



Meeting Summary May 8, 2012

Council members present:

Robert M. Specter, Vice President for Administrative Affairs & CFO (Chair)
Mahlon Straszheim, Associate Provost, Academic Affairs
Steve Hutcheson, Professor, Cell Biology & Molecular Genetics
Ross Salawitch, Professor, Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences
Thomas Zeller, Associate Professor, History
Scott Lupin, Associate Director, Environmental Safety and Director, Office of Sustainability
Joan Kowal, Energy Manager, Facilities Management
Bryan Quinn, Director of Technical Operations, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Matthew Popkin, Undergraduate Student, Government and Politics
Monette Bailey, Senior Writer/Editor, University Relations
Matthias Ruth, Professor, School of Public Policy

Guests:

Russell Furr, Director, Environmental Safety

Meeting start time: 1:00 pm

Meeting Highlights

Minutes Approved

Meeting minutes from March 16, 2012 Council meeting were approved.

Bottled Water Workgroup Recommendations – Continued Discussion

At the request of the Council, the Office of Sustainability (OS) provided more information on the estimated cost (dollars and effort) of the Bottled Water Workgroup recommendations. The Office of Sustainability also provided its own recommendations based on information gathering for the Workgroup recommendations. See **Appendix A** for additional OS research results and Recommendations. See **Appendix B** for approved recommendations with amendments.

- Recommendation 1 – Adopt the State of Maryland standard for bottled water purchasing which says that State funds should not be used to purchase bottled water.

The Council had significant discussion concerning the State guidelines stating that “State Funds” not be used to purchase bottled water where public water is available except for safety and emergency situations. OS tentatively supported the state and Bottled Water Workgroup’s recommendation to adopt the State’s approach, but expressed concern about consumer backlash and the negative affect that would have on other campus sustainability efforts. Council members also expressed a

number of concerns about creating a campus wide ban. Rather, many members were interested in providing choice and creating attractive alternatives to bottled water. Rob Specter reminded the Council that we are in the business of teaching students to make informed decisions and to evaluate the choices in front of them. Scott Lupin highlighted the significant federal regulation of public water supplies under the safe Drinking Water Act and recommended an education program on the safety of tap water rather than creating a ban. **Council rejected Recommendation 1.**

- Recommendation 2 – Form a Water Filling Station Committee

The Council discussed the benefit of establishing a water filling station workgroup to fulfill the stated goals. However, Scott Lupin stated that UMD has not conducted sufficient research to determine whether retrofitting water filling stations will materially reduce bottled water consumption and has not reviewed the success/barriers encountered by other organization who have implemented similar approaches. The Council concurred that the Committee should be formed, but additional research should be completed. The Council also agreed that the Committee should include within its goals the development of a limited testing schedule to determine the proper frequency of filter replacement associated with retrofitted water filling stations. **Council accepted Recommendation 2 as amended. See Appendix B.**

- Recommendation 3 – Develop an education and outreach campaign for drinking water on campus

The Council agreed that this recommendation should go forward. **Council accepted Recommendation 3.**

- Recommendation 4 – Promote use of reusable bottles and containers at athletic events

The Council discussed the fact that this recommendation presents possible safety concerns and a potential loss of revenue. The Council wants Athletics to take up this recommendation and determine feasible approaches that satisfy competing concerns while encouraging a reduction in bottled water consumption at Athletic events. **Council accepted Recommendation 4.**

- Recommendation 5 – Reduce bottled water offerings at catered events

Council accepted Recommendation 5.

- Recommendation 6—Develop and implement a comprehensive chemical and physical testing program for tap water on campus, in conjunction with the education program on the purity of tap water

The Office of Sustainability provided information and links to Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) annual tap water analysis reports which are required under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The Council did not support a broad testing approach, but rather, the establishment of a limited monitoring program for taste parameters and to confirm an appropriate filter replacement schedule. **Council rejected Recommendation 6.**

University Sustainability Fund

Matthew Popkin presented two updates from the Student Advisory Subcommittee, which recommended new funding to the Public Health Garden for \$26,756 and a reallocation of funding to new activities for Trash for Treasure in the amount of \$1600. **Both updates were approved by the Council.**

Recognition of Outgoing Council Members

Rob Specter thanked members of the Council for their efforts this year including those whose terms will end in August 2012: Matthias Ruth, Thomas Zeller, Matthew Popkin and Ian Page.

Adjourn: 3:15 pm