

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION
FACULTY AND STAFF ASSOCIATES GATHERING
HYATT REGENCY AT COCONUT POINT

FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 2007 MEETING MINUTES

Center Staff Present: Peter Blaze Corcoran, Jim Wohlpart, Guillaume Evellin, Jessica Solimano, Jeannine Windsor, Joseph Weakland

I. Welcome, Vision, and Mission

Purpose and plan for the afternoon

1. Peter Blaze Corcoran offers greetings and introduces the Center. He explains funding and points to the importance of student assistants to the work of the Center.
2. Peter Blaze introduces Center Co-Chairs David Orr and Mary Evelyn Tucker. Peter reads the Center Preamble, and discusses the higher education as the “pivot point” in moving society in the direction of sustainability.
3. The 2007 Faculty and Staff Associates Activity Report is introduced. Peter Blaze discusses past meetings and collaborations with specific faculty associates, pointing toward future opportunities. There are two purposes to the day: to invite faculty to participate in Center activities, and to introduce the faculty to the Center itself. The Center also seeks to support faculty and staff interest in environment and sustainability.

II. Opening inspirational readings

1. Jim Wohlpart reads from the great theologian Thomas Berry’s book, “The Great Work”; he sees Berry’s call to ethical responsibility as a philosophical framework for the Center and for FGCU

III. Brief self-introductions

Kathleen Crawford, Auxiliary Services

Mary Walch, Communication and Rhetoric

Gerry Segal, College of Business; grows organic vegetables, interesting in introducing sustainability into the Business curriculum

Randall Cross, Associate Professor and Coordinator, Biological Sciences

Robert Erdman, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences

Nora Demers, Associate Professor, College of Arts and Sciences

Mary Voytek, Art Department; teaches sculpture and works with student artists whose work is informed by environmental issues

Maggie Cavin, Communication and Rhetoric

Jesse Millner, English department; creative writing and working with Jim to revise the Composition course to include a dimension about sustainability
Kathy Hale, Professor, Department of Communication and Philosophy
Patricia Fay, Art Department; interested in human sustainability and developing a course on Earth-based spirituality

IV. Formalizing faculty involvement in the Center, including current Center-related activities and future participation

1. Jim Wohlpart and Peter Blaze introduce the Faculty Involvement Worksheet, asking associates to write down their interests and contributions that relate to Center goals. They explain how this work can enter into Professional Development Plans.

V. Report on Center accomplishments by Goal

1. Peter Blaze presents “The Earth Charter in Action: Toward a Sustainable World”, and comments on the Center’s scholarly work as a segue into the Report on Center accomplishments. He believes it is important to see examples of the Earth Charter being put to use; it is an ethical model for sustainable development, not just a philosophical document. Peter also mentions student publications by Joseph Weakland and Brandon Hollingshead.
2. Student Assistant Jessica Solimano discusses signature events such as the Terry Tempest Williams Student Dialogue and Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture. The Center had its first Student Dialogue in 2005, focusing on the plight of workers in Immokalee. In 2006, the Center built on this theme, inviting students to consider the ethical implications of their food choices. Our 2007 Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture featured Latin American author and poet Homero Aridjis.
3. Associate Director Jim Wohlpart discusses Goal III. At the Earth Charter +5 Conference in the Netherlands, he and Center graduate assistant Donna Roberts led a discussion group on the Earth Charter in higher education. The Center has also organized faculty associates gatherings with David Orr, Mary Evelyn Tucker, and Alison Hawthorne Deming over the last three years.
4. Student Assistant Joseph Weakland discusses the Center’s collaboration with Center for Respect of Life and Environment on the topic of the intersecting elements related to food systems: environmental degradation, climate change, animal rights. He mentions some specific initiatives including FGCU’s move towards cage-free eggs. Student assistant Guillaume Evellin discusses research done regarding our food procurement system, including environmental sustainability issues and labor practices. Student intern Jeannine Windsor discusses her research on humane and sustainable alternatives to what is now being done at FGCU. She also mentions the creation of a database of local producers, in order to create a guide for humane and sustainable eating.

5. Peter Blaze discusses Dean Henry's involvement with the Center and support of the Earth Charter Initiative. He also mentions the Center's collaboration with other organizations, such as People United for the Restoration of Rivers and Estuaries, Green Cross International and the Russian National Junior Water Prize Winner.

Peter Blaze transitions into lunch.

Before afternoon session, Peter Blaze welcomes late-comers and acknowledges Ingrid Martinez-Rico's participation and collaboration with the Center.

