

Environmental Sustainability Task Force Annual Report SY 2008/2009

The Environmental Sustainability Task Force serves a number of roles on campus including but not limited to (1) advising the College leadership on sustainability issues and policy, (2) leading the College's efforts in fulfilling our obligations under the President's Climate Commitment (PCC), and (3) coordinating sustainability activities and serving as a clearinghouse of sustainability information across the College community. This document contains the policy recommendations of the Task Force, an overview of the Task Force's activities and accomplishments during SY 2008/09, and some goals for the Task Force for the coming year.

Task Force Policy Recommendations

It shall be the policy of the College to make clear the links between sustainability ideals and the College's mission, goals and values. All of the College's values are linked to sustainability, but the values of Innovation, Community, Diversity, Integrity and Service to Society clearly call on students and the College community as a whole to engage in sustainability through, "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (sustainability definition of the Brundtland Commission 1987). This definition makes clear that sustainability is not only, or even primarily, focused on the environment, but on people and how our communities and economic systems will survive into the future. Clarifying the links between sustainability and the College's values will be a useful means of engaging the entire college community in actively participating in creating a sustainable community, and will focus the campus' efforts on fulfilling our obligations under the PCC. Finally, this will provide an opportunity for President Dahl and other college leaders to talk about sustainability and provide visible leadership on sustainability issues.

It shall be the policy of the College to call on *all* members of the campus community to actively reduce their carbon footprint. The College recognizes emissions reductions will not fall onto the shoulders of energy production alone, but will require all divisions of the College to accept a role in reducing emissions. As the PCC (of which we are a signatory) states, "We believe colleges and universities must exercise leadership in their communities and throughout society by modeling ways to minimize global warming emissions, and by providing the knowledge and the educated graduates to achieve climate neutrality."

It shall be the policy of the College to limit, or eliminate, refrigerators in faculty/staff offices. If allowed, refrigerators must be Energy Star rated, as should *all* refrigerators in student dorm rooms. A means of monitoring and enforcing this policy is needed. Compact refrigerators are notoriously inefficient and add an additional load to the campus electrical usage (remember: electrical usage makes up 1/3 of the campus' greenhouse gas emissions), and in many cases their use is a matter of convenience rather than necessity.

It shall be the policy of the College to require that all Purchase Requisitions for travel include the cost to purchase carbon offset credits for the mileage involved, and any travel

of 500 miles or less should be done by car, shared or public transportation which are less carbon intensive forms of transportation than air travel.

It shall be the policy of the College to maintain natural areas in excess of 10% of the campus land holdings, to avoid developing these areas unless there is a demonstrated critical need to do so, and to seek opportunities to designate additional areas on campus that can be adapted to serve as natural areas. SUNY Geneseo recognizes the value of preserving natural areas on campus to maintain plant diversity and animal habitats. The college recognizes that these areas serve to benefit the College by offsetting carbon emissions. The College also strives to expand unmanaged areas as much as is feasible without detrimentally affecting the aesthetics of the campus.

It shall be the policy of the College that all renovations and new buildings on campus be constructed to LEED Platinum standards. This will make SUNY Geneseo a sustainability leader among SUNY campuses and campuses nationwide, lower the footprint of the buildings, bring the campus into compliance with NYS Executive order 111, and contribute to the campus' attainment of climate neutrality in compliance with the PCC.

It shall be the policy of the College to adopt a campus-wide "Carry in Carry out" policy for all classrooms and offices. The College recognizes that appropriate disposal of our waste is a reflection of our respect for our community and our environment, and a part of Geneseo's pledge to lower green house gas emissions and develop a sustainable environment and community under the PCC. Trash and recycling receptacles will only be available in common areas and hallways. Students and office residents will be required to dispose of the waste they create in the appropriate receptacle. This will result in an increase in the appropriate disposal of recyclables and a reduction in labor and material costs associated with emptying individual receptacles in classrooms and offices across campus.

Report of Task Force Activities & Accomplishments

The Task Force met with Dr. Levison in October 2008, and was presented with three major tasks for the year. These were:

1 – Continue progress in Geneseo's compliance with the PCC. Co-chair Kristi Hannam assessed our compliance with the whole PCC (see attached document), and the Greenhouse Gas Monitoring subcommittee continued work on the calculation of Geneseo's carbon footprint and projection of our carbon neutrality date.

