SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE REPORT FOR UMC CAMPUS ASSEMBLY.  3 April 2014

Crookston Campus Sustainability Committee has not met as in spring semester but an April meeting is planned.

**Sustainability Minor**  Sustainability Minor still under discussion. Katy Nannenga and Rob Proulx are co-chairs of a committee which has representation from all departments. Department heads are in discussion with Academic Affairs as to the governance of interdisciplinary programs. Once that is settled, things will move ahead.

**Earth Month.** The Crookston Students for Sustainable Development (CSSD) are assisting with organizing Earth Month.  1 April – Taylor Brorby, Writer-in-Residence at Holden Village, Washington. Program. “A profile of the Bakken Oil Fields in western North Dakota.”  11-12 April – Students Self Sustain, an all campus teach-in and sustainability celebration featuring student speakers from all campus. Hosted by the Twin Cities campus.  17 April (Thursday Commons)—Troy Goodnough (UMM) and Dan Svedarsky. “A sustainability tale of 2 campuses; contrasting UMM and UMC.”  22 April (Earth Day) – A one-act play about Thoreau’s Walden Pond, coordinated by Ken Mendez, Laurie Wilson, Linnea Barton, and Tashi Gurung. An all-campus featuring mini-talks, displays, and a poster contest.

**Campus and Community Gardening Initiative.** Four brainstorming sessions were conducted in the summer of 2013 to identify potential opportunities, locations, partners, advantages, and disadvantages of a campus garden. A report of discussions was forwarded to Chancellor Wood. All other campuses of the University have a campus garden of some sort. A mini-grant proposal was funded by the U of MN’s Institute on the Environment (IonE) to support “Gardening and Local Foods Suppers” to explore the many dimensions of gardening in the community and on campus. Programs have included: Community gardening by Kristen Fagerlund and Shannon Stassen, A perspective on what a campus/community garden could look like by Noelle Harden – community gardening outreach specialist with Minnesota Extension; The campus garden at the U of MN, Duluth, Randel Hanson, Project Coordinator; Local community gardening projects, a panel organized by Jennifer Dillard; Gardening and high tunnel research/demonstrations by Terry Nennich, Fruits and vegetable specialist with U of MN Extension. The information generated and shared at these sessions has been noteworthy along with the networking connections made. Allen Pederson a Master Gardener from Crookston has contributed an endowment to help support a campus garden and horticulture scholarship program. He was a special guest at some of the seminar suppers. Plans are to initiate a garden project in the summer of 2014 with a campus location and possible other sites in Crookston. A number of educational programs and webinars on local foods and gardening have been coordinated on campus this winter/spring by Extension, especially Linda Kingery of the NW Regional Sustainable Development Partnership.

**Tashi Gurung**, is a part-time Sustainability Assistant working on the local foods initiative, CSSD projects, Earth month project, NW RSDP, and community engagement and outreach. His temporary appointment will conclude in the summer of 2014.

**Biodiesel evaluation** Paul Aakre has students processing waste oil from the UMC Dining Services and converting it to fuel that is being used to power a Department tractor.
Solar and Wind Feasibility studies. A preliminary feasibility study on solar applications has been completed for the campus with the best return on investment being Solar Photovoltaic panels placed on the south-facing roof of Bergland Lab. A cooperative feasibility study for wind generation in conjunction with the city of Crookston is being considered, contingent on funding.

Frontiers in the Environment Lectures Series. The Center for Sustainability coordinated a weekly lecture series in fall semester from the U of MN’s Institute on the Environment (IonE) which are delivered via UM Connect to the Minnesota Room on Wednesdays from 12:00-1:00. Most have a theme related to food, agriculture, sustainability, environment, or climate change. These are archived on the IonE website; http://environment.umn.edu/news_events/events/frontiers.html

System-Wide Sustainability functions. Amy Short of the Minneapolis campus (Facilities Management Department) is the system-wide staff coordinator with each campus having a campus coordinator. The System-wide Sustainability Committee is co-chaired by Pam Wheelock, Vice-President of University Services and Jacquie Johnson, Chancellor, U of MN, Morris. The 2012-2013 annual report of system-wide sustainability activities with sections for each campus is contained at; http://www.uservices.umn.edu/sustainableU/assets/pdf/2012-2013_Sustainability_Report.pdf

Recycling. The recycling working group of the Campus Sustainability Committee has been meeting monthly to better understand the nature and extent of recycling on campus. A handout is being prepared to communicate the status to the campus community with some hard copies to be available in the Student Center and for orientation sessions, and also available electronically on the Sustainability website. Tashi Gurung traveled to the Fosston Incinerator to record a short informative video that will be made available via U-tube as an educational aid. Fosston receives the “commingled” solid waste from campus. Cans for Cancer. CSSD continues to assist the Polk County Relay for Life group in collecting aluminum cans to support cancer research and these are the large blue bins located in 5 key places. Aluminum cans are transported to a drop-off trailer in Fertile. The Sport and Recreation Management Club led by Ashleigh Erdmann will then be removing the pop top openers from these cans for a fundraiser for Ronald MacDonald Houses.

Heritage Hall Raingarden. The Raingarden installed in 2013 by Dan Svedarsky, Brenda Miller, and student workers assisted by Facilities Management staff, a consultant, Eric Castle’s Landscape Construction class, Kent Freberg’s Facilities Maintenance class, and the Habitat Management Techniques class is awaiting the spring/summer to receive more planting and signage.

CSSD water bottles. Last year, CSSD students designed a water bottle unique to the UMC campus to complement the “Hydration Station” project. These were made available free to all students as part of their “Green Fee.” These are made in U.S.A. of recycled materials. Additional bottles have been purchased to supply the new students of fall and spring semester. Bottles are available for purchase by faculty and staff for $ 15.00. Contact Megan Luxford at luxfo003@crk.umn.edu for more information.

Cattail Biomass Research. A $ 74,000 proposal to evaluate cattails as a potential biofuel while simultaneously enhancing wetland wildlife habitat has been recommended for funding by the Legislative Citizens Committee on Minnesota’s Resources (LCCMR). It is currently under consideration by the
Legislature. Partners include; MN DNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Red River Basin Commission, watershed districts, Mattracks, Northwest Manufacturing, and the International Institute for Sustainable Development in Winnipeg, MB. Katy Nannenga is a co-PI in a new U of MN project submitted to the LCCMR with partners including the Departments of Bioproducts and Biosystems Engineering, and Ecology, Evolution and Behavioral Science, and NRRI of UMD. This project proposes to evaluate advanced techniques of processing cattails for bioenergy, nutrient capture through bioremediation, and recycling of phosphorus as an agricultural fertilizer.

Compiled by Dan Svedarsky, 29 March 2014.