VI. Curriculum

1. Jim discusses a project for the selection of essays for Composition I that relate to ecological perspective and sustainability. These essays might eventually be included in the Composition I textbook, "Purpose and Process". Jesse Millner discusses the importance of this initiative starting in Composition. The idea is to introduce some of the essays to freshmen in their first semesters at FGCU and incorporate the remaining essays into other facets of the curriculum until it is integrated throughout the university curriculum. The Center and the College of Arts and Sciences will provide honoraria for involved faculty. Peter Blaze mentions that faculty who contribute to this project can include those related activities in their respective PDPs. Nora Demers suggests that "The Tragedy of the Commons" be included in this curriculum. It is agreed that this, along with the Earth Charter, could work as a framework for sustainability.
2. Peter Blaze moves the discussion onto the University Colloquium. The Earth Charter is now required reading for all graduating FGCU students. Methodologies and pedagogies for teaching the Earth Charter are taking shape; these include lesson plans and philosophical texts. Nora Demers mentions students exposed to the Earth Charter are skeptical of the University's commitment to sustainability.
3. Peter Blaze mentions as "In Service" for teaching the University Colloquium. This summer, Nora Demers and a few other faculty are going to a work-shop on community based participatory research. This will help to create linkages between service learning and the University's Environmental Stewardship Management Plan. Student projects could focus on the campus itself – linking students to the environmental mission of FGCU.
4. Faculty and Staff Associates express their frustration at the University's failure to emphasize basic recycling practices – this is "miseducative" for students taking the Colloquium. Action is needed to move the administration to take these issues seriously.

5. President Pegnetter has signed the Presidents Climate Commitment. This may be an important opportunity to press on sustainability issues from the presidential level. The Center plans to support the University President in this initiative. In the short term, the Center can help the President prepare for the first major meeting of the Climate Commitment.
6. The Center has an important educative role in teaching the importance of recycling on campus and in the community. Peter Blaze believes the University must work to achieve basic elements of its environmental mission; this will eliminate the experiential ambiguities students have when taking colloquium.
7. Peter Blaze mentions the sustainability work of UF as a potential model for FGCU.

Environmental Literature

1. Jim introduces environmental literature, which uses the Earth Charter as a way to examine environmental ethics, and helps students develop their own ethics of sustainability. A service dimension to the course ensures students are able to enact this learned ethic in a practical way. For many students, the course is a life changing experience – it provides a space for students to reflect on their lives and their relationship with the natural world.
2. Jim acknowledges team taught courses are not as practical given the increasing student population. However, he feels the College could sustain 3-5 team taught courses consisting of about 30 students per year; two professors can provide a cross-disciplinary perspective. Jim suggested that a proposal come from faculty with a philosophy and justification for team taught courses, along with a process for selecting which courses will go forward in a given semester. This proposal should have input from the wider college.
3. Peter Blaze points to the success of Environmental Literature in demonstrating the usefulness of the Earth Charter as a template for looking at literature, and a framework for students developing their own ethics. The Center would like to support team teaching, cross disciplinary teaching, and the provide resources explaining the pedagogical functionality of the Earth Charter.
4. Jim introduces the idea of a Liberal Studies major that would integrate the concepts of sustainability and the Earth Charter. Nora expresses her concern that the Earth Charter may be viewed as a “moniker” and may not work. She is cautious to hang the Liberal Studies degree on it, without knowing if it will work. Tricia Fay also agrees with Nora’s comments and is concerned about any “knee-jerk” reactions related to EC and the risk of having it immediately written off by many. It is viewed too much as a political platform, rather than an educational framework. Jim validates this point and indicates that the difference is in how it

is used. Peter Blaze discusses organizations and universities that have endorsed the Earth Charter and how this discussion brings up many conversations regarding values and education. The question: Is the Earth Charter a valuable principle in developing a Liberal Studies degree program?

5. Jim and Peter Blaze discuss Jack Crocker's role with the Center, especially during Peter Blaze's sabbatical during the Fall 2007 term. Jack will be assisting with the Green Building and the Food Systems work. Gerry mentions that the College of Business might, for the most part, be against the Earth Charter as a basis for the Liberal Studies program. He experiences much resistance in the Business program and believes that sustainability would be a much easier sale in Business, as compared to the Earth Charter.

Faculty and Staff Associates Discussion

1. Faculty are interested in a monthly work shop or space on campus where the dialogue between faculty and the Center could continue.

VII. University-wide Initiatives

1. Center staff does a call for faculty collaboration and participation in fall 2007's Terry Tempest Williams Student Dialogue. The Center agrees to share the topic of the TTWSD as soon as it is pinned down. The goal is to have the issues related to the Dialogue implemented into the fall classes of the Associates. Center will send out a Faculty Associates-wide email by the end of this term.
2. Peter Blaze discusses the 2008 Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture, which will be different, due to his time away in the months leading up to the event. The idea of the Earth Charter and Earth Charter education is the preliminary idea for next year's event. The Center would like to host Earth Charter scholars for a meeting to coincide with the Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture weekend. Vice President Shepard and CRLE will continue to provide financial support. Possibilities for participants include Brendan Mackey, Steven Rockefeller, and Mirian Vilela. Tricia Fay suggests including a hoop dancer with these events! Peter Blaze expresses that the concept is to allow faculty and students to share with these scholars. It is agreed that this event should result in a "university conversation" facilitated by small groups, in which faculty, staff, students, and the community come together and are given the opportunity to express their opinions on a given topic. The thought is that this "university conversation" should tie in to the activities and ideas that the University President could be interested in, such as the Environmental Stewardship Management Plan, The Climate Commitment, or anything else that would encourage the advancement of FGCU's environmental mission.

