

Vermont Campus Sustainability Network
August 26, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

- Castleton State College- Cynthia Renninger, Assistant Coordinator of the Green Campus Initiative
- Champlain College- Christina Erickson, Sustainability Coordinator
- Goddard College- Gary Storrs, Director of Capital Projects and Facilities Planning
- Green Mountain College- Amber Garrard, Sustainability Coordinator
- Marlboro College- Pat Cavanaugh, Development Office Manager, Environmental Advisory Committee
- Middlebury College- Jack Byrne, Director of Sustainability Integration; Katie Scott, Sustainability Communications and Outreach Coordinator)
- St. Michael's College- Heather Ellis, Sustainability Coordinator
- University of Vermont- Gioia Thompson, Director of the Office of Sustainability; Mieko Ozeki, Sustainability Projects Coordinator; Anna Mika, Nell Campbell, Tatiana Abatemarco, Graduate Fellows
- Vermont Technical College – Phil Petty, Interim Director Center for Sustainable Practices
- Efficiency Vermont – Richard Donnally, Planning and Development Manger; Chuck Clerici, Territory Specialist; David Adams, Business Development Specialist; Tim Perrin, Business Development Specialist

Collective reporting project:

- Nell Campbell from UVM presented data collected thus far by the Collective Reporting Committee. Collected institution, energy, and water data from UVM, Goddard, St. Michael's and Champlain College.
- Questions in conclusion, what do we want to get out of the collective reporting committee, do we want to formalize, if so, how?
- Discussion: What is the value of making the effort to collect and analyze this data? Seems to be a missing piece in the analysis. What are we going to do with it, what is the purpose? Especially within the context of having so many surveys to fill out and the upcoming rollout of STARS as the final assessment of sustainability on campuses. May have value in strengthening internal conversation about campus work. Need to spend time figuring out the main 'questions'. Would possibly be more helpful with incorporation of dollar costs.
- Conclusion: Committee will continue. Interested members: Jack Byrne, Anna Mika, Heather Ellis, Christina Erickson, Gary Storrs, Richard from Efficiency Vermont, Amber Garrard

Weatherization Committee:

- Phil Petty presented. Had a phone conference in April, concept to develop weatherization workshop for fall in 2 locations possible. Consists of basic energy loss principles (concepts from button up workshop) and applied hands-on work, combined in a meaningful way. Idea: to bring skills/principles back to community, community outreach project by weatherizing campus buildings. Committee was stymied after first conference call. Need to find another person to lead committee.
- Question in conclusion: is this a beneficial project for this organization to work on?
- Discussion: Time and leadership is needed to organize. Not sure if past weatherization programs will continue. There is a program in Pennsylvania, students become energy

ambassadors through training curriculum, do a simple energy audit in community (primarily focus on lighting). A lot of activity in the group, “Powerminders”, may be a good model for VCSN meeting to emulate. What is purpose of the group? Primarily educational, for students and community, give hands-on experience. Project was pre- ERA, money for weatherization in low-income communities. Maybe can make a push for Button-up to happen again? Weatherization agencies could use volunteers to help with backlog, Vermont Campus Compact may be a place for leadership (have a lot of Vistas). Amber has mentioned it to Campus Compact, may be able to aim to accomplish something by next spring?

- Conclusion: Committee will continue. Interested members: Chuck from Efficiency Vermont, Phil Petty, TJ Poor (?), and Eva Sutton (?)

Steve Letendre and James Robinson – Poultney Community Weatherization Initiative report.

- Moving toward integrating energy into curriculum at GMC. Weatherization Initiative is a part of that. Past work: ‘Change a light challenge’, partnered with Efficiency Vermont. Year past wanted to initiate Poultney community energy project. Building on tradition of community energy in VT, aimed towards service learning for students.
- Developed energy assessment – most energy use is from fuel oil. A lot of old buildings in town build prior to advancements in tightening building envelopes. Potential for wind, wind developer is proposing development. In process of working with the community to find leaders to distribute information. Strong potential for improving energy efficiency in existing building stock.
- Start weatherization by: energy audit by BPI certified contractor, identify where conservation potential exists. *Goals:* complete data collection, identify efficiency potential, provide information to homeowners and funding institutions, quantify actual energy savings. Project approach: pre and post- project assessments, two-year data collection to validate engineering estimates, want to have publishable data
- Partners with NeighborWorks of Western Vermont – helps arrange audit, helps with funding, etc.- and Green Mountain College – develop information database on weatherization, recruit eligible homeowners, etc
- Challenges: not all people who would most benefit from work understand the value of it. Can you identify the senior community leaders? Hard to maintain a consistent town-college relationship. Perhaps have college representative on town energy committee. Business model to combine energy monitoring and social networking suggested by Phil Petty.

