

## **Environmental Caucus Meeting Notes**

Monday, May 4, 2009

ARD Large Pod Room

Present: Ann Huffman, Kathy Maloney, Tom Rogers, Lindsay Wagner, Judy Springer, Jacqueline Vaughn, Marcus Ford, Richard Baron, Cindy Anderson, Sandra Lahtinen, Jim Allen, Heather Farley, Casey Fisher, Kristen Bullard, Abe Springer, Carolyn O'Hara, Emily Champie, Jane Stewart, Shelley Silbert

### **For your Calendars**

The Environmental Caucus will meet at noon on Monday, June 1st and Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> in the ARD Large Pod. We will not have a regular monthly meeting in July.

### **I. Introductions & Announcements**

Richard Baron:

- ARD is the first building in a trial to separate recyclables and garbage in common areas, using recycling/trash stickers on public and office trash cans. The trial has gone well, and the custodial staff has not experienced any problems with it. The Office of Sustainability is looking for the next building to convert to this system. Please contact Richard if interested in adding your building.
- Blue cubes have also been introduced to save water in urinals. The first trial went well, looking for others buildings that would like to try this approach in standard urinals.

### **II. Green fee: presentations and survey.**

Students from Campus Climate Challenge (Emily Champie, Jane Stewart and Carolyn O-Hara) presented a powerpoint to summarize the results of student survey carried out on a possible "Green Fee" at NAU.

Highlights: list of other universities that have a green fee, reasons why NAU should implement such a fee, student survey results (70% of students surveyed support a green fee, more than 750 responses). Details of survey can be obtained through the students). A meeting is scheduled with President Haeger on May 6 to seek support, and students will then begin working to create a charter and process for such a fee (including a student-dominated committee that would determine how to use revenues from the fee).

Discussion: No other AZ universities have a Green Fee. Could make the fee voluntary for a trial year, to eliminate any concerns from those who don't want to pay. Questions were asked about how the survey was conducted (wording, collection methods, neutrality, etc.). Respondent demographics: included 65 majors, all colleges, all classes, including graduate students. Email invitations to take the survey were sent to the entire student body, deans e-mailed survey to their colleges, messages posted through Facebook, and table set-up in the Union with ability to take it there. Verified student status and no duplicates were allowed (rejected 15 respondents). As a comparison: 1500 vote in student body elections. Some suggestions were made about strengthening the presentation in preparation for meeting with President Haeger. The Caucus asked to be kept informed of progress and students should let the Caucus know how our support could be helpful.

**Stimulus Money Projects:** a discussion on Stimulus Funding for environmental concerns.

L. Huenneke: not all the opportunities are known and available yet. So far, areas of EC interest include facilities renovations, advanced research projects, energy programs. NSF has not released all calls.

J. Allen: funding received

L. Wagner (capital assets): Boiler upgrade project, energy audit

A. Springer: Water initiatives

Is there a need for coordination? VPR's office can help - grant administrators available.

Will the government agencies dip into existing proposals? Some will, some are asking for new ones.

### **NAU's most powerful environmental stories:**

As the Caucus works with VPR, faculty, marketing, public affairs, and others to develop the "Environment Website", we want to identify NAU's most powerful environmental stories. This process is a part of developing and publicizing NAU's environmental identity. S. Silbert facilitated a brainstorming session to come up with ideas that could be fleshed out and developed at a later date. The following areas were listed (with best contact people in parentheses):

- Restoration of Fossil Creek (provided as an example)
- Summer environmental programs (week long camps of staff, students, and youth)  
Forestry, Bio, Env Sci – (Jim Allen)
- Sunnyside weatherization project, as a community/campus project. (Rom Coles and Miguel Vasquez)
- Strong increase in number of undergrads majoring/minoring in environmental sciences and environmental studies. (Jacqueline Vaughn)
- Ponderosa Group – grassroots faculty group to include environmental themes throughout curriculum. Revitalization/reorganization of the group in the works. This group has earned national attention for NAU. (Geoff Chase, Paul Rowland, Sandra Lubarsky, Marcus Ford, Abe Springer, etc.)
- Students involvement in the climate mitigation course and resulting implementation of projects, e.g. yellow bike program. (Heather Farley, Bruce Hungate, Marc Chopin)
- Campus operations and LEED Buildings. ARD (the inspiration and vision, community involvement, lessons learned), Business, Engineering. While campus has grown, energy consumption has stayed the same. Capital Assets has charts...other quantifiable info to share. Cost avoidance. (Richard Baron, Lindsay Wagner)
- NAU's high desert location and what can be learned from other cultures that thrive here, their methods of construction, agriculture, survival, etc. (Tom Rogers)
- High level of success the faculty has in the areas of conservation and environmental science, forestry and forest restoration, conservation biology, etc. World class at a university that is relatively small with little funding. Leadership in ecological restoration, land and resource management issues. Selection for competitive fellowships such as Doris Duke. Might be a way to combine many of these areas into one story. (Laura Huenneke, Tom Sisk, Paul Beier, Wally Covington, Pete Fule, Tom Whitham, etc.)
- Grand Canyon Semester – unique nature of this opportunity (David Schlosberg)
- SSLUG – Students for Sustainable Living and Urban Gardening (Ian Dixon-MacDonald)
- Peace Corps recruitment. International Service efforts – Engineers Without Borders. Active engagement international & community. Volunteering. (Karen Pugliesi)
- Diablo Trust/University partnerships (may fit in another category above)

Please send any other ideas! These will end up on the website and may be selected for other materials, such as for student recruitment. We want to tell our story well.

**Visioning Exercise:** The Environmental Caucus Vision for One and Five Years (Postponed due to lack of time)

**Action teams met the last half hour of the meeting.**

Thank you to Kristen Bullard for taking notes of the meeting.