

## Go Green! ¡Viva Verde! Committee Meeting Minutes

Nov. 6, 2008, 1 p.m.

AS 103C

Attendees: Anna CohenMiller, ESOL; Esther Rodriguez, Housekeeping; Karen Mahaffy, Art; Brad Chandler, Biology; Kirk Williams, Horticulture; Russ Wagner, ESOL; Irene Dennis, Continuing Education; and Denise Barkis Richter, Communications.

Denise opened the meeting shortly after 1 p.m. and called for approval of the Oct. 2, 2008, minutes. Brad moved for approval. Anna seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved the minutes.

A copy of *The Chronicle of Higher Education's* "A Green Curriculum Involves Everyone on the Campus" (June 20, 2008, pg. A25) article sent by President Guzmán to Denise was distributed to the committee. Key points of the article, written by John Petersen, director of Oberlin College's environmental-studies program, are:

- "Colleges and universities have an obligation to ensure that we provide our students with the knowledge and experience necessary [to ameliorate the negative consequences of global climate change]."
- "Institutions of higher learning are poised to play a leading role in developing and executing climate-neutral policies."
- "Oberlin College has adopted a comprehensive environmental policy on energy use, purchasing, building construction and management, food, transportation, waste, grounds management, and education."
- "College campuses can serve as laboratories for exploring and developing policies, technologies, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to achieve carbon neutrality."
- "A key goal of a liberal-arts education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be to equip graduates with a diversity of intellectual tools and learning experiences needed to ensure the health of our planet. The challenge that our students face is daunting, but with the help of supportive institutions and faculty members, they have the opportunity to construct a world and a culture that are vast improvements on the ones they inherit."

Denise also shared "40 ways to go green" *San Antonio Express-News's* mysa.com article:

[http://www.mysanantonio.com/livinggreensa/40\\_ways\\_to\\_go\\_green.html](http://www.mysanantonio.com/livinggreensa/40_ways_to_go_green.html)

She asked the Environmental Citizenship Subcommittee to develop a "top ten" list that will help to educate those on campus who aren't already "greenies". This handout could be distributed during PACfest and on the college's bulletin boards.

Irene Dennis reported for the Environmental Citizenship Subcommittee and said that they are working to develop a theme-based event that's related to some aspect of conservation, such as a field trip to explore South Side treasures like the nearby Medina River Natural Area or the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center. In addition, Subcommittee Member Russ Wagner's ESOL students recently made posters that will be hung around campus to help raise awareness of our new recycling program.

Kirk Williams reported that the Natural Habitat and Indigenous Wildlife Subcommittee is moving forward to have the natural area in front of the GE Building certified as a Texas Wildscape. Greg Pasztor and Kirk Williams sent a letter to the president for her approval of this endeavor. Other potential natural areas, like the pond on the corner of Highway 16 and the 410 access road, were discussed.

Anna CohenMiller reported for the Air Quality and Energy Reduction Subcommittee. She, too, has drafted a letter to the president to ask for permission to have CPS conduct an energy audit of the campus. Once the audit is conducted and our baseline is established, we'll be able to formulate plans for campus-wide energy reduction. In addition, Anna spoke with Dr. Daniel Rodriguez, Palo Alto's director of Student Life who serves on the District's Auxiliary Services Committee (book store, cafeteria, and vending machines), to see about having energy misers for each drink vending machine placed into the requirements for obtaining the new contract.

Brad Chandler reported for the Water Conservation Subcommittee. He said that with the help of Palo Alto's Maintenance Department, they were able to identify 17 different potable water service meters on campus. Six meters are dedicated for irrigation purposes only. The other meters are for fire suppression, building water, and/or irrigation. We currently pay Bexar Metropolitan Water District (BexarMet) for our potable water. We pay San Antonio Water Systems (SAWS) for our wastewater. Brad is trying to navigate the BexarMet/SAWS maze to see how we can tap into graywater for campus irrigation.

Karen Mahaffy reported for the Green Building/Renovation Subcommittee. She and Thomas have developed a "green punch list" for those who serve on campus renovation/construction user groups to share with architects and design teams hired by the college/district. Questions range from: "Will this building/renovation be LEED certified? At what level?" to "Will this building divert rain run-off or HVAC moisture collection to benefit surrounding landscape?" to "What percentage of the materials in the construction will be green?" In addition, Karen provided a handout on "Green Building Practices and Sustainability" that defines what green building is and encourages Palo Alto College to incorporate green building practices and sustainability practices into its 15-year Master Plan. (See attached PDFs.) Finally, Karen provided

“Twenty-Five Things Universities Can Do To Create High Performance Buildings” to the committee. (See attached.) The committee asked Karen to present this information to Palo Alto College’s Administration.

On Friday, Oct. 24, the IALS eco-tourism students (20) from Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Columbia attended a tour of Northwest Vista’s campus with their ESOL Teacher Earl Gaston, Alpha Pi Iota (International Honor Society) Vice President of Leadership Joaquin Sandoval, Club Earth Member and Student Government Association Vice President Adrianna Chavez, and Go Green! ¡Viva Verde! Chair Denise Richter to learn about NVC’s already established recycling program. NVC’s Recycling Guru Roxanna Hernandez, Office Supervisor of their Teaching and Learning Facilitation Lab, and Jonathan Sakian, NVC student and recycling program work-study, led the tour. NVC began recycling paper and cardboard back in April of 2006, and they added everything else (plastic, metal and glass) in July of this year (2008). Every Wednesday, Greenstar picks up recyclables at four different locations on the NVC campus. Jonathan “patrols” the campus during his work-study hours to identify problem areas and make sure the recycling program is running smoothly. He has been equipped with a satchel that contains a notebook and pen, liners for the recycling containers, gloves, towels to clean up spills, tape, scissors, walkie-talkie, signs for posting on the recycling containers (paper only or empty glass/empty metal/empty plastic) and a Sharpie. NVC is beginning to launch an “Adopt a Bin” program, similar to the State of Texas’ “Adopt a Highway Program” on campus. They are asking NVC students to adopt a bin (decorate it with their name, recycling slogans, etc.) to make sure that the proper items are being recycled, that the bins are free of trash, and that the bins are brought to one of the four locations on NVC’s recyclables pick-up day on time. Roxy said that they are keeping track of student participation, and they will award a scholarship to those who’ve done the best job at the end of each semester. The tour was a great first-hand look at how the recycling program at NVC is working and how Palo Alto can learn from their experience. Both Roxy and Jonathan offered to share information/know-how whenever we needed it.

Camille Fiorillo sent information on America Recycles Day, Saturday, Nov. 15. The website [www.americarecyclesday.org](http://www.americarecyclesday.org) is full of useful recycling information. In addition, Woodlawn Lake is the host site of a free Texas Recycles Day event (food, music, information and entertainment) on Nov. 15 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Committee members are encouraged to attend.

Denise asked committee members to e-mail her [drichter@mail.accd.edu](mailto:drichter@mail.accd.edu) a “recycling testimonial” (why recycling is important to you) along with a digital photo of you. These testimonials will be sent out periodically to raise awareness throughout campus of our new recycling program.

The recycling program launch day is still TBA. However, we are getting closer! Gray bins for paper only to supplement the ones we already have on campus have arrived. Green bins (and tops) for empty plastic, empty glass and empty metal are on their way. As soon as the bins are delivered, we'll get them distributed and we'll begin.

Denise ended the meeting shortly after 2 p.m. and thanked the committee for their continued work of transforming Palo Alto College into a more environmentally friendly campus.

Respectfully submitted by Denise Barkis Richter, Ph.D.