Sustainability Council
Minutes for 12/9/10 meeting (prepared by Barbara Brooks)

Present: Ian Helfant, Julie Dudrick, Chris Henke, Tim McKay, Trish St. Leger, John Pumilio, Paul Fick, Michael Gladle, Beth Parks, Abby Rowe, Michael Michonski, Christov Churchward, Barbara Brooks

Major business:
- Revision of Colgate’s 3-5 year plan draft
- Presidents’ Climate Commitment deadline 1/14/11

Revision of 3-5 year plan
Ian reviewed the Sustainability Council’s charge, particularly our role to engage in short-term and long-term planning — thereby reminding us that we indeed have authority to issue a document that serves to lead the sustainability effort on campus.

As precedence, Ian recalled the ten-year Forest and Open Lands Stewardship Plan that was created in 2007 by the Council and subsequently approved by President Chopp.

Chris stated that it is clear that the Council has a wide mandate; and therefore, we should not feel restricted in our purview.

Having set the stage for greater authority for the committee, Ian put John’s draft up for consideration again in advance of their upcoming meeting with the President’s Advisory and Planning Committee.

The group spent some time reviewing and providing feedback on the Three-Five Year Plan. Below are some comments to the document:

Overall: Michael G. raised the question of whether the document is intended to be final as published, or whether it will be subject to future revisions. Trish believed that a portion should stay stable (strategic language, objectives, etc.), and that, as needed, supporting documentation can be updated or changed in the future.

Graphics: The group agreed to delete the first graphic and instead describe the 3 Es with narrative. The graphic of the four spheres will serve as the foundation for the plan’s organization, although we felt that the graphic might benefit from being modified (e.g., more than four spheres).
Guiding principles: John designed this section in order to give readers a lens through which to view new sustainability ideas and determine whether they are appropriate. Trish wondered if the guiding principles could be looked at as our “vision” for where Colgate would like to be in 3-5 years. Chris thought we could simplify the principles, or group them (i.e., #1, #2, and #9 are general parameters under which we should operate; the others are specific actions we might commit to taking). Among the guiding principles is the idea that Colgate should invest in socially responsible/sustainable funds/companies. The Council agreed that while we cannot “control” such policies, we should include in the document everything that is important to the Council, so topics are at least on the table for future consideration.

Criteria for evaluating new programs: The group agreed that it’s a good idea to have such criteria; however (as Abby stated) the order (with “impact” near the bottom) seems wrong. Chris thought we should cut the section but use the criteria as we consider which projects ultimately make it into the 3-5 year plan/document. Others agreed.

Structure of the Plan:
After introductory material, there will be four sections: creating a culture of sustainability, campus operations, academics and co-curricular education, and community partnerships. Four groups were formed:

- Creating a Culture of Sustainability: Barbara, John, Michael M., Shae, Christov
- Campus Operations: Paul, Michael G., Beth
- Academics and Co-Curricular Education: Tim, Abby, Jeffrey Reid
- Community Partnerships (bridging the campus and region): Julie, Christov, Trish

While the Council did not resolve issues of overlap — especially in academic and co-curricular education/community partnerships — teams were charged with meeting to talk about the initiatives that John had included in the draft document, and adding or eliminating others. Beth and John both thought each group should look broadly at its assigned list of initiatives because, ultimately, what we are writing is a university-wide 3-5 year plan, not just the “Council’s plan” or “John’s plan.” Before the next meeting, groups will share their drafts with the Council, and also recommend formats that could work for all sections.
ACUPCC deadline
For the remaining 15 minutes, John talked about what we need to do in order to satisfy our commitment to the ACUPCC. By January 15, 2011 we have agreed to:

- Develop an institutional action plan for becoming climate neutral.
- Commit to a target date, as well as planned actions and mechanisms for tracking progress.

John advised that target dates are all over the board. Middlebury’s, for example, is 2016, while other schools may say 2020 or later – as late as 2050.

John outlined a hypothetical/suggested timeline that we could follow. In order to have a plan by January 2011, the Council would begin immediately developing an RFP for a consultant to be on board by March 2010. Ian, John, Paul, and Trish will present this timeline — and the suggestion to hire a consultant — to the President’s Advisory and Planning Committee at next week’s meeting.

John said that this group will need to help with crafting the RFP, and also with evaluating the consultants/firms to do the work.