

UA Sustainability Committee September 10, 2009 Meeting

Present: Fred Cowett, Jeannine Crouse (after 12:30 PM), Fil Eden (after 1 PM), Marty Hatch, Dan Roth, Zellman Warhaft

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Marty Hatch will e-mail to Committee members final revised drafts of the Review of Resolution to Promote Energy Efficiency at Cornell by Establishing a Revolving Loan Fund for Energy Efficiency and a Small Energy Project Fund and the Letter to Accompany the Resolution.**
 - **The next Committee meeting in October needs to be scheduled.**
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AGENDA:

I. Review of Resolution to Promote Energy Efficiency at Cornell by Establishing a Revolving Loan Fund for Energy Efficiency and a Small Energy Project Fund

- The resolution was reviewed, edited, and passed unanimously by the Committee for submission to the University Assembly.
- Marty Hatch will e-mail the revised draft to committee members for final input.

II. Review of Letter to Accompany the Resolution to Promote Energy Efficiency at Cornell etc.

- The resolution was reviewed, edited, and passed unanimously by the Committee for submission to the University Assembly.
- Marty Hatch will e-mail the revised draft to committee members for final input.

III. Presentation by Dan Roth regarding the Concurrent Assemblies Resolution Expressing Support for the Cornell University Climate Action Plan

- Climate Action Plan (CAP) background:
 - President Skorton committed Cornell to a Climate Action Plan in 2007.
 - 590 academic institutions are currently participating in CAPs, 56 of which are in NY State.
 - September 15, 2009 is the due date for the Cornell CAP.
 - Due dates for other institutions are predicated on when they signed their commitments.
 - Unlike the Campus Master Plan, the commitment to a CAP was made without approval from the University's Board of Trustees.
- Climate Action Plan process:
 - Internal White Papers were developed following Cornell's commitment to study feasibility, in particular campus engagement.
 - A \$500,000 matching grant from NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority) has resulted in approximately \$1 million of funding to develop the CAP.
 - Affiliated Engineers, Inc. was hired as outside consultant.
 - The President's Climate Commitment Implementation Committee (PCICC) is responsible for oversight.
- Campus engagement:
 - Student involvement has been sought via the CAP Website and the solicitation of ideas from students, and via the Student Climate Summit.
 - Faculty involvement has been sought via the Cornell Center for a Sustainable Future and the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Environmental Sustainability
- Community Attitudes:

- A countywide survey has recently been conducted regarding community attitudes towards strategies involved in the CAP (i.e. wind farms, park and ride sites, carbon offsets, enhanced geothermal, carbon sequestration through forestry management, and renewable bioenergy).
- Attitudes are generally favorable.
- Wind energy is favored while carbon offsets are not (although it is not clear whether survey respondents fully understand carbon offsets).
- The full report of the survey will be made public next week.
- University Board of Trustees:
 - Approval from the full Board of Trustees is not required.
 - Approval from the Building and Properties Committee of the Board of Trustees has been solicited and is expected at a meeting on September 10, 2009.

IV. Review of the Concurrent Assemblies Resolution Expressing Support for the Cornell University Climate Action Plan

- The resolution is modeled on the resolution for the University Master Plan.
- All University Assemblies are being asked to endorse the resolution, hopefully by Campus Sustainability Day on October 22nd.
- 3rd Bullet: re: “evolving regulatory environments” – the CAP anticipates increased costs associated with regulation and environmental compliance and meeting CAP targets will achieve substantial cost savings.
- 5th Bullet: there are 7 overarching approaches associated with the CAP; these are general strategies and directions, not specific programs.
- While the Climate Action Plan has a specific final goal, there are no interim goals unlike CAPs at other institutions.
 - Interim goals can be extracted from the “wedge” diagram on page 5 of the CAP Summary Report.
- Academic outreach and implementation are not yet included in the plan.
- After the review concluded, the USC voted unanimously to endorse the resolution.

V. Review of Committee Minutes from the 081309 Meeting

- No revisions or corrections were offered to the minutes for the August 13th Committee meeting.
- The minutes were approved and will be posted on the Committee’s website.

VI. Discussion Regarding Committee Participation from ECOS

- ECOS (Cornell University's Environmental Compliance & Sustainability Office) is currently a voting member of the USC.
- Concern has been expressed by ECOS itself that, because ECOS is also part of University Administration and a clear hierarchy exists within the Administration with respect to decision making, its participation in Committee votes could be constrained by the need for Administration approval.
- The question has therefore been raised by ECOS whether it should continue as a voting member of the USC or if the Committee would prefer that ECOS participate on an ex officio Ad Hoc basis.
- Committee members stated that continued participation from ECOS was valuable to the Committee and that ECOS could, if necessary, abstain from Committee votes if Administration approval was required.
- The Committee agreed therefore that ECOS should remain a voting member of the USC.

VII. Scheduling of Next Committee Meeting

- The next Committee meeting will be scheduled for October.
- A Friday date is preferred.