



SUSTAINABILITY ACTION FUND COMMITTEE

Wednesday November 23rd, 2016, 10:00 a.m. VU714

- Members:** *Present: Wayne Rocque (ASVP for Student Life), Mary Moeller (ASVP for Business and Operations), Greg McBride (Assistant Director of Viking Union Facilities), Anna Kemper (Environmental & Sustainability Programs Director), Seth Vidana (—), Johnathan Riopelle (—), Jasmine Goodnow (Faculty Representative), (and Keiko Betcher (AS Sustainable Action Fund Coordinator).
Absent: Kristen Tarr (Student at Large), Izzy Juell (Student at Large), and Hannah van Amen (Student at Large).*
- Advisor:** Greg McBride
- Secretary:** Cora Cole
- Guests:** Jacob Tafejjar (Students for Renewable Energy), Trisha Patterson (Students for Renewable Energy), and Ignacio Perez (Students for Renewable Energy).

Wayne Rocque called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM on Wednesday, November 23rd.

I. Introductions

- a. There were new folks so we introduced ourselves with names, pronouns, and Positions.

Jasmine Goodnow entered at 10:06

II. Discussion Items

a - REC pinches: Seth began by giving the history on RECs on campus. The fund that the committee pulls from began back in 2005 as a way for the students to limit the Western emissions. An environmental science course pushed for the campus to invest in the new Renewable Energy Credit. A REC in essence is a market mechanism to make green energy more lucrative for investors. Students in 2005 decided to tax themselves by \$27 annually per student via Puget Sound Energy for the RECs and over time they decided to shift the purchases to North Dakota because PNW is already much less dependent on carbon emissions and North Dakota is much more so. Then this last year two student teams did a project on building a campus wind farm, and that got some traction with the Financial office. It was a very complicated process and as the school was looking into it we got the Wind Farm investment offer from PSE. Seth and his groups have gone around to talk to the bill payers on campus and they had been in favor but they wanted the go-ahead from students. So they want to shift the XX that students in this committee spend on RECs and switch to the Wind Farm investment. ((10.45)) They will lock in a rate by which we will buy energy from PSE for the next couple years as part of this deal, if costs go up for other energy purchasers go up, ours will still stay steady, which is something of a best case scenario. The

medium risk scenario is the most likely and it increases our rates slightly but on whole, this is a really great deal for campus. The general sense from the bill payers on campus is they want the approval of students as granted by this committee. Seth added that he sees this as a really big deal out of not that much, we are switching products and the new product is better. It is going to be a great PR campaign for the school and a good example for colleges all over the states because we would be one of the first schools. Trisha from Students for Renewable Energy had been looking for a problem or concern with the offer and haven't found anything. A lot of students, leaders, and professors have signed on already. SRE has a standard of prioritizing people most effected by climate change, particularly hiring people who used to work in the fossil fuel industry to work in the new wind farms. Jacob talked about the student outreach they had done, last Friday they tabled in Red Square for a couple hours and everyone they talked to and were super excited. Keiko asked what the Board's feedback had been and Trisha said that they were waiting on the committee today to talk about this and condensing the phrasing but generally they had been supportive. Greg asked if they were looking for support or Funding and SRE said they want the SAF to commit our funds from RECs to the Wind Farm. Professor Goodnow asked how much power the wind farm would provide, Johnathan explained that it would produce 75 constant megawatts, which functions as a one for one swap with either natural gas or fossil fuels. We would be purchasing 100% of Western's Annual Consumption, which is particularly relevant for the use of natural gas for heating buildings including the new student housing project which is looking at an alternative method of heating.

This project started with Google and other IT companies who were looking for a sustainable alternative to RECs they formed the Renewable Energy Alliance, which went state by state to find mechanisms to buy renewable energy and we have the opportunity to become a very small part of that group. Buying renewable energy investment is different from producing them and retiring them instead of keeping them in the market. Wayne asked for clarification on the Fiscal impacts, including premiums on bills which comes out to a 5% increase, due to the nature of energy costs there will always be some increase. The total impact to campus will be about \$105,000 which is not huge but it also isn't nothing. There is going to be an impact not just this committee, but to the Business Offices and other locations as well. This is a cheap way to get into this game and is a much easier way to get in then we are likely to get again, we really are riding the coat tails of multibillion dollar organizations. Greg McBride is one of the bill payers sitting at the tables and asked if the project can continue if the committee doesn't approve. Seth said that the approval of the Student representation organizations is necessary for the continuation of the project. It doesn't feel like a very deep cut financially but it is one among many and they need student approval. We don't have an infinite amount of money available, Greg responded that the current SAF fee runs out in 2018 so this relies on the next group wanting to continue the funds, so this is going to be a complicated process for the financial office and for this committee. Mary said she was excited and loves passionate students and leaders of the community and Wayne added that we will be voting on transferring the funds and also voting to support the funds, the support doesn't matter as much and asked what the timeline is. Trisha said that PSE will be back in January to offer us the opportunity and ask if we want it. The school has submitted an application of interest and PSE has accepted it, so when they come in January we need to have a Yes or No. Seth clarified that step one is a letter of intent which said we are interested, that has already been

sent, step two is the return in January when we need to be ready for in January. They will not give us the information as to whether we have a spot in step two or not until after the January time. Mary suggested that the wording of the motion have it be conditional on them having space, or perhaps saying we are on board now and having the funds shift after they say whether we have space or not. The demand for committee commitment is from the bill payers on campus, so we need to let them know sooner rather than later. Seth added that the easiest way to see the separation between power bills and student fees is on the actual energy bill because they have a divide between the Green Energy item and our power costs, which means we can separate what part of the bill students are paying. Greg asked for clarification on the state's contribution, and Seth explained that the state made a mandate requiring carbon emissions lowering plans. Western is signed on with other campuses to get down to 0. The question is, "Are student funds paying for government requirements?" and he believes that the answer is no because we are going above and beyond that mark. Additionally, they are also waiting on the state saying that this purchase will count in our reduction of carbon emissions, which is slow because this is a new item which differs from RECs. Seth presumes that we will get a yes from them and Western's bill payers care more about doing the right thing in this instance then getting the support from the state because of all the people who are advising us to do this thing. Wayne said that we can move this to an action item at our next meeting.

b - Green Power Purchase Opportunity

III. Reports

a. Rubric overview: Wayne said that he would like the SAF members to talk about their goals for the rubric in the upcoming quarter. Johnathan said that he wants to ascertain what we have so far, but he would like to see one at the end of January so that it can be online and usable as soon as possible. He is suggesting that it is actively dealt with during winter quarter. Greg said that the committee had authorized a sub group last year which created the draft rubric. Wayne added that we will be continuing the conversation about the rubric throughout the quarter and next meeting will be after the thanksgiving holiday to get the Green Energy item passed.

Before adjourning, Wayne asked about switching to tablets for committee meetings, the committee is in favor. The secretary offered to get binders for people who would prefer that.

Wayne Roque adjourned the meeting at 11:00 am.