Members present: Joe Bouchard, Tom Curran, Jim Fitzpatrick, David Frassinelli, Antonio Grau Sempere, Arturo Jaras-Watts, Jen Klug, Ophelie Rowe-Allen, Michael Tucker

Members absent: Jim Biardi, David Downie, Terry O’Brien

Marketing and Communications liaison: not present

Visitors: Dana August, Dina Franceschi

1) Announcements:

Arturo Jaras-Watts announced that he is hosting a talk on Nov. 17 at 7 pm in the Gonzaga Auditorium. The director of Sustainable Harvest will give a talk titled “A Garden Variety Solution to Poverty and Deforestation”. The talk carries FYE (Magis) credit. He asked faculty members to encourage their students to attend.

Jen Klug announced that David Frassinelli is the recipient of Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Connecticut Private Owner of the Year" award.

2) Review of past minutes: there are no corrections or additions.

3) Facilities Management update:

David Frassinelli reported that the Fairfield Planning and Zoning committee has granted approval for the Prep expansion. There is no timeline for this project. He said that they’ve had their code review meeting for the Rec Plex expansion and Alumni Field project and plan to go to Planning and Zoning for both projects next spring. Jen Klug asked about the Alumni Field project. She said that the footprint as shown on the rendition of the schematic drawings shows no impact on the forested area between Alumni Field and the townhouses. She asked if the committee would see the plans again to make sure everyone understands what the impact to that forested area will be. David Frassinelli said that we will need to talk more about that area. Currently, it is a safety and security issue. Tom Curran said that there are no plans to remove the forest but that something needs to be done to make it safer. There are concerns about students walking in that area in the dark. Jim Fitzpatrick asked if David Frassinelli expected any concerns from the neighbors. David Frassinelli said they expect that the renovations will result in less noise and light pollution in the area.

4) Reports from each subcommittee:

Student Engagement: Ophelie Rowe-Allen reported that subcommittee has met several times and is making progress. They drafted a mission statement which is: Increase awareness, and spread habits among the student body to minimize Fairfield University’s environmental impact and prepare students for a life in balance with the Earth and its precious resources. Their broad goals are to: change behavior, increase awareness, and reduce impact. They have focused on behaviors that students can change: recycling, energy use, water consumption and everyday living. They discussed the various networks they can use (including ERC, LEAF, FUSA) and ways to advertise (FUSA, the Mirror, WVOF, the Ham Channel). They hope to target new students and will work with residence life to revise the “What to Bring List” and move-out protocols to make sure things are unplugged. Arturo Jaras-Watts asked if the subcommittee had considered asking students to sign a sustainability pledge. Tom Curran asked if they had plans to target students living off-campus. Ophelie Rowe-Allen said they had not at this point.
Energy: Dina Franceschi reported that they will have a draft soon for the entire committee to review. David Frassinelli gave one example of ways they are currently working to reduce energy by changing the set range in buildings where possible. Currently, the set range is 68-73 and it will be changed to 68-70. They are also doing night setbacks where possible. Dina Franceschi said that the subcommittee would like to change its name to “Utilities” to better reflect what they cover (e.g., not just energy but also water conservation). Michael Tucker asked whether they’d done any studies of motion sensors on lights. David Frassinelli said they have looked at them for low traffic areas. Arturo Jaras-Watts asked about the library lights. He said that students see the lights on and are frustrated. What should he tell concerned students? David Frassinelli said that they are currently working on ways to better automate the library lights. There are some issues with emergency lighting that make it hard to turn lights off. He said he would be happy to meet with interested students to discuss the issue. The issue of leaf blowing was raised. There is a perception among some members of the University community that they are a waste of energy. Arturo Jaras-Watts asked if the students could rake a portion of campus (e.g., the Quad). David Frassinelli said that there are a number of projects like leaf raking that could be done if someone takes ownership. That person has to follow-through to make sure that the jobs get done and equipment returned. There are lots of good ideas but not enough people to make them happen.

Finance: Michael Tucker asked for clarification on the subcommittee’s role. David Frassinelli said that there are several aspects of finance that we are interested in. 1) Some sustainability projects need funding to move forward. Many of the current initiatives are funded through the Facilities Management budget. What are other sources of funding we should look at? 2) The subcommittee should also think about how the University’s finances relate to sustainability. We are frequently graded down on sustainability surveys because of the lack of transparency in our practices. There was discussion of the endowment and questions about where it was invested and whether proxies were voted etc. Michael Tucker explained the Fairfield University Investment Group which he advises. He is working to get a separate $100,000 for students to invest in socially responsible companies. He said that Arturo Jaras-Watts is also currently working on a proposal for the microfinancing of projects, some of which may be related to sustainability. Jim Fitzpatrick suggested we find a small amount of money (~$5,000 or more) for sustainability project seed money. Students could write proposals for projects and receive grant money to carry them out. There was general agreement that this is a good idea and developing such a program could be one of the goals for the Finance subcommittee. Dina Franceschi then explained that the Finance subcommittee is responsible for writing a draft using the CSP template provided. The draft would be reviewed by the committee as a whole. Jen Klug said that there are examples of CSP’s from other institutions in the shared Xythos folder.

Waste Management: Dana August reported that the data from the transition to single-stream recycling is not in yet but they are not expecting to see a big increase in recycling. Members of the waste management subcommittee met with custodial staff to get their feedback. It appears that contamination is not the issue but that people just aren’t recycling. Dina Franceschi said that in some ways this is positive because contamination was a big concern at the outset. There was discussion about the use of plastic bags. Anything in a black plastic bag found in the recycling bin is considered contamination and is thrown out. David Frassinelli said that clear plastic bags are the standard. Dana August said that black plastic bags are no longer purchased but that the stock on hand is being used. Dana August said that the trash audit last week found that 50% of the trash dumpster they analyzed was recyclable.

Academics: David Downie reported via email that he is working on a draft which he will share with the committee in December.

Operations: Jim Fitzpatrick said that he is working with Coke and a vending company to install smart vending machines by next September. These machines turn down the lights and temperature if they haven’t been used for a set period of time. He is also working with Sodexo to get more local products on campus but there are challenges related to large contracts within the Sodexo system. He also reported on the Catholic Climate Covenant. He said that only 2 schools have signed on at this point and suggested we wait and see what happens before we sign on.
Land and Water Management (formerly known as Landscaping): Jen Klug reported that the subcommittee has met. They decided to change their name to better reflect their purview. They discussed the Alumni Field project as well as a LEAF tree planting initiative. David Frassinelli reported that the Phase 2 landscaping plan will be greatly simplified and much less invasive. In particular, the apple trees and other mature trees will not be affected.

5) New business - potential signage of notable “green” features - Tabled until next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30.

Next meeting: Wed. Dec. 14 at 1 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jen Klug