

**Environmental Affairs Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes – March 6<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Members Present:**

Garen Baghdasarian  
Susan Fila  
Janet Harclerode\*  
Ferris Kawar  
Poliana Raymer

**Members Excused:**

Michelle King  
Alexa Hernandez – Student Representative

1. Call to Order:  
The meeting was called to order at 12:50pm.
2. Public Comments:  
No public comments.
3. Approval of minutes:  
Ferris moved to approve minutes. Janet second the approval.
4. CEUS Updates
  - a. Ferris has joined the Program Review Board and is welcoming ideas to include an environmental component during the review.
  - b. Paperless syllabi feedback:
    - i. Chrystianne Menendez (faculty member) spoke for the Geology department, where the majority of faculty members seemed to favor printed copies. a) This is a physical file that the students can carry with them at all times. b) Students can take relevant notes as instructors go over the syllabus on the first day of class. There is, however, the acknowledgement that this choice generates a lot of paper waste.
    - ii. Garen spoke in favor of a paperless syllabus, which is a method preferred by his students in the last two years. Garen lets his students know that they can make their own free copy at the AS office. He also offers to print a syllabus should a student request one. Students have not yet requested printed copies.
    - iii. Ferris mentioned that students are likely more adept to electronic files than faculty members are.
    - iv. Jen Sharpe (student) brought up the concern that this may work for some instructors but not others, depending on how the syllabus is set up on Canvas. Garen then proposed a Flex Day workshop to train faculty on how to become paperless while equipping students well.
    - v. Susan mentioned that forms at the Wellness Center are starting to become electronic with no major issues.
  - c. Earth Week – April 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>

Activities include a three-hour free farmer's market with compost demo, a sustainability-themed fair with non-profit organizations and eco-companies, the participation of other SMC clubs showing how they can be sustainable, and a movie screening (Sonic Sea).

- d. Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo is offering a "greening workshop" to help faculty include sustainability in their curriculum. Ferris mentioned the possibility of having them replicate this workshop for SMC faculty or have us model their workshop. Alongside the workshop, SMC students have been researching how other universities have been making this change.

#### 5. SMC's Carbon Commitment

- a. Garen proposed working with the city of Santa Monica as it aims to reach carbon and water neutrality (support would potentially include financial, man power, energy).
- b. Francisco suggested that students are the best way to reach Dr. Jeffery in asking her to sign the "We Are Still In" coalition. Poliana then suggested that a task force would be formed to talk to her in person and show that SMC is already well on its way to C neutrality. The task force would involve one student, one staff member and one faculty member to represent the school's multilateral interest in committing itself to C neutrality. A debate was formed in deciding if this task force should meet with Dr. Jeffery or with the Board of Trustees. It was decided that a meeting with Dr. Jeffery would be best.
- c. Francisco mentioned that NRDC has shown interest in working with schools/students through Associated Students.
- d. Poliana asked if we should keep working on a sustainability resolution or if the ACUPCC would suffice. Ferris demonstrated concern of a resolution not moving beyond theory. The committee agreed to set aside the idea of a resolution.
- e. Ferris mentioned that Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo is working together with the Center for Teaching Excellence and suggested we would do the same. Poliana suggested something similar to a Faculty Summer Institute, with potential compensation (grant? funding?) for participating faculty members.
- f. Garen brought up the fact that Dr. Tsang has signed a commitment aiming for carbon neutrality by 2050. Poliana researched on this matter and e-mailed the EAC members and participants on March 9<sup>th</sup>. The content of that e-mail has been annexed to this document.

#### 6. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55pm.

## ANNEX

E-mail sent to EAC members and participants on March 9<sup>th</sup> in relation to SMC's commitment to carbon neutrality:

Dear EAC members and participants,

I am not one to send extensive e-mails, but I will need to open up an exception today. It's taken me a couple of days to understand where we stand in relation to the Climate Commitment we talked about last week, and this e-mail finally summarizes that information. I've included a few important links to help you better understand what's going on, as well as to better prepare ourselves for our next meeting on March 13th.

Here we go...

In 2008, former SMC president, Dr. Tsang, signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. The school has, since then, made a national Carbon Commitment to neutralize greenhouse gas emissions, and to use research and education to equip our community to mitigate climate change. According to our 2015-2016 report, we have reduced our carbon emissions by 72.31% since our baseline year (2008). This means that, if we continue to innovate and to get everyone involved, we are very likely going to reach our carbon neutrality goal before the 2050 deadline. Please see the links below for detailed data on SMC's participation and commitment.

<http://reporting.secondnature.org/institution/data/>

<http://reporting.secondnature.org/institution/detail!541/##541>

After the US Administration announced the intent to withdraw the country from the international Paris Climate Agreement, an organization called Second Nature, along with its Climate Leadership Network, stepped forward with other sector partners to create the We Are Still In (WASI) coalition, a movement to gather and empower local, regional and potentially isolated climate actions across the country, with the intent to give them a voice to say that they still support the Paris Agreement.

Santa Monica College is already part of the ACUPCC, but we have requested that our new president, Dr. Jeffery, would declare our continued commitment to neutralizing greenhouse gas emissions through the WASI coalition (<https://www.wearestillin.com/user/register>). This would not add any additional cost or responsibility to the school; it is only meant to reaffirm our commitment during a time when the US is the only country in the world outside of the Paris Agreement. An initial request was sent in December of 2016, during which time her office responded by saying that she would sign it. There has been no record of her signature as of yet, and a second request was sent in February 2018, this time with no response.

Here are a few things to consider for our next meeting:

- 1) We may or may not want to proceed with the request to sign the WASI declaration, given that the official commitment has already been made (the WASI declaration would only be for the purpose of reaffirming our commitment in support of the Paris Climate Agreement).
  
- 2) The last progress report for ACUPCC covered 2015-2016. We can use this report as our baseline to see what else we would like to do. We may also want to discuss a “divide and conquer” strategy to update this report if/when needed: <http://reporting.secondnature.org/ape/ape-public1397>
  - a. At the end of the progress report the role of the EAC is mentioned. It is interesting to note that the report talks about one of the ACUPCC’s pledges as an EAC accomplishment, which reads “to weave sustainability into new areas of study so students in all fields get exposure” (the pledge reads “Integrating sustainability into the curriculum and making it part of the educational experience.”). We have agreed, in recent meetings, to turn this into a more detailed and tangible plan. I believe we could prioritize this plan in preparation for Earth Week, with informal panel(s) with faculty, staff (and students), followed by a Flex Day workshop next semester. All in all, I think that our Carbon Commitment needs to be “dusted off” and restated to the campus, as I believe most of us are not even aware that we are part of this massive commitment that includes over 600 higher education institutions. I believe that the upcoming Earth Week gives us the optimal opportunity to do that, when we bring everyone (students, faculty and staff alike) to an excited and conscious mindset of reaching, together, carbon neutrality.
  
  - b. We should also note that the city of Santa Monica has its own carbon neutrality plan. There is a potential for us to partner with the city, which would be especially helpful in regards to electricity consumption (shift to renewable energy). The steps towards this partnership is also something we can discuss.