

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION  
FACULTY ASSOCIATES RETREAT MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2005  
11:00 AM-3:00 PM  
WEST WIND INN  
3345 WEST GULF DRIVE  
SANIBEL ISLAND

Center staff in attendance: Peter Blaze Corcoran, Jim Wohlpart, Donna Roberts, Jessica Solimano, Brandon Hollingshead

Faculty in attendance: Rebecca Austin, Sharon Bevins, Larry Byrnes, Tricia Fay, Carolyn Gray, Peg Gray-Vickery, Bill Hammond, Ingrid Martinez-Rico, Morgan Paine, Joanna Salapska-Gelleri, Mary Voytek, Neil Wilkinson

Welcome and Introductions

Peter Blaze Corcoran opened the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education Faculty Associates retreat by commenting on the ongoing lessons of Hurricane Katrina, particularly the lessons of extreme poverty. Corcoran drew from the inspired words of Jeffrey Sachs's The End of Poverty and John Dewey's A Common Faith.

Center introduction and brief review of accomplishments

Following introductions, Peter Blaze explicated the concept of the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education. It is a gathering of FGCU faculty members, students, community stakeholders, and board members. The Center is a growing modestly, taking time to see what we want it to be and how we want to realize our mission and goals. Corcoran noted the Center is now developing increased involvement of students and faculty. Corcoran noted the purpose of this retreat is to discuss the Faculty Associates program, offer a "take away" from the workshops on the Earth Charter and President Gorbachev, and discuss the values of sustainability.

Student assistant and Center intern Brandon Hollingshead gave a brief review of Center accomplishments since May 2005, the most notable of which is the completion of the manuscript for the book *Toward a Sustainable World: The Earth Charter in Action*. The Center is a publication partner in the book, and it is edited by Peter Blaze Corcoran. Brandon served as the Editorial Assistant. The book celebrates the rich diversity and uses of the Earth Charter. The book contains sixty-two chapters and represents the Earth Charter in action in thirty-four nations. Hollingshead and Corcoran distributed a selection of chapters from the book relevant to the work of the Center, including the Preface by Mikhail Gorbachev.

Graduate assistant Donna Roberts gave a brief review of the Center's Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture. Roberts announced that David Orr will be the Spring 2006 lecturer during the weekend of February 16-19, 2005. Orr will deliver two lectures on Friday, February 17,

2006: During the day at Florida Gulf Coast University and at night on Sanibel Island. The Center Board of Advisors will meet on Saturday, February 18, 2006. The annual Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education fundraising party is scheduled for the night of February 18, 2006, as well.

### Faculty Associate involvement in the Center

Jim Wohlpart initiated a discussion on formalizing faculty association with the Center through Personal Development Plans (PDPs), explicitly modeled after the Whitaker Center. The benefits of formal association are to inaugurate a network of awareness and a community of scholars. In time, the Center can gather a critical mass through PDPs. Activities, research, and scholarly work that faculty are doing can be gathered and identified to show what is going on in the University in terms of environmental and sustainability education. Over time, new research, service, and teaching initiatives will emerge. This will always be a two-way system – the Center will support faculty and the faculty will support the Center.

A number of examples of ideas for PDPs are listed below:

Mary Walch wants to design an environmental marketing course;

Maria Roca will serve as moderator and advisor for a panel discussion to be hosted by the Center on Human Rights and Social Justice in Immokalee;

Rebecca Austin will apply for grants as an associate and explore Interdisciplinary course development;

Megan Mcshane may create a strand in a conference in Brazil as an associate;

Marci Greene will work to ensure that sustainability emerges in the doctoral program in the College of Education;

Sharon Bevins will present a paper at the Third World Environmental Education Conference in Italy with Peg Gray-Vickery and Tom Bevins. She will also note work on the QEP, a five-year plan for the reaccreditation process for ecological literacy and civic engagement.

### Social Justice and Diversity

Student assistant Jessica Solimano introduced the Terry Tempest Williams Student Dialogue series. The series is an endeavor to raise awareness among Florida Gulf Coast University students and faculty about critical issues in our regional community. The first Dialogue is scheduled for October 18, 2005, at 7:00 PM. It will be a panel discussion on Social Justice and Human Rights in Immokalee. Rebecca Austin noted the idea of awareness is paramount, as she feels students at FGCU are apathetic. Promoting awareness that these issues exist is important.

Other faculty enthusiastically to this idea and offered many suggestions for the dialogue. Bill Hammond suggested a bus trip through Immokalee and Belle Glade. Ingrid Martinez-Rico suggested student involvement with the Guadalupe Center of Collier County and in the annual homeless count. Morgan Paine noted that the Center should encourage students to actively engage in the issue following the dialogue.

