**Academic Integration Breakout Session**

**7/14/15; 2:15-5:00; Plemmons Student Union; Facilitated by Jeff Ramsdell and Dale Brentrup; Scribe: Laura Johnston.**

Welcome by Jeff Ramsdell.

Dale Brentrup: Academic Integration is the most difficult of any breakout session to wrap up. After last year’s break-out and the break-out at the mid-year meeting, we identified four major topics:

1. Campus as Living Lab
   1. Integrating Classroom Activities with Physical Plant Operations
   2. Putting Research to work/test in the Campus Environment
2. Developing Curriculum for Energy & Sustainability
3. Measuring Sustainability in Academics for STARS Purposes

Introductions around the room, including ideas / interests / reasons people chose this working group. Topics discussed included the opinion that energy is a subset of sustainability; the need for sustainability to be science-based and very thoroughly integrated; the importance of the STARS rating system; campus as a living, learning lab; incorporating sustainability into early childhood / k-12 education, breaking down global issues for young students; integrating sustainability into curriculum across various disciplines—not just “environmental” courses, but English, Philosophy and Religion, Business, Accounting, Communications, etc; hunger (particularly in Forsyth county); using American Indians as a resource due to their long history of sustainable development; purchasing and serving local food on campus; involving more faculty; how the plasticity of the word sustainability can help bind the university; collaboration across disciplines; involving not only academics and campus but also community; integrated design as a capstone course—a real project that is actually built rather than something theoretical; Engineers without Borders; sustainability incorporated into a STEM High School; getting sustainability-related materials into classrooms (Government-published materials); electric / hybrid vehicles; research projects; Entrepreneurship class; thermodynamics; partnerships between facilities and academics; why/how are World Watch Institute books being used in classrooms; service learning projects; bridging the scientific community with the rest of the world; energy-efficient cooking; construction; electrical engineering; improving carbon footprint of university; Renewable Energy Initiative (REI) / solar on campus; poster competitions.

Last year, there was a disagreement among the Academic Integration group regarding the direction the group should take, so we’re proposing to split into subgroups to allow everyone to work in the area they are most interested.

Four subgroup options (with number of working group members that are interested):

(1a) Students [and Faculty] approaching Facilities/Physical Plant (PP) and vice-versa (10)

(1b) Putting research to work/test in campus environment (14)

1. Developing curriculum for energy and sustainability, which could include experiential learning (20)
2. Measuring sustainability in academics for STARS purposes—metrics (3)

Did we miss anything? Ideas:

Q: Aren’t Sustainability Officers interested in (3)? A: No—we already did that (STARS); assessing it isn’t as important as doing it.

Q: What methods have people used to find funding, collaborate, implement, etc? That could be something to incorporate into (3)—I don’t want to measure for STARS, but I would like to measure this. Should we incorporate this into one of the topics above? Into all of them? A: the 17 UNC schools have been discussing this for the past year, and we are pretty talked out amongst ourselves. Jeff Ramsdell: let’s incorporate implementation, measurement, and collaboration in groups 1a, 1b, and 2. Any objections? New suggestion: breaking 2 into: (2a) energy, and (2b) sustainability. Dale Brentrup: they’re one in the same as far many of us are concerned. New suggestion: We could eliminate 3 and just split 2 into two subgroups down the middle, so we’ll still have four groups but don’t have to make people split between energy and sustainability. 2a and 2b will both discuss (2) above.

To be discussed in subgroups:

* Issues, opportunities, and projects
* Next steps: how can we leverage the collective power of [NC] Higher Education and the Appalachian Energy Summit to the greatest good?

We’ll get back together at 4:40 to get a quick summary from each group and then discuss in greater detail tomorrow.

**Subgroup 1a (in detail, since Scribe was in this subgroup), led by ECU’s Griffin Avin:**

Issues:

* Funding. Students create proposals but it’s hard to get them off the ground.
* Inconsistency / timing. Capstone projects that don’t get completed before students graduate.
* Communication / lack of understanding and trust: getting PP to communicate with academic side and vice-versa. Not a lot of trust and respect. PP thinks faculty members have no clue about practicality; faculty doesn’t think PP understands their side of things. Furman is small and doesn’t have this problem. One suggestion: should we get faculty concerns and get the PP concerns (from this group)? One person reminded us that administration is a third group that can be a problem—Faculty to Provost, for example. NC School of Science and Math only has ~8 Facilities staff members—very willing to help and be creative, but sometimes run into problems with funding approval, etc. from admin., even when project will help academics. Both a challenge and an opportunity—some staff members don’t understand sustainability, but students can teach them, and then staff can tell students when they suggest something that’s not practical. Staff members don’t understand tenure process, criteria on which faculty members are judged; faculty doesn’t understand the roles of the facilities folks—what are the roles of the housekeeper? How much are grounds personnel allowed to do? Are faculty members asking facilities staff to go above and beyond their job duties? Understanding responsibilities, roles, and how they’re judged for advancement / whether or not there are opportunities for advancement would be helpful.