Efficiency Vermont – Barriers to energy efficiency

- Came to meeting because there isn’t currently a strategy for addressing market needs in campus communities. Colleges and Universities are like small cities. Want to know what we value, to identify barriers. Understand: does Efficiency Vermont have a roll to play with the VCSN network? Primarily work for kWh savings, but also support other efficiency work that may lead to kWh reductions. Vermonters pay surcharge for Efficiency Vermont on electricity bill, therefore organization is charged with returning values to customers in terms of kWh savings.
- Barriers list: UVM: Lack of people to monitor controls, high capital costs and loss of bonding ability, aging infrastructure, continuing rising demand for energy, lack of awareness about energy use, competing priorities makes it hard to get attention. Marlboro – physical location (rural, no real opportunities for energy projects) is big barrier, GMC – meeting obligation of ACUPCC and CAP without sending a lot of money elsewhere, local versus non-local investments. Middlebury – lack of feedback and celebration of success, could use celebration to build

momentum, energy is invisible and therefore hard to make concrete for people – need to make visible somehow, lack of economic fluency in sustainability profession. St. Michael's College – lack of knowledge for people who are trying to propose efficiency work (ie, not having engineering background when talking with operations people). VT Technical College – no pervasive empowering sustainability culture in institution on either at student or faculty/administrative level. The whiteboard list:

- No people to monitor controls
 - High capital costs
 - Bonds no longer available
 - Aging infrastructure
 - Increased demand for energy
 - Lack of awareness regarding energy use
 - Competing priorities
 - Rural/isolated location
 - Lack of feedback, particularly celebrating successes
 - Local community effects vs. distant effects
 - Lack of lifecycle perspective
 - Communication within institution
 - Lack of technical knowledge
 - Lack of economic fluency
 - No culture of sustainability
- Opportunities: Help visualize energy use: Dartmouth Tell-Emotion (polar bear icon, etc), Energy Orbs, etc. Sustainability coordinators act as bridge between administration, operations, and academics. Currently there is a strong focus on payback periods – small projects with a big story can be valuable. Having support of CFO's can make things easier. Case studies of success at different institutions would be useful. The whiteboard list:
 - Carbon offset market
 - Celebrate positive improvements and change agents
 - Visual representation at individual and institutional level
 - SRI, invest in ourselves
 - Emphasize quick payback periods
 - Small projects can equal BIG STORIES
 - Efficiency Vermont: would like to develop capacity to engage college and university communities, help them with the work in progress.

Northeast Campus Sustainability Consortium Conference-

- Gioia Thompson discussed the purpose of the NECSC, a group of affiliated schools supporting sustainability work in Northeast institutions, purpose of the annual meeting is that it is hosted by the 'whole state' rather than individual institutions, meant to help institutions share progress and discuss a number of possible future actions and pathways.
- Presidents Board, discussion by a collection of presidents from state institutions, discussing where their respective institutions are going in regards to sustainability. Speak to specific themes that are also backdrop for the conference as a whole.
- Ideas for presentations and panels:
 - *Tatiana*: panel on use of different student funds – ex: UVM Clean Energy Fund, GMC Student Greening, etc. Show different ways of using student contributions.

- *Jack*: panel on biomass, ecological capacity for biomass supply, climate impact, etc. Put together panel from GMC, Bennington, others? Discuss how Vermont schools have displaced (1,000,000 gallons?) of fuel with wood biomass.
- *Pat*: discussion of fundraising, making connecting with donors is traditionally very paper intensive, how to make transition to electronic without having donors feel as if they are not being attended to personally.
- *Gioia*: people working in sustainability in higher ed are coming in at all places in the spectrum, just starting or working for many years. Might be useful to have 'sustainability 101', collection of case studies, stories, barriers to share with people just coming into the field. ALSO session on greenhouse gas reporting as well as climate registry.
- *Amber*: student panel on food production, hopefully including some of student farmers from GMC. RELATED *Mieko*: working on incorporating discussion about food purchases, Sodexo, etc.
- *Amber*: panel on green jobs and Vermont Campus Compact
- *Tatiana*: need panel on sustainability in academics. Common issues, working with academics as a sustainability coordinator. See it focused on sustainability coordinators, students, people working on facilities – how to work with and influence academics and vice versa. Discussion of faculty trainings, work on infusing sustainability into the curriculum from grassroots.
- *Efficiency Vermont*: could provide some case studies and talking points for work that has been successful at other institutions? Work with Efficiency Vermont provides a unique model in addressing energy efficiency.
- Might be helpful to incorporate information about sustainability background of participants in registration: what are their interests, how long have they been in the field? Something to think about for next conference.

VCSN Website:

- New website, has information on previous minutes, contact information, updates, announcements. Can be found at www.vtgreencampus.org. More could be added about updates and information about each institution. E-mail Tatiana with any information to be added or updated.

Vermont Technical College:

- New development: executive director CSP

Next VCSN meeting:

- January, 2010. Tatiana will circulate inquiries for dates sometime in September, including ideas for themes as well as looking for a host for the next meeting. Hosting entails: helping setup facilities, taking care of facility costs (usually in kind).