

Energy and Sustainability Committee Minutes
December 11, 2008
2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
210 Burruss Hall

Present: Michael Coleman, Linda Woodard for Sherwood Wilson, Brennan Shepard for Dwight Shelton, Scott Hurst, Denny Cochrane, Bruce Ferguson, Ben Myers, Rob Lowe, Sean McGinnis, John Randolph, Tom Tucker, Mike Cutlip, Jack Davis, Brian Perkins, Katie Hoover for Sara Murrill, Angella De Soto, Kristina Hartman, Sandra Mullins (Administrative Assistant)

Absent: Rick Johnson, Madeline Schreiber, Annie Pearce

Guests: Bryce Carter, Richard Hirsh, Don Leo, Brittney Owens, Jackie Pontious, Rachel Rees, Lylah Shelor, Martha Wirt

Call Meeting to Order and Welcome Guests

Due to a scheduling conflict Denny Cochrane chaired the meeting for Mike Coleman. Denny Cochrane called the meeting to order and welcomed the guests and made introductions.

Adoption of Agenda

The Committee approved the agenda as proposed.

Approval of the October 15, 2008 Minutes

The November 17, 2008 minutes were approved.

Old Business

- 1) Campus Energy and Water Policy 5505. Policy 5505 remains at the Presidential staff level for approval.
- 2) Commission on University Support Resolution 2008-2009A. This Resolution proposes the Energy and Sustainability Coordinator and the Director of Housing and Dining Services as ex-officio members on the Energy and Sustainability Committee. The Commission on University Support recommended approval. The University Council had its first reading of the Resolution on November 17, 2008, and had no issues. The University Council did not meet in December, and we anticipate they will have their second reading and vote on the Resolution at their February 2, 2009, meeting.

New Business

- 1) Draft VT Climate Action Commitment and Sustainability Plan (VTCAC&SP). John Randolph, chair of the VTCAC&SP Subcommittee, provided an electronic copy of the latest draft of the Virginia Tech Climate Action Commitment and Sustainability Plan to all Committee members just prior to this meeting. Following a brief overview of the

status of the draft plan, John Randolph reviewed a series of pages of the report that addressed local, state, and federal green house gas (GHG) emissions goals; Virginia Tech's energy usage, costs, and associated GHG emissions; and led a discussion on what is the overall best course of action for Virginia Tech Climate Action Commitment. John Randolph presented potential action strategies for achieving the VTCAC&SP focusing on six key areas to include: Administrative Structure and Governance, Facilities and Grounds Infrastructure, Facilities Operations, Transportation, Behavior and Campus Life, and Academic Programs. The intent is to identify action strategies for three time horizons: immediate (first 2 years), mid-term (the next 10 years) and long-term (the next 25 years).

Angie De Soto expressed some concerns that the VTCAC&SP will be seen as just a plan when it goes through the university governance system, and not a policy or commitment to those proposed initiatives. To alleviate those concerns she proposed the Plan be packaged with a written policy to go through the governance system together thus enhancing full implementation. The policy would establish emission reduction targets for the university, and emissions would be evaluated each year and tracked by the proposed office of sustainability to make sure that the goals are met. It is this commitment or reduction target that President Steger asked us to produce in his charge of April 25, 2008. She stressed, and the other Committee members agreed, that the VTCAC&SP will be a living document that will be updated regularly due to the changing world around us and the forthcoming national and state policies. In signing this proposed policy endorsed through the university governance process, President Steger will be making a commitment to emissions reductions and will not have to sign a commitment for carbon neutrality. In conclusion, his signature would demonstrate a strong commitment from the university to do something about climate change.

- 2) Presenting the Draft VTCAC&SP to President Steger and to the Commission on University Support. On April 25, 2008, President Steger charged the Energy and Sustainability Committee to develop a draft Virginia Tech Climate Action Commitment by the end of the 2008 fall semester for presentation to him and to the Commission on University Support. John Randolph stated the VTCAC&SP Subcommittee has held 10 meetings over the summer and fall, and there is still more work to be done before delivery. He will be spearheading the process to finalize this draft plan. He mentioned that it is our interpretation that the 2008 fall semester extends until the day before the 2009 spring semester. We want to ensure we have a polished product prior to delivery.
- 3) Facilities Services Department Procedures for the Holiday Break. Mike Coleman was able to join the meeting in progress. He distributed a copy of his Facilities Services memo that will be published in the Virginia Tech News Daily Email tomorrow, December 12, 2008, which will help the university prepare to conserve energy during the Holiday break. He has been working with Larry Hincker to develop a marketing plan for this and future energy efficiency and conservation actions. Facilities Services staff will be inspecting campus facilities next week to ensure the facilities are properly secure from winter weather elements to prevent freeze damage and loss of property. While performing this task the staff will also conduct an operational check on the facilities internal space thermostats and ensure they are set at 68° Fahrenheit in accordance with

the Campus Energy and Water Policy 5505. See Attachment A for more details on the check list to conserve energy and help preserve the environment.

- 4) Community Engagement Grant Opportunity. Don Leo, Special Advisor the Vice President for Research on Energy Initiatives, announced an initiative funded by the Office of the Vice President for Research focused on enhancing interdisciplinary research through community engagement. The program will be announced early in January and proposals will be due in early January. The program will solicit short proposals that combine university faculty with students (undergraduate / graduate), or town representatives. The programs are intended to be 6 to 9 month efforts that provide preliminary data for larger research proposals that promote sustainability efforts on campus and in the region. <http://www.research.vt.edu/energy/>

Future Meetings

The proposed meeting dates for the 2009 Spring Semester were approved and are as follows.

January 26, 2009

February 23, 2009

March 30, 2009

April 27, 2009

May 18, 2009 (if needed)

All meetings will be held in the Presidents Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall, from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

Adjourn

It was moved and seconded to adjourn.