Minutes for Sustainability Council Meeting of Sept. 9, 2009

Present: Barbara Brooks, Christov Churchward, Julie Dudrick, Shae Frydenlund, Ian Helfant, Chris Henke, Tim McCay Beth Parks, John Pumilio, Geoffrey Reid, Trish St. Leger

Absent: Paul Fick, Mike Gladle, Michael Michonski, Abby Rowe

I. Helfant briefly summarized the history of the Council for new members. He also noted that Interim President L. Roelofs has approved changing the name from the Environmental Council to the Sustainability Council, which more accurately reflects our evolving mandate. In addition, Roelofs approved a revised Council charge that did not involve significant substantive changes except in the membership roster, which has expanded in the last two years to include representation from the Upstate Institute, Communications and DOC, as well as the Associate Provost and the Sustainability Coordinator. Furthermore, the new charge makes it clear that the Sustainability Council oversees strategic climate action planning, which is necessary in order to meet our institutional requirements under the Presidents' Climate Commitment.

J. Pumilio then presented a summary of some of his major activities and emphases since starting the job in early April, 2009. He noted that he has focused on promoting a culture of sustainability as much as the practice of sustainability, since the former is a necessary precondition of the latter. He has also put a great deal of work into the website. He observed that prior to his arrival we tended to present our work in terms of campus groups rather than themes, and stated that we should be emphasizing themes; he then demonstrated this new approach via the website. John emphasized that he has also provided a framework of sustainability on the site. He highlighted the Sustainability Pledge, which a number of people have taken, and noted that Survey Monkey represents a way of keeping track of such things. He also pointed out the Sustainability Blog, which highlights Sustainability Heroes, and expressed the hope that we could identify additional members of the Colgate community to feature in the blog. He mentioned that recycling signs can now be downloaded in electronic form and printed out necessary.

On Oct. 22, John noted, we will be conducting a national teach-in on campus featuring Colgate's greenest videos. T. O'Keefe has been actively involved in promoting this project, as have R. Nardelli and E. Moore.

The biggest project so far, John continued, has been to conduct a greenhouse gas inventory for Colgate. His summer intern, Ben Taylor, has done an impressive job with this. One of the most problematic aspects has been to get a handle on air travel, which represents a significant portion of our greenhouse gas emissions. B. Brooks suggested that this student-run research might be "Chronicle worthy," as so many institutions are hiring out the research to external partners. At the least, the Colgate Scene might be interested.

John spoke about the green campus initiative, which consists of three main components: a) a Green Office Program; b) a residential life component; c) and green events. Each of these three will have an advisory group, and John has been finding that people are more than willing to step up to the plate.

Among signs of progress:

- we're in the final stages of negotiations with OfficeMax to get 30% recycled paper at the same price as virgin paper
• we're about to convert the Loj (a student residence that has historically focused on environmental themes) to be heated with veggie oil through a local company of which one of the two employees is a Colgate graduate;
• John has been working with ITS head David Gregory to explore the possibility of real-time monitoring of campus buildings for their electricity, steam, and water use; they will be meeting with Lucid Design Group about this;
• we continue to explore ways of facilitating carpooling: John is helping with two classes -- ENST 480, which will be working on the climate action plan, and Catherine Cardelus' Core SP class ("Global Change and You"), which is helping to create a road-map for the plan;
• John has also been reaching out to the local community through groups like the Southern Madison Heritage Trust and the Madison County Planning Committee;
• John has also been asked to sit on the Board of the Upstate Institute.

After the summary, Ian noted that the Sustainability Council is now in a new phase. With the hiring of a Sustainability Coordinator who has the expertise and time we have lacked, we now have to figure out the most appropriate ways in which the Council can continue to facilitate Colgate's evolution into a more sustainable institution. Clearly, overseeing the implementation of the Presidents' Climate Commitment represents a central goal, as does working on the draft Strategic Sustainability Plan that John has submitted for our consideration.

C. Henke emphasized the fact that students are very interested in food, and especially local food as well as the possibility of establishing a community garden in on-campus. We noted that the upcoming vote by the class of 2010 on their class gift could represent an opportunity to fund such a garden or other initiatives, as did the gift of the class of 2008. J. Dudrick noted that there had been a meeting with B & G about siting such a garden.

John stressed that the Council has a unique voice and the ear of the senior administration and Interim President. We are in a good position to get behind well-chosen initiatives and advance sustainability. Ian stressed L. Roelofs commitment to sustainability, noting that he had made it the central focus on his speech at the convocation for incoming students.

S. Frydenlund stressed the importance of the SGA student liaison's role. She noted that Sodexo's George Murray has approved in principle a punch card initiative proposed by students that would give a discount for every 10 drink purchased with reusable containers. We discussed the pricing of these punch cards, and whether it would be possible to accomplish the same thing electronically. Shae asked where she could seek funding if the SGA cannot provide it and mentioned that the price for a specialized card punch would be about $64, and that additional funds would be required for the cards themselves.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30.

Respectfully submitted by SC Chair, Ian Helfant