

Notes from 2nd Environmental Caucus Meeting
November 3, 2008 -- ARD Large Pod Room

Agenda.

- I. Introductions
- II. Environmental Caucus Survey Results
- III. Discussion on Roles and Initiatives
- IV. Website Progress
- V. Announcements

I. Introductions. Comments from first time participants on what they'd like the caucus to achieve --

- Increase support for collaborative work at the university
- Gain a higher profile for NAU's environmental and sustainability programs
- Forum to learn about sustainability at NAU as it relates to NAU bookstore, and bring ideas and successes from other colleges from environmentally progressive universities where Follett has stores

II. Environmental Caucus Survey Results. As of 10/31/08, 59 surveys had been returned. (Results can be found in a pdf file attached to the e-mail sent with notes from the November meeting).

III. Discussion on Roles and Initiatives

- Connect website with all existing environmental websites, as a resource not a replacement
- Develop an identity for NAU in environment/sustainability, through curricular depth and through research initiatives with relevance to state (Arizona)
- Departments and individuals are in motion towards great environmental action but there is not sufficient, coordinated PR to represent the efforts on a grander scale
- Environmental Caucus can be a recruitment tool for students
- Ponderosa group- to be determined what role they will play and how it will fit with Caucus, there has been discussion about reactivating the Ponderosa Group

Additional Suggestions relating to roles:

- Speed dating model for collaboration, works to get useful information communicated in an efficient manner, better than just standard 'wine and cheese' because it gets people talking to new individuals
- 'Green Drinks' at the Green Room, a collaborative social gathering (formerly Mogollon Brewery). Once a month with a different host each time, Environmental Caucus could host one month
- Website to post ideas to be worked on by larger group, blog or clearing house, and individuals post what they are working on in an effort to attract new collaborators.
- Blog-a-day for informal connecting
- Monitoring campus operations. (Office of Campus Sustainability working on building efficiency and energy use audit/assessment, but buildings are not wired for individual assessment.
- Coordinate Masters of Arts in Sustainable Communities (MASC) students with active group involvement with students and community. Ecohouse and MASC students working together

- An Environmental semester where students are immersed in a cross disciplinary environmental study of local issues (could model after Grand Canyon Semester)
- Natural role_ become an authoritative voice to advocate for NAU, its departments and individuals along with identity; try to define the caucus through the action of projects
- Caucus can advocate for 'political will' -- we need to add a 'vener' to the sustainability/environmental actions that are already happening. We have depth in projects, people and knowledge, but shallow in PR and getting the word of what people are doing out into the greater community.
- Opportunities for partnerships could be enhanced through Caucus_, e.g. EMA's work with Grand Canyon National Park and opportunities that are building for 2009.

Goals of next 1-6 months

- Caucus to become a contact point/voice with external partners – website/p.r., etc.
- Promote informal connections between individuals – hold a social event, possible in December.
- Unanimous decision to request formal representation on President's Cabinet
 - Laura Huenneke_ represents research and scholarly outreach
 - Rich Bowen _ represents economic development
 - Need a person to represent academic face (faculty member)
 - Shelley Silbert to compose letter from Caucus stating need for Caucus representation
 - Those interested in serving as a representative should contact Shelley
- Faculty Senate – Caucus involvement could make Faculty/Senate an active body to advocate for environment
- Strategically plan budget cuts so sustainability and interdisciplinary programs surrounding environmental issues are not lost, look for ways to increase efficiency and cut costs and environmental impacts.
- Three elements of connection, Caucus needs to represent all three not just one in isolation:
 - Academic, Operations, External Partnerships
- Umbrella and clear first point of entry into unity, be acquainted with each others work
- A Caucus or NAU Environment website is not sufficient for PR, we need to get people used to visiting the site regularly, not just once.
- 'Navigating the Green Road' as a point to jump from
- Initiatives_ outside partners visibility Conference to showcase all that NAU has to offer
- Internal groups of interest (don't call it a committee, but that's the idea), small groups that self-select for interest that do small or great actions, the people working on these initiatives have a specific desire to see them take off. Entrepreneurial agenda. Shelley will create a list of potential

action teams/initiatives and ask the Caucus to sign up for the one that interests them. Action team meetings will be held at the December caucus meeting.

IV. Website Progress – Patrick McDonald (Bilby) has been supporting Caucus work by developing mock-ups of potential websites. Group provided initial feedback, and Patrick will modify these mock-ups based on feedback and then share again with the group.

Environmental Caucus Home Page

NAU Environment Gateway Page

- Links to individual Blogs or Q&A under ‘Contact us’
- Interdisciplinary research connection
 - Encourage posting research information to become part of culture
 - Use social network model (e.g. Santa Fe Institute) to find people who could benefit from know your research goals.
- Not static, but will need to determine who will do upkeep on different parts
- Student involvement – possible journalism student opportunity to expand articles from Inside NAU on environmental subjects
- Gear to audience, customize through navigation with tabs delineated to demographics
- Hold focus groups of high school students to assess usability of page

V. Announcements

Eco-Pass is now available. Send out more information via e-mail.

Tom Sisk’s Environmental Science and Policy grad students have developed Recommendations for the Next Federal Administration on Western Landscape Conservation. Send more information via e-mail.

EMA silent auction at the Green Room, Nov. 6 at 5:30 pm. Support the San Juan River program! Contact Karan English for more information.

Present at meeting: Laura Huenneke, Rod Parnell, Richard Baron, Kristen Bullard, Ron Hubert, Karan English, Patrick McDonald, Laura Cagney, Deja Walker, Tom Rogers, Mark Aasmunstad, Mehrdad Khatibi, Shawn Newell, Ann Huffman, Derrick Widmark, Romand Coles, Rich Bowen, Tom Sisk, Tamara Ramirez, Jeff Downard, Bruce Hungate, Darrell Kaufman, Scott Anderson, Erik Nielsen, Kathy Bryant, Janine Schipper, Tree Spang, John Grahame, Octaviana Trujillo, Paul Beier, Zach Smith, Shelley Silbert.