

President's Sustainability Leadership Team Meeting
December 9, 2009
2:30 p.m. ~ Seibert Conference Room

Attendees: Dr. Georgia Costello, Dr. Valerie Thaxton, Bernie Ysursa, Dr. Mark Eichenlaub, Rob Hilgenbrink, Karen Stallman, Walter Arenstein, Jody Lauf, Dave Buesch, Gary Gruenert, Brad Sparks, Kurt Range, Dr. Katherine Witzig, Brad Nadziejko, Bob Weck, Melanie Reinhart, Susan Pflug

Not in Attendance: Jan Zuke

Introductions were made.

Illinois Community College Sustainability Network (ICCSN)

Dr. Costello provided an overview of the ICCSN. She and Rob Hilgenbrink have been working on this partnership since fall 2008. Approximately 1 ½ years ago, 7 colleges out of 48 in the state of Illinois began to share their sustainability ideas. These colleges hired a lobbying team in Washington, D.C. Approximately \$500,000 was the upstart funding for the ICCSN.

Dr. Costello met with Dr. Jerry Weber of College of Lake County who spearheaded the initiative along with the seven colleges. A meeting was held with Dr. Weber, Dr. Elaine Johnson, and Dr. Jonathon Astroth where it was decided that Southwestern Illinois College would become the eighth college in the ICCSN.

Along with Rob Hilgenbrink, Dr. Costello met with the Obama Energy Team and worked together to establish funding sources. Subsequent visits to the Departments of Labor, Agriculture, USDA and Education were made to share ideas for SWIC and what role we could play in the network. Additionally, after meeting with Dr. Weber, it was determined that all 48 Illinois community colleges would be included in the network. The state of Illinois is to be a model for the nation.

At this time, we are expected to receive funding through Governor Quinn's office - \$7.9 million was the requested amount. It will take two years to be fully funded. Currently, dollars are only being allocated for our initiatives. The Departments of Energy and Water Resources will contribute \$250,000 and the Department of Education \$600,000 as part of start-up funding.

Rob also stated that as the network was extended statewide, Dr. Costello recommended that it would be necessary to have three Regional Centers. Southwestern Illinois College is one of those Centers. Rob said that the ICCSN will be a tremendous resource for faculty (curriculum), Physical Plant, and clubs at the college as well as the larger community in general.

Dr. Costello stated that we will be working with Dr. Leith Sharp who will serve as a consultant to the network. Dr. Sharp established the Harvard Green Initiative.

Bob Weck asked how many schools have hired directors. Rob responded that it depends on the individual college's focus. Some are utilizing current staff members who are taking on the role.

Role of President's Sustainability Leadership Team

Dr. Thaxton said that the 2nd Quarter Report for the grant has been submitted and is pending approval. A copy of the report will be sent to the team once it is finalized. Priorities for the grant include: workshops for homeowners, grade school activities, general seminars for adults, and "green" job development activities.

Dr. Thaxton stated that the role of the committee is to provide suggested board policy changes, speakers' series suggestions, and to be a part of programs/initiatives at the college. The team will meet two times per semester. She asked that the team provide feedback and consider any policy issues, agenda items and outreach topics/programs to be discussed at the next team meeting.

Grant and Funding Opportunities

Dr. Mark Eichenlaub stated that competition for grants is fierce and the manner in which they are applied for has dramatically changed in recent years. He mentioned that there are funding sources through the Environmental Protection Agency. He will be sharing ideas with the deans and faculty. Also, AGI is offering \$750,000 in grant awards to boost the number of graduates. The forthcoming stimulus money is geared toward job development. Dr. Eichenlaub recommended that we pay close attention to any curriculum programs we could do at the college.

Dr. Eichenlaub said there is the possibility of receiving grants through community and business partnerships (i.e. Ameren). Foundations and private sources are also tremendous resources. He mentioned that smaller funding opportunities through local businesses are another possibility as they often like the public recognition for partnering on such initiatives.

Dr. Eichenlaub suggested that we need to brainstorm ideas and give them to Walter Arenstein – ideas such as, what do we need money for? What do we want money for? Short- and long-term goals? He stated that a priority needs to be in making Southwestern Illinois College known to the community at large since the competition for funding is so tight.

Green Committee Report

Dr. Katherine Witzig and Brad Nadziejko provided an update on the Green Committee and on a Red Bud Learning Communities Class. Brad reported that a Learning Community class was held this semester which focused on sustainability. Students read articles and watched documentaries and provided proposals for campus sustainability changes. Some of which include: going WiFi campus-wide, rental of laptops, green fair with farmers market and flea market atmosphere, and recycling fair with a spring cleaning theme.

Dr. Witzig stated that the Green Committee has been established for about one year and is comprised of faculty, students, deans, and Marketing representation. They discuss ideas to make the college more cost efficient and what students can do to be more involved. Aspects of their mission statement include: curriculum programs, special events (Earth Month), and general environment/energy-saving information (signs on campus, etc.). The next meeting will be held during opening week and they will begin to develop proposals for Earth Month activities.

Dr. Costello commented that initiatives are already being put in place at the campuses through the Physical Plant. Dr. Witzig suggested broadcasting those initiatives on the plasmas screens. Brad

commented that records are kept on the number of cans/paper that has been recycled in a month and that information could be shared through the plasma screens as well.

Director of Sustainability

Dr. Thaxton introduced the college's new Director of Sustainability Walter Arenstein and provided a copy of his resume to the team. Dr. Thaxton commented that she would like to have Walter address groups on campus to share sustainability ideas and discussions with him. Some of those meetings have already been scheduled.

Walter spoke of his background in environmental issues and studies, teaching, and consulting work. He stated that his role internally will include providing a Sustainability Resource Center for students, faculty and general public to access information on environmental issues, green job opportunities and studies. In addition, he will serve as a coordinator for the ICCSN.

General Comments

Jody Lauf commented that any ideas for non-credit teachers or recommended courses that could be offered through Community Education would be appreciated.

The next two President's Sustainability Leadership Team meetings will be scheduled for the spring semester once the faculty schedules have been finalized.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Notes taken by: Jamie Windler