### Earth Charter and Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

Peter Blaze Corcoran provided a background on the history and provenance of the Earth Charter. It is a statement of ethical principles that grew out of the report of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development. The report, Our Common Future, called for “a new charter to guide state behavior in the transition to sustainable development” (p.332). The Earth Charter is an inclusive, ethical vision that can guide action of all kinds toward a sustainable world in which we recognize our mutual destiny and responsibility. It is the product of a decade-long, worldwide, cross-cultural conversation about common goals and shared values. In 1994, Maurice F. Strong and Mikhail Gorbachev launched the Earth Charter initiative with the support of Ruud Lubbers and Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands. The drafting of the Earth Charter has involved the most open and participatory consultation process ever conducted in connection with an international document.

### Exchange of ideas – Teaching the Earth Charter at FGCU

Jim Wohlpart and Peter Blaze Corcoran led a discussion over lunch on teaching the Earth Charter at Florida Gulf Coast University. Many faculty chimed in with the following examples:

Neil Wilkinson teaches the Earth Charter in the Colloquium, but not in Environmental Biology of Southwest Florida. Although he teaches many concepts of the Earth Charter in the course, he finds the document to be overwhelming for many students.

Ingrid Martinez Rico uses the Earth Charter in Spanish translation courses. In this way, students must analyze terms and concepts of the Earth Charter in order to effectively translate them from one language to another

Bill Hammond charges Colloquium students to find other, more familiar documents that relate to Earth Charter principles.

Larry Byrnes uses the Earth Charter to engage dialogue by asking education students to offer and support their views on Earth Charter principles. He noted that critical thinking is key to the success of these discussions. Also, Byrnes uses music to explore the Earth Charter; he associates certain songs with particular Earth Charter principles.

Sharon Bevins suggests faculty pick a piece of the Earth Charter which they have knowledge and passion about and use that as a jumping off point.

Peter Blaze Corcoran and Jim Wohlpart have Environmental Literature students find an entry point by picking a single principle of the Earth Charter that speaks to their interests and concerns.

Rebecca Austin suggested that examples are a really good way to demonstrate the uses of the Earth Charter.

Tricia Fay suggested having students read the Earth Charter and state how they think the course materials fit into the Earth Charter.

The discussion turned to using the Earth Charter at FGCU in other ways. Neil Wilkinson suggested sending a delegation of representatives from all colleges to an international event of the magnitude of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, and linking these events to the Earth Charter. Larry Byrnes suggested FGCU hold an international summit with the Earth Charter as a center piece. He would like to demonstrate links between the University Mission and the principles of the Earth Charter. Sharon Bevins recommended the Interdisciplinary Studies Center and the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education sponsor a campus-wide discussion on the Earth Charter. Morgan Paine showed interest in having the Earth Charter cross-indexed with the FGCU Learning Goals and Outcomes. Bill Hammond suggested an academic conference with spin-offs in the community.

#### Earth Charter reading

Jim Wohlpart led a group reading of the Earth Charter—an activity he does in the Environmental Literature course.

#### Discussion of the visit of President Mikhail Gorbachev

The group discussed ideas and opportunities presented by President Gorbachev's March 28, 2006 University Lecture. Corcoran gave a background of President Gorbachev's work in the environmental arena, specifically with Green Cross International and the Earth Charter. The mission of Green Cross International is to help ensure a just, sustainable and secure future for all by fostering a value shift and cultivating a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility in humanity's relationship with nature. The President of Green Cross International, and one of Gorbachev's top aides, Alexander Likhotal, plans to accompany Gorbachev during his visit. Corcoran has worked with Gorbachev and Likhotal on Earth Charter matters in the past.

The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education will take an active role in President Gorbachev's visit by distributing information packets on Gorbachev to faculty through e-mail, the Center website, and the University Lecture Series website.

The group suggested the Center include a biography, timeline, glossary of key terms, current history of Russia, selected writings by Gorbachev, selected readings by others about Gorbachev, and compilation of websites relevant to him. Faculty also recommend the packet include the

Earth Charter, the Charter of the United Nations, and the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Participants also suggested that the library order visual materials, that Laura Jensen in the bookstore create a Gorbachev book display, and that WGPU include President Gorbachev in their media campaign.

Altar call for Professional Development Plans

Jim Wohlpart concluded the meeting by calling for participants to submit draft language to be included in faculty Professional Development Plans.