

Environmental Caucus Meeting
Monday, March 02, 2009, noon-1:30 pm
ARD Large Pod.

I. Introductions.

Present: Jan Kerata, John Grahame, Marianne Davis, Lindsay Wagner, Karla Brewster, Judy Springer, Blase Scarnati, Matt Kern, Karin Wadsack, Jane Marks, Bruce Hungate, Richard Baron, Betsy Goodman, Rich Bowen, Bridget Bero, Deja Walker, Ann Huffman, Casey Fisher, Laura Cagney, Kristen Bullard, Sally Evans, Abe Springer, Rom Coles, Mehrdad Khatibi, Holly Troy, Rod Parnell, Yeon-Su Kim, Shelley Silbert

Guests: Robert Chavez, Paul Capps, David Hook

II. Recycling Recommendations. Shelley introduced the topic --The ACUP Climate Commitment action team has developed recycling recommendations, together with the Office of Sustainability. Our goal is to work with Capital Assets to assist in promoting more effective recycling on campus. The Caucus, with its membership across many departments on campus, could play an important role in helping to make recycling work. We are mindful of the budget cuts and the difficult job facing custodial services, and believe that a more effective recycling program can help to reduce costs without adding an extra burden on custodial staff.

Capital Assets representatives Robert Chavez, Director of Environmental Health and Safety, and Paul Capps, Manager of Custodial Services, were invited to discuss their thoughts on the recommendations

Robert said they feel ignored by the EC's exploration and development of recommendations, yet hope to reconcile through this meeting. Why do we need to change the program? Any failures in the recycling program are due to lack of education and understaffing. Don't see the need for two cans in academic/admin areas (minimal contamination). Need more effort in the res halls and dining (most food contamination). Waste audits reflect this. Common food waste containers for academic/admin areas should continue. They do not clean res hall rooms and do not enter those areas – students are responsible for emptying. Good news: Sky Dome will have increased recycling effort (plastic/aluminum). The lack of outreach and consistent messages about procedures in the academic/admin areas has caused increased contamination.

Response from Caucus participants:

- Any bag that contains wet waste is not sorted and goes to the landfill. Several noted that they separate garbage from recycling in their office, but food waste containers are dumped by custodial into the rest of the trash (recyclables) – contaminating everything.
- We need to look at ways to reduce the amount of waste. The processing center has to work very fast. They want to recycle and even make more money that way; however, the market for recyclables is not strong right now.
- Bags of contaminants need to be separated and tied off – if wet waste remains

separate it is removed at the processing center. Food waste in centralized areas is removed daily for sanitary reasons.

- How can the EC help? Identify ways to support and/or make things easier for Capital Assets. Recycling is subject to social norms – education! Clear identification of what can and cannot be recycled – detailed (maybe with photos and descriptions on a web site).
- We can't change anything that we are doing without outreach - consistent messages, increased visibility, and describe what people can expect.
- Revise the recommendations? Offices and classrooms – recycling only. Common areas need both. Revising the method of gathering is crucial.
 - Residence rooms - signs on the cans can be placed in rooms for garbage and for recycling.
 - Common areas in academic buildings - the same.
 - Offices – needs further discussion.

Consensus on the first two, discussion on academic and office buildings will be taken up again by the action team, who will meet with Capital Assets and try to work out consistent messaging. Volunteers and marketing department will be ready to work with outreach when a clear message is agreed upon.

- Additional notes.
 - Earth day as a timeline for increasing the education
 - See how the Sky Dome goes, then apply approach to the dining halls.
 - Consistent and clear messages – must be unified for the whole university. Confusing if it is different for different locations.
 - Eliminate confusion!!
 - City recycling flyer could be modified for campus.
 - How do the bags play into the issue?
 - Student EC – has 15 volunteers already who are ready to be helpful and are passionate about this issue.

Campus Master Planning. Presentation by David Hook, Project Manager in Planning and Development at Capital Assets.

- See the power point that David Hook shared for details. Available at: https://www4.nau.edu/cas/Plan-Dev/NAU_MasterPlan.html. The power point provides information and a link to more information on the plan. Comments can be submitted via web.
- Spine alignment – dedicated bus-only route.
- Parking on campus. The plan continues to remove parking from interior and relocate it to garages on the exterior of campus. Green spaces on campus to be increased

David invited a representative from the Caucus to attend a campus planning workshop on March 25, 1-5 pm and March 26, 8 am – 2 pm, meeting location to be decided. No volunteers at meeting -- If interested, contact Shelley.

Caucus Meeting Times: Consensus on a regular time each month: Mondays, noon – 1:30, ARD Large Pod. Next meeting April 6th. Same time and place.

Student Environmental Caucus Update – Deja Walker: The group has met twice and is focusing on campus student groups, recycling, student orientation.

Announcements:

- Visible NAU Energy Challenge – program is being launched. Details will follow soon.
- Energy audits – Lindsay Wagner mentioned new developments and volunteered to present information at the April Caucus meeting.

Postponed to Next Meeting:

- Discussion on EC Steering Committee Recommendation to Endorse the Global Learning Subcommittee's Recommendations
- Campus Collaboration on Energy – Rich Bowen
- Caucus business: Environmental Caucus Mission, Operating Principles and Strategic Plan; Environment Website Update – Design and Content Ideas

Action Team Break-out groups met for a reduced time due to the length of the first discussion. Each group is to choose a team leader to report on action to Shelley each month.

Thanks to Kristen Bullard for taking notes at the meeting.