

## Environmental Council 9-30-2011

Submitted by Brian Sanner

Additional comments from meeting by Kristi Heintz indicated in red

### Revolution of Thought:

- ^ Minnesota Waste Wise – communicates with businesses to reduce waste.
  - ^ <http://www.mnwastewise.org/>
- ^ Sustainable Curriculum - “Curriculum that encourages students to think about environmental, social, and economic factors, individually, and in relation to one another.”
  - ^ Through: Classroom experiences, research projects, and gen. ed. courses
  - ^ Web Presence: Link on home page (student portal) to sustainability action plan and Sustainability Calendar of Events showing all events related to sustainability in the community **Kristi will try to add relevant student activities to the new Campus Calendar and also ask Steve to add SPA to Student Portal**
  - ^ Integrate sustainability features into campus tours through our Campus Ambassadors
  - ^ Encourage Admin to make sustainability a part of the evaluation process on all levels.
  - ^ Celebrate successes formally.
  - ^ My idea: Almost all courses list “critical thinking” as part of their curriculum, why not also sustainability?
- ^ Think outside the benefit and profit for LSC, and more about the benefit and profit for the community and world.
  - ^ For example, removing sales of bottled water, might cost the school revenue as people buy less water, but it is also costing less in disposal fees, and, in the broader scope, reducing the amount of carbon emissions in shipping, waste in landfills, cost of recycling, etc.
- ^ Funding cuts have created the argument that schools can't afford to be “green” but in reality less funding can help stimulate cost saving ideas, and environmentally friendly techniques can often save costs.
- ^ Sustainability = great marketing = more student enrollment and involvement.
- ^ Move away from a single-use mentality to a multi-use mentality. Everything should have more than one use. Special lecturers can be used across multiple disciplines, rather than paying for multiple speakers to come talk about different topics. (Bad example for LSC).
  - ^ Water used to wash hands could be drained into toilets to flush.
- ^ Purchasing policies: Try to buy reusable products. Be conscientious of packaging, and go through companies that use eco-friendly products in their packaging. **Kristi will include Student Senate in forming the Purchasing Policy.**
- ^ Use existing student organizations to promote sustainability. Rather than create a new organization to address an issue, find existing organizations that are effected by the issue and organize between them so they are all active in finding/implementing a solution. **The EC should work to include student groups in projects that may be relevant to their goals. Possibly invite Heather to meetings or send her a list of projects that may be good for student groups then work as a “mentor group” with these student groups.**
- ^ Promote System Thinking – basically, the water bottle you use was drawn as raw materials, energy went into its creation, it was then packaged, shipped, refrigerated, consumed, and discarded. From there more energy was spent sorting it, shipping the waste to a disposal center, and recycling it or placing it in a landfill. The landfill/recycling center use energy, require large amounts of real-estate, etc. Every one of these steps creates pollution. **PROMOTE and PUBLICISE projects that the EC completes.**

### Small Initiatives:

- ⤴ Communicate what is recyclable.
- ⤴ Reusing graduation caps and gowns.
- ⤴ Student Organizations: Stress local and organic foods through culinary and gardening clubs.
  - ⤴ Patrick McDonald is interested in this idea.

### Moderate Initiatives:

#### Energy Efficiency Student Alliance (EESA): Power Police

- ⤴ Blitz buildings (set up a time and schedule) to come in and place watt meters overnight to see how much passive power (vampire power) is being drawn by appliances being plugged in. Then show them how much they could be saving by using power strips. They then come and install power strips for free. They use a revolving fund to pay for the power strips.
- ⤴ Use bright green stickers on every light switch reminding people to turn them off.
- ⤴ Eric Sannerud – EESA President: [eesaumn@gmail.com](mailto:eesaumn@gmail.com)
- ⤴ <http://www.tc.umn.edu/~aec/eesa.html>

Work with Student Senate or other club to promote this as a campus-wide competition and give “green decals” to office suites that practice sustainability in their work area. Possibly give “smart strips” as a prize for greenest office space. EC could discuss using budget to fund a project like this every year.

#### Zero Waste Student Workers:

- ⤴ each department has one of their student workers who also goes to the environmental council (as part of their paid duties, one hour per week) and works within their departments to increase efficiency and reduce waste.