2 – Investigate Fume Hoods as a major Energy cost, and measures to alleviate this cost. The Facilities and Operations subcommittee took on the task of investigating the energy cost of Fume Hoods and possible measures to alleviate the cost.

3 – Increase education/awareness/action on Sustainability issues across the campus community (which includes increasing the profile of, readability, and information on

Geneseo's Sustainability webpage). This task was taken on primarily by the new Programming subcommittee and the P.R. subcommittee.

The task force successfully tackled these charges and generated some additional goals for the 08/09 school year and for the future.

The Task Force subcommittee structure was reorganized slightly and highlights of each subcommittee's work for the year are summarized below. In addition, complete annual reports from each of the subcommittees are attached to this document

Climate Impact & Monitoring Subcommittee

Members of this subcommittee attended several webinars including "Three Simple Steps to a Carbon Neutrality Plan" and "How to be a Carbon Zero Hero" which offered useful suggestions for calculating Geneseo's carbon footprint, finding places to reduce our impact, and targeting our carbon neutral date.

The subcommittee, with the help of our intern Alicia Kowsky, worked to continue gathering data about Geneseo's carbon footprint from the past and present. The subcommittee is continuing to work over the summer with our new intern, Hallie Miller, to finalize our carbon footprint data and carbon action plan for the September 2009 deadline set by the PCC. If necessary, Geneseo may apply for a 6 month extension to complete the carbon action plan.

The subcommittee noted that the Residence Hall Energy Saving Contest (sponsored by GEO- see attached document) resulted in more than \$10,000 in savings through more than 42,000 kWh of electricity savings in the month of November 2008 as compared to the previous year. The subcommittee recommends that the contest be continued in future years and supported by the Task Force.

Additional recommendations of this subcommittee include instituting a Student Green Fee that could be used for sustainability initiatives on campus. This could be set up through the SA or through a Geneseo Foundation Account. A second recommendation is to convert external lighting to LED lighting (as has been done on several other college campuses). Ithaca College reports that payback for the LED lighting on their campus was less than one year.

Facilities and Operations Subcommittee

The Facilities subcommittee assessed the viability of reducing the impact of fume hoods in the ISC. After attending several webinars including "How to be a Carbon Zero Hero", and "Green Labs: Resource conservation in research settings", and after talking with facilities building managers for the ISC, there were few options for reducing the energy loss from fume hoods. The design of the ISC and its ventilation system does not allow unused hoods to be turned off-line, and the hood ventilation is connected to ventilation for the rest of the building. This leaves the only option a re-engineering of the ventilation system for the entire building. It is unclear whether the benefits would outweigh the monetary costs (in addition to the loss of valuable research productivity) for a project of that magnitude.

The subcommittee also conducted a lighting assessment on the Holcomb building in conjunction with a representative from GE. Changing the lighting ballasts and bulbs in this building is recommended as a demonstration of the energy and money savings (and rapid payback) available by making small changes. This remains under current review for feasibility.

Beginning after spring break, a pilot recycling program in Newton classrooms was instituted as a means of determining whether a larger “Carry in Carry out” program could be instituted campus-wide. Trash receptacles were removed from classrooms and trash and recycling bins were paired in the hallways. By the end of the semester a change in disposal behavior patterns was noted in Newton. The subcommittee recommends adoption of a campus-wide “Carry in Carry out” policy for all classrooms, and possibly widened to include all offices as well. This will result in an increase in the appropriate disposal of recyclables and a reduction in labor and material costs associated with emptying individual receptacles in classrooms and offices across campus.

In part as a result of recommendation by this subcommittee, Bailey will be mothballed for the next year or more. Savings from the shutdown on this building are estimated to be \$52,000 annually for electricity and \$73,000.00 annually for steam use. The subcommittee recommends that the renovation of Bailey over the next several years be used as a model for retrofitting other older buildings on campus, and that any retrofits be done to LEED Platinum standards in order to maintain as much of the savings as possible over the long term.

In the coming year, this subcommittee looks forward to investigating building codes for lighting as a means of uncovering additional savings from unnecessary lighting in buildings across campus. They will also look into reducing mowing and the possibility of establishing a biodiesel program for campus vehicles.

Academics and Co-curricular Subcommittee

The Academics subcommittee has worked this year to refine green course listing available on the Task Force website. This has been approached through a survey of faculty across campus. The survey had a 10% response rate and the results of the listing will be used to add to the course listing. The survey also examined faculty opinion on how sustainability ought to be defined by Geneseo.

