Minutes
Environmental Advisory Committee
October 25, 2000


NEW MEETING DATE: Wednesday December 6, 2000, 11:30am-1pm
107C Osborne

• Lunch will be provided, courtesy of Liz Bohlke, who will showcase some new menu items.
• Come get your very own experimental trash receptacle!
• Note that date is NOT the one we discussed in our meeting. Change your calendars please.

After introductions, the following items of general interest were noted:

• The Trustees passed the policy statement developed by the EAC.
• Copies of an article which appeared in the Energy Office newsletter on the water and energy saving washers in USC dorms were distributed.
• Publicity for the new Siemens plant quoted EAC grad student representative Jamie Russell, who has worked closely with the company.

Julie Bixby presented the results of a survey and building evaluations conducted by undergraduate students in John Carpenter's Geology 103 class last semester. (Attached.) Comments included Charles Stevenson's affirmation that leaving lights on in unused rooms is a “big deal”—costing the university from $100,000 to $125,000/annum. Retrofitting lights in the Cooper library alone has saved approximately $90,000/year. Jim Demarest noted that there has been discussion of developing an energy policy for the campus, and suggested that the policy be brought before the EAC when the time is right. Walt Piegorsch cautioned that while the work was useful for the students who participated, and helped to identify areas for further study, it should not be viewed as a statistically valid picture of attitudes and behaviors across the university.

Stephanie Ogburn presented a “wish list” for future recycling efforts on campus developed by SAGE students (with some input from graduate student association.) She summarized the major concern by saying that “students don’t know where the bins are, and there aren’t enough.” SAGE plans to make signs informing students of recycling bin whereabouts, and to consider a video or related multi-media communication. She asked for information about the current recycling rates, so that SAGE could see if their efforts made a measurable difference.

Stephanie and Gene Luna reported on a meeting between Housing staff and SAGE students, which resulted in a commitment to focus on maintenance of instructional
signs, convenient location of recycling facilities, and timing (timeliness) of information distribution. (Beginning of school year is not best time to retain information.) Bottom line: “It won’t do any good to have more bins if no one knows about them.”

Laura Pergolizzi distributed a draft proposal to improve recycling at USC, which was discussed. She and Jim Demarest noted that RFP’s for a company to conduct a campus-wide waste audit will be going out soon. Laura suggested that SAGE might request a column in the Gamecock to keep recycling “facts” in front of students. Many around the table volunteered that they had information to share, but that only students could request the space. Margaret Lamb suggested “fact boxes” might be more effective than columns, and would be less burdensome to prepare and more attractive to the paper. Corey Ford agreed to contact the paper on behalf of student government to express an interest in weekly conservation information.

Laura described the “behavior modifying trash collectors” (my term, not hers) distributed in Swearingen. Committee members asked to have some too, and Laura offered to bring them to the next meeting.

At the next meeting, we will continue the discussion of “how to operationalize” the recycling goals that have been identified, and how to develop joint objectives which meet the needs of students, housing, and facilities services. We will also continue a discussion—barely started as we were adjourning—about using the committee as a mechanism for educating maintenance staff of both housing and facilities services about the importance of their role in encouraging/enforcing conservation (not only recycling, but water and energy conservation, selection and use of supplies, etc.) At the same time, staff should be asked for their ideas on the best way to achieve improved conservation. Finally, we'll clarify what we need/want to see in January in order to be helpful in endorsing conservation in the budget process.