

Energy and Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes 9-25-2017

Present:

Kayla Smith for Sherwood Wilson, Debbie Greer for Dwight Shelton, Gwyneth Manser for Frances Keene, Denny Cochrane, Scott Kerklo, Jeff Orzolek, Rob Lowe, Ed Lener, Sean McGinnis, Judy Taylor, Alexis Trent, Siddharth Bhela, Melvin Amos, and Brooke Baugher (guest)

Welcome:

Introductions from all committee members.

Agenda:

Motion to accept proposed agenda was approved.

Old Business:

- Review of April 24, 2017 meeting minutes
 - Denny Cochrane reviewed Earth Week, Y-toss, and previously approved electronically at the end of spring semester
 - Denny Cochrane noted members recommendation for increased student involvement through updates by student groups in activities in AY 2017-2018
- E&S Committee Revised Charge
 - Denny Cochrane discussed the new, approved charge for the committee. It more holistically encompasses the purpose of the committee and gives direction for how to achieve it

New Business:

- Sustainability Week 2017
 - Denny Cochrane gave a brief history of how sustainability week formed, and the current state
 - Sustainability week began in 2007 as a result of the “Green Partnership” formed between Virginia Tech, the Town of Blacksburg, and the local citizen’s group Sustainable Blacksburg
 - Sustainability week 2017 had over 30 events including guest speakers, workshops, presentations, tours, and fairs
 - Denny Cochrane discussed the intern involvement (especially from the Communications Team) in each event. One of the many highlights was the Rocky Forge Wind Farm Project presented by Apex Clean Energy
 - Siddarth Bhela made the suggestion of overlapping Sustainability Week with the Engineering Exposition to gain a broader audience and include the industries in the activities and events of the week
- Green RFP
 - Green RFP program began through student initiatives and motivation to do sustainability projects on campus in 2009
 - First year of the program begun in the 2010-2011 academic year

- The proposals must meet one or more of the 14 points in the Virginia Tech Climate Action Commitment; oftentimes these proposals meet several of the items
- Question Raised: How do we analyze the value of Green RFPs?
 - Review cost, feasibility, & savings
 - Determine ROI and payback
- Past RFP projects: water bottle refilling stations
 - Lots of the filters in the water bottle refilling stations are in need of maintenance (the light is on)
- Looking at the date for the E&S presentation to the Budget Office, should it be moved up?
 - March 1 is the date, there is lots going on in the budget office, the earlier it gets addressed the better
- Student Sustainability Forum, developed and led by Brooke Baugher GA for Office of Sustainability
 - Held September 11, 2017
 - 6 Student Groups
 - 24 Attendees
 - Purpose: to create a common space for discussion between sustainability-focused groups at Virginia Tech
 - Motivation: to bring students together for collaboration and unite these groups through the Office of Sustainability
 - Asked two questions to the students, one focused on sustainability issues, and one on sustainability learning
 - Question 1: What is the most important sustainability issue on campus?
 - Recycling, energy usage, greenhouse gas emissions, waste
 - Question 2: What sustainability topic would you like to learn more about?
 - Gardens, food, consumption, plants, energy, community gardens

Open Discussion:

- What should we do as a committee moving forward, what are we doing well?
 - Kayla Smith: Opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to influence university governance and administrations
 - Debbie Greer: Due diligence in RFP's is highly appreciated
 - Rob Lowe: In the past, the committee has been the conduit of information from facilities
 - Judy Taylor: If we hear student ideas, pass them along to the staff senate
 - Perhaps we should investigate signage for the water bottle refilling stations
 - How they got there, who funds them, what they do
 - Do this for all RFP projects
 - *Office of Sustainability to brief Staff Senate on October 19th, 2017*
 - Melvin Amos: Campus policy 5505: "Energy, Water, & Waste Reduction" needs updating

Next Meeting: October 23, 2017

Motion to Adjourn: Approved