3. Larry Byrnes suggests that FGCU should encourage students to be critical thinkers and that the critical analysis of the Earth Charter should be part of the institution; there should be an opportunity for those who are critical of parts of the Earth Charter to take part in the conversation. Peter Blaze asks that if any faculty would be interested in working with that group of scholars, to please include that in their faculty involvement form. Tricia Fay asks about the possibility of FGCU endorsing the Earth Charter. Peter Blaze says that the conversation has never been brought up.
4. Joe Weakland discusses current and future projects related the “sustainable food system”. He mentions working on the draft guide to eating and living sustainably with the Earth Charter at FGCU. He quotes David Orr by saying that we expend 14 calories of energy for every 1 calorie of food that is placed on our tables. Nora Demers mentions that the International Standards Organization 14000 should have some historical documents that could be of use.
5. Ingrid begins discussion about FGCU’s search for a new president by questioning if the new president will be able to choose whether or not to follow the climate commitment that President Pegnetter signed. Associates also question if the Board of Trustees is aware of this commitment? Sharon Bevins says that no candidate will leave campus without being asked about this. Perhaps the position description will give more guidance on this topic. Hallie discusses that all on-campus interviewees will have meeting times with faculty and staff members and that is where these concerns should be voiced. Peter Blaze reads aloud to the group the letter to the Presidential Search Committee from the Center’s Board. Discussion continues on ways to express concerns to the Search Committee and Board of Trustees. The Faculty Senate also gave a formal recommendation on the same topic to Peg Gray-Vickrey, chair of the Search committee.

VIII. Scholarship

1. Jim discusses *A Voice for Earth* and goes over the handout of Table of Contents. Peter Blaze transitions into how the Center can provide support for scholarship by Faculty Associates, particularly with regard to sustainability education. The Center is developing an editing capacity at the Center.
2. Joe discusses *Young People, Education, and Sustainable Development: Exploring Principles, Perspectives, and Praxis*. It is a joint project with Philip Osano, whose Masters Thesis won international recognition. Looking to finish the project by late 2008. Peter Blaze discusses different contributors to the book, many of whom are actively involved in the Earth Charter Youth Initiative.
3. Larry Byrnes discusses the Journal of Education for Sustainable Development. He calls for any students doing work related to sustainable development in any discipline. Although he is in charge of the student research section, there is also a

section in this publication for faculty research. He encourages the group to keep this journal in mind.

4. Peter Blaze mentions the need to include faculty involvement and presentations in Center literature or announcements, perhaps in the Quarterly or on the Center website. The Center can put out periodic calls to Associates regarding any recent accomplishments or activities.
5. Nora would like the College to hire a grant-writer. Sharon suggests having someone create a template for grant proposals at FGCU, including all the language regarding our vision and guiding principles, institutional history with regard to sustainability. Halcyon suggests that Tom Roberts' office may have already pooled the language regarding University principles.

IX. Other Matters

1. Peter Blaze discusses his sabbatical. He will be at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji. He will be working with Konai Thaman, among many others. The University encompasses the indigenous perspective on sustainability. He hopes to bring back many of the indigenous perspectives.
2. Peter Blaze talks about a potential institutional planning grant offered to the Center by an anonymous foundation. The Center must start thinking of what it wants to be in the university and how it will evolve in the next few years. The Center is beginning to actively engage in this process. The Board of Advisors has developed a small Strategic Planning Group, chaired by Larry Amon, who has chaired similar committee groups for NWF, WWF, and others. This group will help guide the proposal to be submitted to this foundation.
3. Joe Shepard has suggested that the Green Building could house the Center. The Building is not yet in the planning phases. It has been designed, but these designs have not been evaluated or approved by the Center or its Associates. Halcyon mentions that the American Democracy Project (ADP) has also been "promised" space in the building in the past. Jack Crocker will manage the process of the development of this building, from the Center's perspective. There must be a conversation about what we want this building to be and that we want our university to learn from this building.
4. Halcyon St. Hill mentions that during the fundraising push for the University, the Center should be included as a facet of the university that can receive directed donations. Hallie will speak with Steve Magiera about including the Center in this.

X. Announcements

1. Peter Blaze begins closing the meeting by requesting that all Associates present leave their faculty involvement sheets. Tricia Fay makes announcement regarding senior projects in the Art Department, many of which will involve topics that are relevant to the Center's goals. These presentations will take place on Wednesday, April 11, 2007, from 5:00-7:30pm. Also, there will be a presentation on the service trip to the Dominican Republic, including a photography exhibit – Thursday, April 12, 2007, 5:00-6:00pm, in the Library Atrium.

XI. Adjournment

1. Jim and Peter Blaze close with a poem by Mary Oliver:

Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.