**MINUTES**

**President’s Council on Sustainability**

**Meeting of April 16th, 2024, at 4 pm**

Present: Kevin Caffrey, Pamela Grothe, Kate Stoneman, Diana Binette, Eliana Nachman, Alan Griffith, Eric Bonds, Lauren Pilcher, Brian Ogle, Jeremy Larochelle, Suzanne Sumner, Melanie Szulczewski

1. **Climate Action Plan Update:**

Alan Griffith presented an update on the status of the Climate Action Plan (CAP). He sent the most current plan to Jeff McClurkin in mid-March. Unfortunately, the administration still wants more details on the cost of implementing each action. Jeff will work directly with the appropriate staff to gain better cost estimates – most of this falling onto facilities personnel who are currently swamped with the many ongoing building repair issues. This means the CAP will not be presented to the BOV until the beginning of the fall semester. Troy and Jeff have assured us they are committed to the CAP. Additionally, the updated CAP moved the target date for net zero emissions from 2035 to 2040 and Jeff still thinks this is too ambitious. However, the PCS agrees that we need to continue to advocate for 2040 and research all the literature and other schools to support our reasoning.

**Discussion:**

* There is concern that waiting until the fall just means more of the BOV will be Gov. Younkin appointees, making it even harder to pass.
* Some have heard that Troy is pushing for geothermal energy for the new theater arts building which would indicate his strong support for the CAP.
* Generally, it is not clear what the administration wants with better cost estimates since they have a hard time looking beyond a 5-10-year plan.
* A fear for pushing the date back beyond 2040 is that it becomes too far in the future that it allows the administration to hold off on making significant progress, considering the scale of the problem.

1. **10-Year Planning Committee:**

Suzanne Sumner presented the current status of the 10-Year Planning Committee. Currently, they are in the process of putting together a report for BOV. The different subcommittees have written their reports and members are in the process of reading the various subcommittee reports. Thus far, discussions indicate everyone is thinking about sustainability. They will continue to work in the summer and fall, compiling a final report to present to BOV and the broader community.

1. **Center for Sustainability**

Pamela Grothe provided updates on the status of the proposed Center for Sustainability. The Curriculum and Research subcommittee has led this charge since it will be a great avenue for implementing many of the educational-related objectives in the CAP. The subcommittee has reviewed the procedures for proposing a new center and began the pre-proposal activities. The next step is to identify a small working group of faculty (and possible staff if interested) to complete the proposal. Tim O’Donnell is already aware of faculty interest as Andrew Dolby and Laura Mentore wrote him a letter expressing the need. The working group should be assembled before the end of the semester but much of the work will take place in the Fall. There will be continued communication with the PCS and a large community of faculty invested in the center.

If you are interested in being a part of the small working group to write the proposal, please let Pamela Grothe know (Alan Griffith, Jeremy Larochelle, and Suzanne Sumner all express interest in the meeting).

**Discussion:**

* It was agreed that the new Sustainability Coordinator would be integral for the center.
* Physical space in the UC would be preferred, potentially in the same suite at the Center for Community Engagement.
* There is potential to propose this such that it does not cost very much.

1. **Subcommittee/General Updates:**

**Construction subcommittee:**

The subcommittee met before the PCS meeting and mostly discussed funding initiatives. They discussed revisiting a “Green Fee” for students and tasking the students in the fall to begin researching this. This idea was discussed 10 years ago but never took off for various reasons, even though there was strong student support then, thus the PCS believes it is time to revisit the idea. They also discussed working with the alumni office for future fundraising for sustainability initiatives, like on Mary Wash Day. Other ideas included reaching out to congressional members to lobby for funding for smaller institutions, like UMW, to support the transition to renewable energy.

**Discussion:**

* There was generally agreement for revisiting a green fee, although, perhaps it should be called something different, like a Sustainability Fee, so it is more encompassing of all parts of sustainability.
* PCS student members seemed unsure about how students would take an additional fee. One idea was to provide an opt-out option (rather than an opt-in option). The first step should be to work with Debra Schleef to poll the students on the idea.

**Curriculum and Research Subcommittee:**

See updates above on the Center for Sustainability.

**Sustainability on Campus Subcommittee:**

Kate Stoneman provided an update on the upcoming events surrounding Earth Week.

* Arbor Celebration – Friday, April 19th 2-3 pm at
* COAR/PCS Earth Day Clean Up – Saturday, April 20th at the pollinator garden (facilities will provide all the equipment)
* Earth Day Celebration – Monday, April 22nd 12-3 pm on Alvey Green (there will be vendors, clubs, campus organizations, UMW dining serving free plant-based food, shelter dogs, clothing swap, botany club plant sale, Sammy Eagle, etc.)
* Painting the Spirit Rock – Join Leah on Friday April 19th at 3:30 to paint the spirit rock for Earth Day
* Next Year – plan to incorporate locally made crafts to sell

1. **Sustainability Coordinator**

Interviews are complete. The committee interviewed five candidates and are now debriefing on the top two candidates. An offer should be presented in the next week or two.

1. **Member Updates:**

* Eric Bonds – A member of our community offered $10,000 to buy electrical landscape equipment. So far, it has been challenging to get UMW to accept the donation. We need to do better cultivating these relationships and figuring out how to move forward.
* Diana Binette – Submitted a UMW Impact Grant Proposal for a solar umbrella charging station on campus. There were 27 other proposals and ours was not funded. Thank you, Diana, for leading this charge.
* Eric Bonds – UMW’s website mentions we are still committed to phasing our single-use plastic but based on observations at events, we do not seem to be doing what are advertising. How can PCS keep dining on track? Perhaps the new Sustainability Coordinator could develop metrics and track progress.
* Pamela Grothe mentioned there was a community discussion about the removal of 100 trees, 8 of them being heritage trees, for the construction of the new theater arts building. It was unclear if they were being removed because of the building location or more for the ease of construction. We should investigate the plan and reasoning for the removal and see if there is any way to reduce the impact of tree removal.
* Eric Bonds will take on the faculty co-chair for PCS beginning next academic year. Kate Stoneman and Kevin Caffrey will remain the student and staff co-chair, respectively. **Please email your respective chair about your intent for membership for the 2024-2025 academic year.**

Meeting adjourned at 5:12 pm