



Office of the President



TO: President's Commission on Sustainability
Professor Kristi Hannam and Mr. Craig Ross, Co-chairs

FROM: Christopher C. Dahl, President

DATE: January 31, 2012

SUBJECT: Charge to the Sustainability Commission

I am pleased to remind you that, in consultation with the leadership of the Sustainability Task Force, the Cabinet, and the leadership of College Senate, I have designated the Task Force as a presidential commission, on the model of the President's Commission on Diversity and Community, to be known as the President's Commission on Sustainability.

I wish to thank the members of the Commission, both past and present, for their dedicated service, and to welcome new members who have agreed to join in the Commission's work for the coming year. I am most grateful to Professor Kristi Hannam and Mr. Craig Ross, who have so ably co-chaired the Commission for the past two years.

You will be pleased to know that both Professor Hannam and Mr. Ross have agreed to continue as co-chairs for 2011-2012. With their strong leadership, along with the committed service of everyone on the Commission, we can look forward to continuing our progress toward sustainability and responsible stewardship of our planet's resources.

By this memo, I formally accept the reports of the Commission from 2009 and 2010. Some very important initiatives emerged in these reports. I have consulted with the co-chairs on the recommendations in the report, and concur with many of the recommendations or their general intent.

As we continue our work in 2011-2012, I offer the following charge to the Commission. I offer you the opportunity to decide how you will accomplish this work. I recommend that you continue the good work of the Commission in the following areas:

Statement on Sustainability: The College's Statement on Diversity has been a very successful policy tool to which we regularly refer. It is printed on the back of our widely-distributed Mission, Values, and Goals pamphlet. I charge the Commission with creating a thoughtful and complete Statement on Sustainability to be shared with the campus community and to assist us in policy-making.

Sustainability Web Site: I commend the Commission's work on the sustainability web page and encourage the Commission to continue the education and outreach that stems from an attractive, readable, and informative site.

United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) for Higher Education Institutions: I charge the Commission with developing a Communication on Progress, in collaboration with Provost Long and with Professor Jassawalla of the School of Business, that demonstrates Geneseo's commitment to the UN Global Compact. The UN Global Compact has identified ten universal principles of human rights and sustainability. Institutions that participate in UNGC commit to implementing and promoting these principles. The Communication on Progress describes actions that Geneseo has taken or plans to take to implement the UNGC principles. Further, the report describes the measures that are used or will be used to assess outcomes of the implementation plan. The Communication on Progress – which is updated regularly -- is designed to convey this information to the College's stakeholders, as well as contributing to UNGC's database. There is a conference in Rio de Janeiro in June of 2012 to which we might submit our Communication on Progress as a pilot program for other higher education institutions to use as a model. The Provost and I are willing to send a small team to the conference to make this presentation.

Climate Impact & Monitoring Subcommittee: I commend the subcommittee members for their diligent work in drafting the January 2010 Climate Action Plan, as required by the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC). The subcommittee should continue its work on the Climate Action Plan progress report that is expected early in 2012.

The subcommittee should continue its work in helping the College comply with the ACUPCC.

Facilities and Operations Subcommittee: I commend the Commission's work that led to the adoption of the "Carry in Carry out" policy in all classrooms.

The subcommittee should collaborate with Vice President Milroy and Assistant Vice President Stooks, or their designee, to explore the feasibility of a pilot test of LED lighting in an area of campus. I understand, as one sample area, LED lighting was installed in front of Merritt Athletic Center. This collaboration should take into account – in addition to carbon footprint considerations -- the fact that LED lighting design is still evolving; cost effectiveness (including labor costs) in the face of continued budget constraints; and safety concerns which necessitate a suitably lit campus.

Academics and Co-curricular Subcommittee: I commend Commission members for offering a professional development workshop through the Teaching and Learning Center on adding sustainability as a course topic. The sub-committee should consider offering the workshop again or packaging this information in another way that would reach faculty at their desks.

I commend the Commission for submitting a proposal to the Task Force on Curriculum. The subcommittee should continue to explore whether a single course requirement or infusion

throughout the curriculum or a third option is the best model for increasing student knowledge about sustainability. There may be a body of literature available to assist in this exploration. As proposed in the 2009-10 annual report, I recommend that the more recently conducted faculty survey be mined for data that might be used to support future recommendations.

Programming and Community Engagement Subcommittee: The Commission should continue its good work in support of Live Green Expo and Earth Day/Earth Week.

I encourage the Commission to support annual Residence Hall Energy Saving Contests, sponsored by students in GEO.

I support the continued participation by Geneseo faculty and staff in the Finger Lakes Project Conference. In addition to adding a sustainability assignment to their courses or programs, the members who attend should make these assignments available on the Commission web site.

The Commission should collaborate with the Director of College Union and Activities to include a recycling component or other sustainability content into Weeks of Welcome.

I am taking many of the other recommendations by the Task Force under advisement. Many of these ideas are important issues to address and I will consult with Cabinet and other appropriate advisors in order to move, where possible, from recommendation to implementation over the coming year.

1. Limit or eliminate individual refrigerators
2. All College travel should include the purchase of carbon offset credits
3. Increase the proportion of natural (unmowed) areas on campus; have a policy that over 10% of campus land holding will remain natural
4. Establish a Student Green Fee to fund sustainability initiatives on campus
5. All new construction and renovations should be constructed to LEED platinum standards
6. Have a policy to call on all members of the college community to reduce their carbon footprint
7. Eliminate water bottles in Admissions
8. Put a Green Button on the Geneseo web page

I look forward to working with you in the coming year as we continue to reduce our carbon footprint and communicate our commitment to sustainability to the entire College community and beyond. The annual reports contained sound and helpful recommendations, and I thank the co-chairs and subcommittee chairs, in particular, for their dedicated and thoughtful work.

My Executive Assistant, Becky Glass, will serve as my liaison to the Commission on Sustainability. In addition, by virtue of the task at hand, Vice President Jim Milroy will continue to work closely with the Commission. Thank you again for your involvement in this important work.

Cc: Cabinet