Opportunities:

* Funding:
  + Green fund—UNC-G worked with UNC Green (student group), who got support cards signed, etc., and it was passed. Funding source is a new fee; approved by BOT and BOG; rolled into activities fee ($2.22/student). 7 students / 6 faculty and staff on committee deciding what will be funded. Brief mention of ASU’s REI.
  + External research grants, mesh with faculty member’s research interests.
  + Greensboro: Cost share opportunities for water conservation measures.
  + Contracted services (i.e. Food Services; Bookstore)—corporate arm may have funding opportunities.
* Time constraints (1-3 semesters for capstone projects; as little as 4 weeks for summer course; classwork vs. student organization; question of whether or not leaders pass the torch well):
  + If a student doesn’t finish project by end of spring semester, turn it into a summer internship.
  + Continuity of faculty, so one student can do first part of project, next semester another student does the next step, and so on. Faculty is “champion;” pick a strong student … or a young student with promise and dedication.
  + Proposal for action vs. actually tackling a project. Students need to seek input from facilities staff—if a landscaping proposal, seek input from Landscape Services. Store project ideas online.
  + Work study / internships through the Sustainability Office.
  + Fayetteville State: Facilities member is faculty/staff support for “Green Team” student group.
* Relationship / communication / trust / understanding between faculty and PP:
  + Look at facilities folks as co-teachers.
  + Sustainability Committee / Council.
  + UNC-G has an Academic Sustainability Coordinator, who involves staff. Staff workshop, “Intro to Sustainability”—invited faculty to teach staff—breaking down barriers.
  + Less formal opportunities than workshop: happy hour for faculty and staff on Friday afternoon (Western Carolina). Another idea: monthly green bag lunches, open to everyone.
  + Western Carolina doesn’t have the problems some schools are describing.
  + App State: PP Director met with Deans last semester, plans to meet with Chairs in the upcoming semester; working with Provost and Deans to request faculty involvement in Repair & Renovation (R&R) funding requests; working on briefs to help people understand what we do and how tight our budget is.
  + App State: when PP receives thank you notes from faculty, it is passed along to staff with a cover letter from the PP Director and is highlighted in the PP’s quarterly newsletter.
* Support from administration:
  + UNC-G: when funding shrunk for the Academic Sustainability Coordinator, the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs stepped up to secure funding. STARS rating was reached in the last year, in large part to efforts of the Sustainability Academic Coordinator.
  + We want to draw quality students, and ~60% of prospective students and their parents consider sustainability an important factor in deciding which school to attend, so it should be a part of our strategic plans.
  + Get Chancellors to come to AES—Western Carolina’s Chancellor attended four years ago and came back “pumped.”
  + Question from one subgroup member: have you experienced push-back from admin? A: when safety is a concern, absolutely (i.e. community garden—farm tools). Also, when there is an impact on the look of the campus.

**Full Working Group:**

Summaries from each subgroup.

**Subgroup 1a Summary:**

Issues:

* Funding for student proposals / projects
* Time constraints
* Communication / trust / understanding between faculty and staff
* Support from administration

Opportunities:

* Funding:
  + Green Fund—clearly called out as such or rolled into student activities fee
  + External research funding
  + Corporate funding from contracted services
* Time:
  + Strong faculty and students to ensure continuity from one semester to the next
  + Proposal by one student one semester; first phase of project by different student next semester; etc.—don’t bite off more than you can chew
* Relationship / Understanding:
  + Faculty and staff on Sustainability Council
  + Look for opportunities to get faculty and staff to comingle—green bag lunch, happy hour
  + Co-teaching
  + PP meeting with Deans and Chairs
  + Involving faculty in R&R funding requests
  + Share thank you notes between faculty and staff
* Administration:
  + Make sure they understand the importance of sustainability

**Subgroup 1b Summary:**

Initial thoughts before diving into issues, etc:

* Considered constituencies—Operations is a central group. Students come either directly to Operations or through faculty. Faculty members come either directly or through research offices. Business partners are also important.
* Discussed process; brokers; scalability; timing / longevity.

Issues:

* Student-generated ideas
* Timing / continuity
* Process / brokers
* Scalability
* Faculty-generated ideas (often more complex than students)
* Permissions

Opportunities:

* Business partners
* Research offices
* Faculty engagement
* Share results from subgroup 1a
* Break-down barriers
* Recognize contributors

Projects (to be discussed tomorrow)

**Subgroup 2a Summary:**

Obstacles:

* No value for tenure / promotion
* No time to integrate
* Faculty don’t see relevance
* Don’t see the “why”
* Institutional inertia
* Don’t see benefit for students

How to overcome:

* Determine / demonstrate relevance to discipline
* Empower / incentivize faculty
* Show value / need
* Interdisciplinary research / curriculum activities
* Team teach
* Experiential learning
* Tenure / promotion policies should reward these activities
* Disseminate information and successes

**Subgroup 2b Summary:**

Issues:

* What students need vs. what staff needs
* Potential stigma
* Educate staff
* Support from faculty / administration
* Across curriculum vs. departmental

Opportunities:

* Service learning for students
* Intro and exit courses
* Professional development
* Survey incoming students on prior knowledge

Projects:

* Creating depository of resources—where we can learn from successful projects, etc.
* Creating departmental and cross-departmental teams

Conclusion by Jeff Ramsdell. We’ll meet again tomorrow; only 1.5 hours.