

Annual Report
University of South Alabama
Faculty Senate Environmental Quality Committee
18 April 2011

Committee Members:

Gayle Davidson-Shivers (ED)
Doug Haywick (A&S)
Anne-Marie Kaulfers (COM)
David Langan (CIS)
Trey Lemley (LIB)
Doug Marshall (Chair) (A&S)
Leigh Minchew (NUR)
Mark Perry (COM)

This has been an active and mostly productive year for the Environmental Quality Committee. The primary focus of our efforts has been the creation of a genuine commitment to environmental sustainability on campus. By partnering with like-minded student groups, facilities management, housing, and administration, we have initiated a hopefully significant and enduring change in campus culture. While our initial focus is largely framed as a practical matter of reducing utility costs in the current harsh economic climate, the goals and effects of this push extend across the spectrum of sustainability.

To this end, we were instrumental to two important initial projects this year. The first of these was the design, printing, and distribution of approximately 1500 lightswitch stickers, reminding members of the campus community to turn off the lights when they leave the room. The second of these was the holding of a very successful conservation fair in the student center in February, which drew a larger-than-expected crowd. Exhibitors included Alabama Power, Keep Mobile Beautiful, AlabamaGrows, as well as student groups, among others.

Perhaps the most important outcome of these efforts has been the recognition of the importance of sustainability on the part of administration. This recognition is manifest in their creation of a new, University-level sustainability committee, with responsibility for a wide variety of sustainability programs on campus, from energy and water conservation to recycling, landfill diversion (re-use), and a push to make the campus more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly. Though in a sense, our success at raising awareness has resulted in the project being taken somewhat off the Faculty Senate plate, the committee is structured so as to ensure continued Faculty Senate involvement and leadership, while both bringing a broader spectrum of stakeholders to the table (housing, students, facilities, police, housekeeping, and administration, as well as faculty), and providing significantly greater financial resources than the Faculty Senate alone could bring to bear.

With the responsibility for sustainability thus more broadly distributed, the EQC can hopefully now turn its attention to the "environment" in a broader sense. One aspect of this has been our involvement with the efforts to improve the Glenn Sebastian Nature Trail on campus. The intention is to increase use of this campus resource by adding informational signage around

the trail, providing measured distances for runners and walkers, and building a trailhead kiosk to both mark it as a campus facility and provide emergency shelter to trail users.

Another unintended, and recent addition to our plate has come with the administration's unilateral decision to clear the ravine between the library and the HUMB building over spring break. Given that this area is used by a number of faculty for educational purposes, and that these faculty are thus also experts on it, and on resource management in particular, it is unfortunate that the administration did not consult with the faculty, via our committee, before clearing the area. As committee chair, I am currently seeking to meet with administration representatives to devise a plan to facilitate such consultation in the future.

Doug Marshall
Environmental Quality Committee Chair 2010-2011