The subcommittee also investigated the possibility of increasing sustainability course options through service learning opportunities. Meetings with Kay Fly and David Parfitt resulted in some ideas that can be pursued. These options need to be advertised to and encouraged among the faculty.

Three faculty members of the subcommittee attended an AASHE workshop on infusing sustainability in the curriculum. Those three faculty will offer a workshop through the TLC in Fall 2009 to engage other faculty on campus in efforts to add sustainability topics to their courses.

The subcommittee recognizes that the general education core is being reviewed by college, and there are opportunities for adding a sustainability core course to the college

requirements. The subcommittee has already submitted this recommendation to the Task Force for Curriculum revision. A faculty member from Geology will be offering an Honors course focused on energy sustainability in Fall 2009, and another faculty member in Sociology is developing a sustainability course. It is hoped these will provide models for future courses across the disciplines.

The subcommittee also recommends that the college formally recognize the link between sustainability principles and the college mission and goals as one means of engaging faculty in addressing sustainability issues in their courses and office life.

Programming Subcommittee

The Programming subcommittee took a major role in planning and presenting Live Green in February 2009. Live Green was even more successful in its second year, and one of the goals for next year is to engage more of the community on and off campus.

The subcommittee also resurrected the celebration of Earth Day in April with a week's worth of programming. Turn out for the Task Force's Panel Discussion and for the guest speaker on solar energy was more than 50 people at each event. Both of these events were competing with other major programming on campus, so turn out was judged as very successful. Next year the subcommittee plans to expand service learning opportunities into Earth week.

In addition, for SY 2009/10 the programming subcommittee has a calendar of monthly programs including films and fieldtrips around the theme of sustainability.

P.R. and Community Engagement Subcommittee

The P.R. subcommittee worked with the office of communications to revamp the Task Force website. It is now easier to navigate and provides a forum for visitors to give feedback on the Task Force's work. After the publication of the Scene Magazine highlighting Geneseo's sustainability work, the website traffic increased and we received emails from several alumni through the website.

The subcommittee also investigated the possibility of inserting a "Green Button" on main Geneseo webpage. Policy about what appears on the homepage doesn't make this possible outside of special events such as Live Green. However, the subcommittee requested additional avenues for publicizing the sustainability work on campus with the new web design. We are waiting to see the new design unveiled to determine what the next best step will be.

The subcommittee arranged to send 7 faculty & staff to the Finger Lakes Project Conference at Ithaca College in May. The attendees will be adding a sustainability-related assignment to a course they teach in Fall 2009 and submit the assignment details to the Task Force for a reference catalog of sustainability assignments that will be made available to all faculty. The subcommittee recommends sending another 7 people to the FLP Conference again next year.

Finally, and importantly, the subcommittee strongly recommends a Press Conference/Celebration lead by President Dahl when the College's carbon neutrality date is announced – a major obligation of the PCC.

Plans for the Future

Goals for SY 2009/10

Encourage use of LATS, carpooling, and reduction in driving to/from campus
Participate in RecycleMania – nationwide recycling competition (Jan/Feb)
Weeks of Welcome-focus on recycling, Trash Guards (August/September)
Campus sustainability day - a nation-wide event (October)
Add sustainability component to multicultural week (October)
Send people to SUNY ESF conference (November)
Continue and expand Live Green Day (February)
Send students to Powershift on Biodiesel bus (March)
Campus wide Earth Hour (April)
Send additional faculty Finger Lakes Project Workshop in Ithaca (May)
Provide better P.R. for sustainability successes on campus

Long Term Goals

Establish a Sustainability tour of campus
Create a sustainable orientation program beginning with placing orientation materials on flash drive
WOW-compostable picnic
Declare 2010-11 “Year of Sustainability”
Eco Reps for all buildings to publicize sustainability initiatives and engage community members face-to-face (academic, administrative and residence halls)
Grant program for redesigning courses
Establish a Green fee for students
Establish an Eco-dorm
Adopt the Green Passport Program for study abroad
Organize workshops for faculty and staff about living a sustainable life at home and work
Incorporate sustainability into School of Business
Sustainability certificate for GOLD
Provide research grants for Sustainability Projects (through green fee? Foundation account?)
Awards for GREAT day/Plaque for winners