

EnviroAlums (E)
Steering Committee (SC) Meeting
29 September 2007
Lewis Center, Oberlin
4:00 – 6:30 PM

Present:

Lewis Center: Andy Barnett, Walt Galloway, Peter Lavigne, Michael Lythcott, Carl McDaniel, John Petersen, John Schaefer, Robert Stenger, Pat Cobb Tarnow.

Teleconference: Susan Bernat, Andy deCoriolis, Meredith Dowling, Erik Jansson, Bonnie Yelverton.

Guests: Nathan Engstrom (Sustainability Coordinator), Karen Florini (E member, Trustee), Kofi Lomotey (alum, Executive Vice President/Provost, Fisk University), Brad Masi (alum, Director, New Agrarian Center).

Absent:

Rachel Cohn, Lewis Gilbert, Mira Inbar, Michael Murray, Gavin Platt, Naomi Sabel.

Appointment of Steering Committee members (term: 9/2007-9/2010):

Andy Barnett, Michael Bobker, Andrew deCoriolis, Walter Galloway, Erik Jansson, Robert Stenger, Pat Cobb Tarnow.

Election of chair and vice-chair:

Carl McDaniel and Andrew deCoriolis unanimously elected chair and vice-chair, respectively, for one year terms.

Things discussed and to do in the coming year:

1. E will provide \$500 during academic year 2007-08 for a continuation of the environmental careers speaker series that John Petersen and students organized last year. Meredith Dowling will work with John and students on this program.
2. Andrew deCoriolis, Meredith Dowling, and Nathan Engstrom reported that everyone involved was delighted with the accomplishments made in “greening” the 2007 Commencement/Reunion. E supports efforts at further greening of commencements/reunions. Andrew and Meredith will work with Nathan and Danielle Young (Alumni Office) on further greening and involve E as possible. As a start they suggested the following to consider for May 2008:
 - a. Organize ride-share and car pooling.
 - b. Continue with having an environmental panel. John Petersen and Walt Galloway, who have 20th and 40th reunions respectively, will work on having their classes organize an environmental symposium or panel.
 - c. Have alums organize at commencement/reunion weekend activities such as a composting demonstration at the Jones Farm. Brad Masi was enthusiastic about this and would think on other possible activities for alums to participate in with the goal of taking ideas back to their home communities for implementation.

d. Have resource table, workshop, or other vehicle that would be a springboard for promoting activities by alums in home communities.

Andrew and Meredith will provide Carl with a list of possible greening suggestions in late October 2007 so he can report on this initiative and elicit suggestions from the Alumni Council Executive Board at its meeting, November 2-4, 2007.

3. Brad Masi, Director of the New Agrarian Center, discussed the Center's promotion of community networks that seek to build capacity for growing, distributing, and enjoying local food. He highlighted the City Fresh program that has 30 community partners striving to improve access to local food in inner city neighborhoods. The New Agrarian Center seeks to stimulate alums to think regionally and to engage with those acting locally. Since eating local-food grown in a sustainable way is central to reducing our ecological footprint, Brad will write an article for E to email to its members and post on E's website (www.oberlin.edu/envs/oeaaa/).
4. Eban Goodstein of Lewis and Clark College is organizing a day of national events (Focus the Nation) on 31 January 2008 to highlight the importance of climate change. Oberlin will be a center of activity in the midwest. Andrew deCoriolis is in communication with Goodstein and will let E know how we might help.
5. E's student fund is under utilized. Carl McDaniel will prepare a statement on the purpose and activities that the fund will support and then pass it by the SC for approval. Nathan Engstrom and Andrew deCoriolis will identify the groups on campus most likely to have appropriate projects. Nathan's office will alert student groups to E's fund and direct requests to E's chair and vice chair for approval.
6. Nathan Engstrom, Oberlin's Sustainability Coordinator, gave a brief presentation on his work. He discussed Oberlin's Environmental Sustainability brochure that presents ideas from all parts of the Oberlin Community: faculty, students, staff, alums, etc. It gives a big picture of possibilities for capital projects, personnel, and education & outreach. One might consider it an in-progress visioning document aimed at fund raising. Nathan briefly considered progress on environmental sustainability at Oberlin. Visit Oberlin's Environmental Sustainability Website for more information (www.oberlin.edu/sustainability).
7. Nancy Dye signed the American University Presidents Commitment to Climate Neutrality in December 2006. With Trustees and Marvin Krislov supporting this commitment, E's role is changing from advocating environmental sustainability to assisting its realization. Oberlin's Environmental Sustainability brochure discussed by Nathan Engstrom (6. above) provides an emerging list of things that might be done, but they need to be prioritized. The process by which this is accomplished will emerge as Oberlin assesses where it is and where it wants to go.

E's Climate Justice Challenge Campaign last fall established broad alumni financial support for implementing Oberlin's Environmental Policy and E's capacity to facilitate fund raising. Clearly, E will be involved in fund raising, but for what, and how, are to be determined. Susan Bernat volunteered to pole E SC to establish what projects presented in the Environmental Sustainability brochure are of greatest interest to SC members. Carl McDaniel will investigate the avenues that E might pursue for raising funds and draft a statement of E's intent to participate in fund raising for SC approval.

Walt Galloway, Bonnie Yelverton, and Nathan will work together on the possibility of E sponsoring/coordinating an event at commencement 2008 on “visioning the future” to facilitate creative discussions.

8. An Affinity Group Reunion for EnviroAlums, ENVS graduates, and others who had/have environmental interests will be held in fall 2009. The proposed date is Columbus Day weekend (October 9-11). The first Affinity Group Reunion was in fall 2006 for Oberlin African Ancestry Alumni Association that was very successful with about 180 alums return to campus.

Susan Bernat, John Schaefer, and Bonnie Yelverton will create a data base of alums with environmental degrees, careers, and interests. Carl McDaniel will seek input from various people and organize a meeting of interested SC members and others in Oberlin on March 1, 2008, to begin planning for the E’s 2009 Reunion.

9. Rob Stenger, being disappointed with the food provided for the SC meeting, will “green” the menu for next September’s meeting.
10. Carl McDaniel reminded everyone that it is the responsibility of all SC members to make a financial contribution to Oberlin each year. These contributions are not only important because Oberlin needs money, but also because they reflect an alum’s satisfaction with what Oberlin provided to him/her. E dues count as a financial contribution and giving something is important! It positively enhances one’s relationship with Oberlin, fosters a behavior of appreciation, and builds Oberlin’s reputation and capacity to do well.

Future Alumni Council weekends and Steering Committee Meetings: Council Meeting 19-21 Sept 2008, E SC meeting 20 Sept 2008; Council Meeting 11-13 Sept 2009, E SC meeting 12 Sept 2009.

Steering Committee members and terms: Lewis Gilbert, Carl McDaniel, John Petersen, Naomi Sabel, John Schaefer, Bonnie Yelverton (expire in 2008); Susan Bernat, Chris Brown, Meredith Dowling, Mira Inbar, Peter Lavigne, Michael J. Lythcott, Gavin Platt, (expire in 2009); Andy Barnett, Michael Bobker, Andrew deCoriolis, Walter Galloway, Erik Jansson, Robert Stenger, Pat Cobb Tarnow (expire in 2010).

Respectively submitted,
Carl N. McDaniel '64
Chair, EnviroAlums