



Minutes of SMOG Forum 5th August 2008

Present: Prof Marcus O Connor, Prof James Guthrie, Dr Michael Paton, Prof Geoff Frost, Prof Frank Stilwell, Dr Richard Seymour, Dr Iain Black, Mr Andrew Lee, Dr Stephen Greaves, Prof Steve Elliot, Mr Bob Kotic, Prof Charlie Benrimoj, Dr Chris Dey, Dr Andrew Black, Mr Terry Daly, Dr Joy Murray, Dr Kate Grenot, Prof Andrew Coats, Mr Gavin Thompson, Ms Linda Schofield, Mr John Lavarack, Assoc Prof Ruth Colagiuri, Dr Nonna Martinov-Bennie, Dr Betsi Beem, Dr Diane Hutchinson,

1. Introduction

Marcus O'Connor welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the SMOG Forum and encouraged dialogue from all parties to work together for a sustainable future for the University.

2. Bob Kotic (CFO Perspective)

Highlighted the need for a strategy for The University of Sydney to move forward. He also mentioned Triple Bottom Line (TBL) initiatives in relation to sustainability issues. He also mentioned about carbon neutral issues and how the University could make savings by introducing a more Carbon friendly approach.

3. Charlie Benrimoj (View from the Sustainability Planning Office, HEEF, USSM, and TBL)

Sustainability will definitely become a big issue for organisations in the future as their reputation and branding will depend on their sustainability. If an organisation was seen to be more sustainable then it would be an advantage to their branding strategies. At University of Sydney, electricity accounts for 30% of Carbon footprint and air transport accounts for 10% of Carbon footprint. He highlighted the importance of right timing to actually organise a group of people to deal with such sustainability issues, too soon will deprive creativity, too late and the quality of the outcomes cannot be co-ordinated.

4. Chris Dey (Brief retrospective: from TASC to USIS to SU(ISS and the SI)

In 2002 there was no major funding or support for such sustainability initiatives; therefore it is possible to see how far the University has come in terms of being tuned

in to sustainability across all disciplines. They have just produced a booklet on sustainability for the recently launched USISS. He highlighted the work of the Institute and how it spans over the University as a whole and its support for different initiatives.

5. **Andrew Black** (Scope and potential of USISS)

His main focus was on the scope and potential of USISS. How it was of academic, research, teaching and public interest. It was going to be a centre in which people can approach for advice on sustainability issues whatever their interest. The goal of this institute is to build on the cross disciplinary work that is already being done. A new director for the Institute is required as it is being managed by two interim co-directors. The teaching and learning communications still have to be confirmed but the core beliefs of the university will drive the institute forward.

6. **Terry Daly** (Scope and potential of CIS responses)

Terry provided a handout and explained to everyone the current program initiatives that The University of Sydney are focusing on.

7. **Chris Dey** (Role of the ISA)

Chris spoke about the role of the ISA (Integrated Sustainability Analysis). Their work on how to achieve cost effective ways, reduce costs on campus, and improve efficiency.

8. **James Guthrie** (Role of SMOG)

James spoke about the role of SMOG in the Faculty of Economics and Business. He announced the SMOG Conference in Italy 2009 and the support of the CPA behind this initiative. The SMOG Group links to the GRI, which James is going to meet in October to highlight sustainability issues. The need for communicating across disciplines for the purpose of research and teaching is relevant and required at the University.

9. **Joy Murray** (Implications for student load)

Joy gave a handout about the Implications for student load. She endorsed the fact that a changing climate will have changing work place conditions. Companies will want employees who are more environmentally conscious. The demand for jobs in the green sector will increase due to the restructuring of the economies. She also delivered positive feedback from some research regarding introducing a masters course on sustainability which initiated a lot of interest.

10. **Kate Grenot** (Sustainability Initiatives)

Kate introduced herself and her role to facilitate the forum. She emphasised that there was an enormous amount happening across the University but that we needed to channel that work. She indicated the fact that the university is a community of social consciousness, but that there are a lot of big questions that still needed to be answered.

Discussion

Bob Kotic raised the issue about the Fiscal Policy.

Charlie Benrimoj emphasised the need for the right management at the right time.

Betsi Beem brought up the question, “What is Sustainability”? She feels it is the responsibility of the university to model behaviour but on the other hand be practical as well.

Iain Black raised the question that, “Is it enough to educate the consumers”? as he feels legislation may gain more action from consumers.

Ruth Colagiuri said that we should not underestimate the public. People really do care about the environment and are now more aware of their individual impact and that to move forward we must support individuals by providing stimulus.

John Lavarack said that the university are already engaged in several strategies to improve sustainability but that it was complex and that in order to operate more smoothly a solution was needed.

Geoff Frost highlighted the very powerful role that the university plays in society. It is here that students are taught how to approach problems and solutions. This is a research led institute. Is it viable to measure students social input?? Is it up to the University to change behaviour?

Charlie Benrimoj thinks that the timing is not right now as there is no structure in place.

Chris Dey highlighted the different levels of activities happening at the institute. An idea would be to look at policies and make them more practical. He suggested small steps to look forward to a bigger picture.

Michael Paton suggested that the quality of degrees need to be high but practical at the same time.

Kate Grenot raised the issue of how big and how significant do we make the institute?

Richard Seymour thinks that it SMOG's role to provide the exact forum to work on something together and to bring together co-teaching innovations.

Chris Dey highlighted the need for right incentives to be provided but that at the moment that is not happening.

Charlie Benrimoj, argued that the financial mechanisms are in place that it is up to people to look for them in the right way.

Gavin Thompson gave a short speech on setting up a sustainability foundation at TSU.

Kate Grenot thanked the forum by indicating that the University needed more dialogue and to work together.

James Guthrie concluded by thanking everyone for the lively and focused discussions. He indicated another forum will be held soon for SMOG members to discuss how SMOG can collaborate with the wider Sydney University community.