

Sustainability Task Force

Meeting Minutes

Date: 15-February-06

Time: 3:00 – 5:00 pm

Place: Sem II – B – 3rd Floor Meeting Room

Main Objectives:

1. Conversation with Craig Ward (Food Service Director)
2. Update on Community Engagement Progress
3. Tony Cortese Visit

Attendees: Nancy Parkes, Steve Trotter, Carolyn Johnson, Claude Mahmood, John Lauer, Kathleen Haskett, Jean MacGregor, John Pumilio, Martha Rosemeyer, Craig Ward (Food Service Director), Todd Kessy (Food Service Office Director).

Topic 1: Synergy Conference – March 1-3

Discussion: The Task Force has a slot on March 3 from 12:45pm – 1:15pm. We are expected to do a presentation. John Pumilio has agreed to present and is welcoming requests or ideas on the presentation content. See www.evergreen.edu/synergy for website introduction.

Topic 2: Food Service Update from Craig Ward and Todd Kessy

Discussion: Aramark is under contract to report how much local, local organic (TESC Organic Farm), & organic food they are purchasing. Local is currently defined as any purchase made within a 150 mile radius of TESC. This may change to “local” being anywhere within the state of Washington. Kelly Battershell (student sustainability intern) has been working regularly with Craig.

- o Craig distributed a Fall Quarter 2005 Roll-Up which indicated that 20% of Aramark purchases (\$86,307 out of \$424,623 total expenditures) were spent on local, local organic, or organic foods. This was an ambition that Craig and Aramark undertook with no stated requirements or established goals (no specific purchase percentages were included in the contract). This is a benchmark that Craig feels can be maintained and he will continue to take advantage of new situations as they appear in order to increase the percentage of sustainable food purchases.
- o Craig also reported on other sustainable efforts including economic, environmental, & social factors.
 - Economic: Craig indicated that his staff earns \$2/hour above average for the same position in Washington State. Aramark also includes a benefits package.

- Environmentally: Aramark was purchasing World Centric Compostable unbleached plates but had to stop because they were not breaking down properly. The sheer quantity and slow breakdown times were overwhelming our organic farm. Since the plates were 15 cents more than normal plates, Aramark reinvested this money into sustainable food purchases.
- Socially: Aramark makes significant purchases from Pura Vida a certified Fair Trade company. Obviously, it is difficult to quantify social expenditures (i.e. from Pura Vida); it is hard to know the details of what the company actually does and their certification is taken at face value.
- Food purchases coupled with other economic, environmental, and social expenditures equaled 56% of Aramark's totals.
- Organic Farm – right now Aramark is contracted to purchase organic farm spices. However, organic farm does not want Aramark to purchase everything from them. They prefer to sell to other vendors as part of their package.
- It is worth recognizing the obvious: that Craig is trying to balance Evergreen's requirements with food purchasing, student concerns, and Aramark's goals from the contract.

Increasing Recognition of Local/Organic Food Purchase:

- Increase signage at Greenery so students know which food items are organic/local.
- John Pumilio & Kelly Battershell will work on a CPJ article.

Increasing Purchase of Local Foods and Increasing Efficiency of Food Program: the attendees brainstormed ideas that might improve opportunities for sustainable food purchases.

- Reducing high cost of organic/local food purchases: an obvious challenge, which Craig pointed out, is the high cost of organic/local foods. Ways to reduce that cost should be explored. Some ideas that were generated are bulleted below:
 - Aramark's participation in the CAB redesign to increase storage facilities and optimize kitchen space. A feasibility or cost/benefit analysis would clarify the possibilities of a canning facility or large dry storage unit which would allow TESC food services to buy up local food when available but which would have high up-front costs.
 - Establishing a local food co-op; Kelly Battershell has been exploring this opportunity.
- Increase efficiency/capacity of composting:
 - Purchase "Sifter" to increase efficiency and time of composting; an expensive up front cost – would it be a wise purchase?
 - Purchase "Shredder" that would increase breakdown rates of compostable paper plates. Would a shredder work on paper plates? Again, expense is an issue – would it be a wise investment? Are there other opportunities/solutions? Martha

Rosemeyer inquired that perhaps a mechanical shredder could be useful in two areas: 1) right now Evergreen is purchasing bark and paying to have our trimmings taken away; 2) to shred compostable plates.

Action: *Steve Trotter looks into feasibility of sifter and shredder purchases.*

- Increase Acreage of Organic Farm – currently it is only 1.3 acres – Craig has offered to purchase whatever the organic farm is willing to sell if the acreage is increased.

Topic 3: Community Engagement

Discussion: the discussion revolved around whether or not we are expected to synthesize our community engagements prior to our March 12th meeting.

- It is recommended that we bring a brief synopsis (perhaps key bullet points) of the important and overriding themes of each community engagement. That is, the faculty engagement team should have a brief overview of the key findings; the student group team should do the same, etc... This process will help us organize our thoughts and make for a more productive March 12.
- With that being said, it is time consuming to digitize our notes and this is encouraged but not required. Typing our notes into electronic format obviously facilitates the management and sharing of the engagements.
- Nancy Parkes is digitizing her faculty engagements.
- John Pumilio is digitizing the workshops and student group engagements. And through working with several evening and weekend students (from Nancy and Bob's class) he will have a final report highlighting the key findings.
- Steve Trotter announced that the staff engagements have been going very well. The staff engagement group has had face-to-face interaction with 206 staff (to date) – that is 44% of entire staff at Evergreen. Of that, 15% (about 40 staff members or 7.5% of entire staff community) will participate in the 3-hour mini-institute that they have scheduled for Feb 23rd.

Topic 4: Tony Cortese's Agenda

Monday - February 27, 2006

- *9-10:30am - Senior Staff*
- *12-1:00pm - Presentation to the Campus Community (need to reserve room):*
 1. open campus lecture covering the importance of higher education in promoting/advancing sustainability.
 2. Tony may also want to cover Evergreen's specific position and opportunities which are specific to Evergreen.
 3. This is also an ideal time to solicit feedback from all participants for inclusion in group engagements.

- **1:30-3pm - Student Groups** – a select group of student coordinators and their members for a session on advancing the practice of sustainability at Evergreen.
- **3:30-5pm – Sustainability Task Force – Need to Reserve Room**
- **7-9pm - Evening Program - open to public: in Nancy's Class (Eco-Hero's & Hope for the Earth) – SEM II A1107**

Final Action Steps:

- **Nancy Parkes:**
 1. informs Tony of itinerary and expectations from each session
 2. makes flyers to distribute
 3. contacts John Dodge(?) writer for The Olympian to invite him to observe Tony's visit and learn about Task Force for a possible later publication.
- **John Pumilio – advertise in CPJ (need to know room#); send invite to student groups via email – need to get room**
- **Claude Mahmood: help with distribution**
- **Kathleen Haskett** – reserves room for 12-1pm open campus lecture and space for 3-5pm Task Force Meeting. Kathleen will e-mail task force with room reservation as soon as she hears back from space-scheduling so we can begin our promotional campaign.

Next Meeting: We will not be meeting next week (Feb 23); next meeting TBA.