Minutes

Steering Committee, Advisory Council on Stewardship and Sustainability
November 03, 2009 12:05-1:05 pm
College Hall 327

In Attendance: Monica Bartlett (co-chair), Brian Henning (co-chair), Andrea Bertotti Metoyer, Jace Bylenga, Todd Dunfield, Brittany Jarnot, Kari Sulenes, Ken Sammons, Anastasia Wendlinder, Linda Wilson.
Absent: Jillian Cadwell, Tim Hatcher, Henry, Jon Isacoff, Michael Treleaven, Tim Woodard
(Refer to the Council portion of www.gonzaga.edu/sustainability for information on member affiliation and for the composition of the ACSS Steering Committee)

1. **Report** – Jace Bylenga (Environmental Studies Graduate Assistant) attended the “Renewing the Campus: Sustainability & the Catholic University” conference on sustainability on behalf of the ACSS and presented his report (see below).

2. **Old Business** – The meeting continued the vigorous and wide ranging discussion of the merits of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (see www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org). The Steering Committee agreed to begin work drafting a resolution and resolved to continue the debate over the Commitment and the resolution over email.

3. The meeting adjourned at 1:10 pm. Next meeting: first Tuesday of December at 12:05 in CCASL meeting room.
Renewing the Campus: Sustainability & the Catholic University
October 9-11, 2009
University of Notre Dame, Indiana
Attended by Jace Bylenga as Gonzaga University Representative

“Renewing the Campus was the first conference dedicated to enhancing understanding, activism, and cooperation among Catholic universities in the area of sustainability. Over 200 faculty, administrators, and students from 45 universities across the country participated.”

Keynote addresses were filmed and are available on the web at http://green.nd.edu/education/renewing-the-campus (click on schedule for video links):

Dr. Kristie Ebi, Executive Director, Technical Support Unit for Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
This was an excellent presentation that shed light on the complex social justice implications that climate change will have on human health, particularly in the less developed areas of the planet. As the climate changes, disease will increase, and production of nutritious food will decrease.
This was, in my opinion, the best presentation at the conference. I recommend viewing it online (one hour).
http://green.nd.edu/education/renewing-the-campus

Renewing the Covenant with Creation: Catholic Teaching and Action on Climate Change. Daniel Misleh, Executive Director, Catholic Coalition on Climate Change
Founded in 2006, the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change is currently campaigning to get all Catholics to sign the Catholic Climate Covenant. All Catholic Universities have been asked to participate.
Signing is a pledge to “Pray + Learn + Assess + Act + Advocate.”
“Who’s under your carbon footprint?” http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/

The other main sessions consisted of panel discussions and plenary speakers that focused on sustainability and the Catholic university as related to theologies, teaching, administrative leadership, student activism, and models of living sustainability. See http://green.nd.edu/education/renewing-the-campus for power point presentations. This conference offered a unique perspective among similar conferences in that theology and its relation to sustainability was discussed at a high level. A particularly noteworthy presentation came from Santa Clara U’s Sustainability Coordinator pertaining to administrative leadership, and how her position enabled departmental barriers to be broken down to find creative solutions to sustainability issues. Approximately a third of the crowd signaled that they had similar positions at their institutions.
Two sessions consisted of concurrent break-out groups, and I attended a very general discussion about climate action planning that schools engage in once they are a part of the Presidents Climate Commitment, and another that focused on how U. of Notre Dame has been able to form partnerships with local government.
The third day consisted of a tour of the newly built Geddes Hall on campus that is a ‘green’ LEED certified building, as well as collaboration building session for participating universities. The collaboration session, split into faculty, administrators, officers, and students, epitomized the feeling of the conference: now that we are all in the same room together, how can we work together to continue this dialogue? This was the first time a Catholic campus sustainability conference has taken place, and UND is not necessarily looking to own this conference. They are interested in the possibility of changing locations for future conferences, and in forming a knowledge committee and conference planning committee. I put my name on the sign up sheets for these, and am waiting to hear back from them. It would be useful for Gonzaga to be involved with this conference in at least some capacity in the future.

To pick out some main themes from the weekend, other institutions have been successful in moving toward becoming a more sustainable model for society by means of dedicated support from a few champion decision makers, bottom up pushes from students, strong leadership that transcends departmental ‘silos’ of isolation, creative integration with classroom teaching, and recognition of the spiritual and ethical implications that sustainability has.