, and Director, Center for Integrative Environmental Research
Allen Davis, Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering
Bruce James, Professor and Director, Environmental Science and Policy
Karen Lips, Associate Professor, Biology
Joanna Calabrese, Undergraduate Student, Environmental Science and Policy
Ramy Serour, Graduate Student, Marine-Estuarine Environmental Sciences

Presenters/Invited Guests
Patricia Mielke, Assistant Vice President, Student Affairs
David Allen, Director, Department of Transportation Services (DOTS)
Carlo Collela, Director, Department of Capital Projects

Meeting Overview
The meeting began with a brief overview of two proposed endorsements related to campus energy use, lighting levels and building temperature, and their unanimous passage by the Council. The Council discussed other building energy-related topics that it might undertake and formed one sub-group to explore the issues further. The Council then heard presentations on campus transportation and potential green renovation options for the old Journalism Building. The Council approved Undergraduate Student Sustainability Fee language, was briefed on an upcoming campus transportation survey, and heard a short announcement about Recyclemania.

Discussion of FM-Proposed Energy Endorsements

Draft Endorsements for Discussion
The draft Council endorsements on Lighting Levels and Building Temperature were unanimously approved.

Additional FM-Proposed Energy Endorsements
Members reviewed additional FM proposals from the November 5, 2009 Council meeting and discussed how focusing on building schedules and periods of inactivity in buildings at night, on weekends, and during holidays, was a logical next step. It was noted that each campus building is unique – in terms of its mechanical systems and also its occupants and functions. In many buildings, space has been
renovated and current uses may be at odds with how the HVAC systems were designed to function, further taxing building systems and compromising occupant comfort. These unintended consequences must be considered in any policy regarding building schedules. A number of suggestions were made including whether the Facilities Council and/or Provost should be asked to consider the energy efficiency consequences of renovations and space utilization decisions. The Council might provide guidance along these lines based on its discussions.

It was proposed that schedules and setbacks of office and classroom buildings be explored by a small sub-group to see whether there were opportunities on nights, weekends, and/or holidays that could be realized. As a second step the Council might consider laboratory buildings that generally have greater need for 24 hour / 7 days a week access and amenities (temperature, humidity, and lighting). Mary Ann Ottinger, Monette Bailey, Scott Lupin, and Joan Kowal agreed to work as a sub-group on this issue.

Campus Transportation

David Allen provided an overview of campus transportation, including the merger of Shuttle-UM and parking services in 2002 to form the Department of Transportation Services. He explained how DOTS collects ridership data and makes decisions about routes and schedules and presented the financial implications of the Climate Action Plan strategy calling for a reduction of 3,450 campus permits by 2015.

Members were interested in the new license plate recognition software and the implications for DOTS operations. DOTS was cautioned that before it declares the cameras and software a “sustainable” solution, it should more carefully consider the life cycle costs of that equipment versus the costs associated with conventional plastic hang tags. It was suggested that this was something that a student research team might carry out for DOTS. One member wondered whether DOTS might ask the Council for an endorsement of its new system and another member suggested that might be possible pending a more holistic analysis of the new technology and its environmental benefits and costs.

One member pointed out that beyond the reduction of “stuff” (hang tags and mailings) the real benefit is that there will be additional data about commuter behavior to help improve transportation planning. This will likely be the greatest sustainability benefit of the new technology. Another member described the challenges associated with trying to collect data on students’ local addresses and it was noted that this data gap reduces the accuracy of the campus greenhouse gas inventory and also has public safety implications. It was suggested that the University is getting better about collecting this data from students, so obtaining local data should become less of a problem.

The remainder of the discussion focused on DOTS’ revenue issue – how it can make up for a shortfall as it encourages more students to give up their parking permits and take more sustainable forms of transportation to campus. Members suggested that DOTS consider charging those who come to campus after 4 pm and to take a long term view that reducing the number of commuters will ultimately reduce the need to build or renovate garages in the future, thereby reducing DOTS’ debt. But it was also noted that the campus needs an ample parking supply beyond supporting daily campus users as sports events, graduations, Maryland Day, and Presidential visits all rely on a plentiful parking supply.

One member asked DOTS if its revenue model (i.e., funding from student fees and parking) is realistic as a means of promoting sustainability to all members of the campus community, particularly faculty and staff. Allen responded that employees have no mandatory transportation fee (unlike students) but their
parking fees do subsidize Shuttle-UM, so in effect, employees are paying for the 10 percent of Shuttle-UM rides taken by non-students.

**Greening the Old Journalism Building**
Carlo Colella provided some thoughts on how the renovation of the old Journalism Building might be made more sustainable and divided his comments into projects that would have no schedule impact, projects that would have modest schedule impact, and those that would be most disruptive and costly.

A member asked whether donor support might be possible and it was suggested that donors generally don’t like to finance building renovations. Another member asked about the financial payback and the CO₂ reductions for each strategy; calculating these numbers would make the projects an easier sell to the Finance Committee or the Student Sustainability Fund. Members had additional suggestions for the building, such as to consider water capture options (as WSSC rates are increasing), to consider long-term (50 year) life cycle costs when calculating paybacks, and to conduct a sensitivity analysis to price to consider different breakeven scenarios.

Members asked how visible sustainability will be in the renovated building – whether there would be signage and perhaps green features that are obvious to occupants and visitors. It was noted that signage would be possible but that many of the enhancements (e.g., increased insulation in the attic) would not be obvious. Members stressed that it is important that the green features are highlighted – both for building occupants as well as campus visitors. The project should be an example of what is possible in terms of green renovations in a state-funded building.

One member asked whether it would be helpful to have a process for the evaluation of sustainability-related funding requests and suggested that a sub-group might work on a set of criteria and a prioritization process so that the Council and other campus entities such as the Finance Committee could look at projects on a comparable basis. Volunteers were solicited and Joanna Calabrese, Matthias Ruth, Joan Kowal, and Scott Lupin indicated interest.

**Other Reports**
- **Undergraduate Student Sustainability Fee [Draft Fee Language Changes]** – Joanna Calabrese gave a brief overview of the proposed language changes. One modification was suggested – to strike “reduce the carbon footprint of the campus” in the third to last sentence of the final paragraph. The language was unanimously endorsed by the Council.
- **Draft Campus Transportation Survey** – Dr. Matthias Ruth provided a brief overview of a campus transportation survey that will solicit information about commuter behavior from the campus community in late February and early March. It is hoped that this data will shed light on barriers to the adoption of more sustainable transportation options.
- **Recyclemania** – Office of Sustainability staff member, Heather Lair, reminded members about the Recyclemania competition taking place until March 27 and asked for their support.

**Next Steps**
The next Council meeting will take place on March 4, 2010 and will focus on solid waste management including composting and recycling. The meeting will also include agenda planning for the remainder of the semester. The two newly commissioned sub-groups should strive to meet before the March 4 meeting.