Minutes
Environmental Advisory Committee
September 2, 1999

Present: Aelion, Alford, Amiridis, Bass, Bohlke, Carpenter, Chaudhry, Coull, Hunter, Husser, Lamb, Luna, Reynolds, Schermerhorn, Selvig, Stevenson, Sweigart, Wertz, (Jerman, Bixby, Staff)

The next meeting will be on October 7 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 107c Osborne.

Dr. Coull thanked members for coming and asked them to introduce themselves. He noted that many around the table--and many who were not at the table--were already involved in improving the University’s environmental performance.

He described the many factors leading to creation of the committee, including:

- Dr. Palms interest--recognizing that environmental issues affect faculty, students, operations personnel and administrators alike.
- Accreditation effort includes a ”Sustainable communities” factor; other schools have similar committees; Sustainability has been included in a list of 10 Public Policy Issues for Higher Education for 1999-2000 (copy in mail for those not in attendance);....in short, environmental focus/sustainability focus is something which is important and timely.
- EPA has announced a crack down on higher ed, including a $250,000 fine levied against the University of New Hampshire. Several nationwide efforts to develop “indicators” of environmental progress, measure “greenness” are underway. We want to be prepared.
- Student concerns about the environment, which were described as the most focused Dr. Coull had seen in his years of teaching.
- Sustainable Universities Initiative (materials in mail for those who missed meeting) needs advice from many to accomplish its goals. Web site is www.sc.edu/sustainableu for those who are interested in more information.

Dr. Coull briefly reviewed efforts already underway, citing in particular Ed Bass’s construction recycling efforts, and cooperation between Gerry Schermerhorn and Richard Wertz’s divisions on cardboard recycling and composting of waste at Russell House. He also noted the significant energy savings promised by the long range plan developed by Charles Stevenson and the reduction in waste produced by the Purchasing Office’s consolidated services efforts to reuse surplus material, recycle electrical equipment, and printer cartridges. In addition, he described a sampling of student projects, and noted the potential for service learning related to university operations and environmental projects.

Finally, he noted some of the activities/accomplishments of the Sustainable Universities Initiative, not the least of which is the agreement among the Presidents of MUSC, Clemson and USC to work together on issues related to sustainability and the environment (in the mail for those not present.) He described the mini-grant program included in the Sustainable Universities Initiative, and noted that the committee will be asked to participate in the decision-making process during the next grant cycle. (A listing of projects funded during the
last cycle will be on the web site soon.)

Dr. Coull then asked members what, in their opinion, the committee should focus on. Comments included:

- John Carpenter said that the committee provides a great opportunity to avoid the traditional “three camps” of students, faculty and operations/administration and to really start thinking big about projects and facilities. We have students available to be a workforce to allow operations to do things they might not have had the ability to do in the past, while at the same time learning important lessons. He also noted that the committee presented a forum to allow new partnerships to form on an ad hoc basis.

- Malik Husser noted that ATO, Student Government and others are collaborating in a Campus Sweep during homecoming weekend (October 15). The intention is to make this a big event and strategically clean up various parts of the campus. It seems like an ideal time to involve the trustees, the Environmental Advisory Committee, and Sustainable Universities Initiative.

- Ed Bass noted the various opportunities he’d had to find out about “sustainable efforts” going on elsewhere, wondered if other committee members had had similar opportunities...if they “had been exposed to all the things we might be advising on” and suggested some educational efforts to present the range of opportunities demonstrated by other schools, communities, and industry.

- Gene Luna suggested that the web site include a place to suggest good ideas and to note “good stuff” that’s already happening.

- The suggestion was made to consider working groups, and to consider the addition of an attorney to the group.

- Michael Amiridis requested clarification of the mission of the group, leading to an extensive discussion. Bruce Coull reiterated his understanding of the President and Provost's interest in having something to guide the university in using resources wisely, which he took to include policy recommendations and identification of educational opportunities. Gene Luna suggested that the second point in Dr. Palms letter--requesting a “coordinated response to environmental issues” presented the opportunity to “imagine what the University could be in a sustainable setting.” Malik Husser thought that the letter gave the committee license to “take it wherever the committee wants to go” noting that whatever the committee decides to do should be acceptable, since the University has nothing in place now.

There was a general consensus that it made sense to look at what other, similar schools, were doing, see how USC’s activities and plans meshed with other schools’ and develop a plan or proposed policies. To that end, Trish and staff will identify some useful web sites and forward them to the group. At our next meeting, we’ll discuss the examples, and will also have a brief presentation from the students working on the Environmental Management System.

A corrected list of contact information for members will be forwarded as soon as Kim, who can bend computers to her will, is able to put it in the format we prefer. In the meantime, if you find additional corrections, please let us know.