#### Commercial Composting in the food service:

- ⤴ Macalaster started saving their food scraps for use by local pig farmers. This cut their waste disposal by 40%. The pig farmers also paid them to take it off their hands. **Publicize composting efforts and track amounts.**

#### Under Utilized Green Spaces:

- ⤴ Edible Landscape: Small gardens with edible foods, rather than useless flower patches that are high maintenance and use of resource, that aren't meant to be used by students or others.
- ⤴ Planting fruit and nut trees that normally flourish in the area, such as apple and pear trees.
  - ⤴ Fruits harvested can be canned, made into cider, pies, etc. and sold at local festivals or given to the homeless, if we are unable to sell it in our own school do to health code issues, etc.
- ⤴ Creating permeable paths and sidewalks.
- ⤴ Using shade trees (fruit trees offer shade) with tables and benches.
- ⤴ Aggregate and proper drainage, as seed grass doesn't have deep roots and water does not absorb well, rather running off into streams, etc.
- ⤴ Student Senate Legacy Project: Landscaping for student use in the area in front of Library and between the H&SC and the S-building. Terracing and designing usable areas/edible gardens back there. **EC will work with Student Senate to help them move forward with this project.**
- ⤴ Edible Landscape: [http://www.d.umn.edu/sustain/land\\_water/ediblelscp.html](http://www.d.umn.edu/sustain/land_water/ediblelscp.html)
- ⤴ UMD Farm Research and Field Studies Center: 4709 Jean Duluth Road (Hard to find online!)
  - ⤴ <http://www.d.umn.edu/farm/about/location.html>
  - ⤴ Mainly liberal arts, sciences aren't really involved. Disciplines that could be:
    - ⤴ Biology – species variation, population growth, grafting, basic genetics projects, soil testing, water testing, the effects of mono-planting vs. integrated fields, etc.

- ▲ Chemistry – fertilizer, insecticides, soil and water purification/enrichment.
    - ▲ Engineering – irrigation, bio-systems, etc.
  - ▲ Sandra Olson Loy @ UMD -Good Food Movement  
<http://www.d.umn.edu/cscd/foodseminar/>
- ▲ Gleaning of fruit from around Duluth. This gave me the idea to just grow our own, but could be done by LSC as well.

Reduce utilities cost through water conservation/renewal, waste reduction, and heat recirculation.

- ▲ Vent heat from server rooms and utility rooms into HVAC system, through a purification system.
- ▲ Reuse gray water and capture rain water for use in toilet flushing, watering landscape, etc.
- ▲ Small power gains and energy savings add up to large numbers over time. Every bit counts.

#### Large Initiatives:

Bottled Water Ban:

- ▲ More than 85,000,000 bottles of water used every day. Over 31 Billion per year.
- ▲ 1 gallon of bottled water is 3 times more expensive than 1 gallon of gasoline.
- ▲ Access to clean water is a human necessity and right. Make a commitment to no longer profit from the sale of water.
- ▲ Three steps:
  - ▲ Draft the Policy with Students, Faculty, Administration and Staff involvement.
    - ▲ Involve everyone who will be effected by this change.
  - ▲ Identify the alternatives
  - ▲ Educate the campus and community
    - ▲ Through the Sustainability Council, Student Senate, and Administration
    - ▲ There are more regulations on city water than there is on bottled water.
- ▲ Macalaster College went with Hydration Stations and sold reusable plastic bottles to students for \$5. Funds can go toward other sustainability efforts, after paying for retrofitting water fountains and such.
- ▲ Points to consider for water filling stations:
  - ▲ Easy to retrofit drinking fountains (acts as both drinking fountain and water bottle filling station.
    - ▲ Cool features like counting the number of plastic bottles that would have been saved.
    - ▲ Sanitary fill system, in that there is no protruding nozzle that could touch the sides of a used drinking vessel.
  - ▲ Cheap and easy filter replacement.

Sustainability Programs

- ▲ U of M minor in Sustainability: 3 electives, 2 core courses
  - ▲ SUST 3003 Sustainable People, Sustainable Planet
  - ▲ SUST 4004 Sustainable Communities
- ▲ Beth Mercer-Taylor: [bethmt@umn.edu](mailto:bethmt@umn.edu)

#### Enormous Initiatives

Community Partnership for a U based Biodigester at UW-Oshkosh

- ▲ Designed by BioFerm
  - ▲ A power plant that utilizes the heat and stores the gas from composting materials.
  - ▲ Waste left over is good, compost soil.

- ^ With General Mills chaff, commercial composting, the paper plant, etc. plus easy access to shipping, and the ability to heat downtown, it makes the possibility feasible here in Duluth.

Observations about the conference itself:

- ^ I believe Lake Superior College was the only MnSCU school in attendance. I know we were the only 2 year school there.
  - ^ The fact we are a 2 year school offers many obstacles, as we have such a high turnover rate of students it is hard to keep momentum rolling on projects without dedicated staff and constant student recruitment. If a student is recruited in the first semester they attend, they spend at least a full semester being brought up to speed, they then spend two semesters as a productive member, and another semester recruiting and training. This means we generally only have one year of continuity from the same person.
  - ^ Recruit amongst programs with long waiting lists. Students that are slowly getting their AA while waiting to be accepted into a program have the time and desire to do more. Many lose interest from lack of stimulation.
- ^ They had no information on what each session was going to be about. The only way to decide which to attend was by the title, which was often misleading as the presenters would try to name it something intriguing, rather than descriptive.