

Minutes
President's Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility
Wednesday, January 30, 2013
Gentry Building Room 246
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Dennis Pierce, Kim Fearney, Waldo Klein, Michael Kirk, John Sears, Susan Randolph, Gina DeVivo-Brassaw, Anne Crawford, Celia Guillard, Tim Tolokan, Kyle Muncy, Phil Dwire, Leslie Langworthy, Bill Simpson, Rich Miller, Shareen Hertel

Absent: Nina Hunter, Robert Bird

Chair Shareen Hertel opened the meeting and welcomed all members; she requested a re-ordering of agenda items to lead with Sustainability Issues (i.e., move item 5 in place of item 3 on agenda) in light of the need to accommodate Dennis Pierce, who would be leaving early. All agreed to move order.

Kim Fearney motioned to approve minutes for January 2013; seconded by Kyle Muncy and carried by acclamation.

Update on Sustainability Issues:

Dennis Pierce discussed roll-out of bottle distribution in “Think Outside the Bottle Campaign” and evolution of beverage consumption patterns on campus. Students have picked up the bottles provided as part of this initiative and are using them widely. Faculty and staff have been slower to do so. Susan Randolph suggested a renewed effort/outreach to encourage pick up during the Spring 2013 semester. Mike Kirk recommended possible engagement of University Communications to publicize initiative.

Rich Miller discussed feedback on “Think Outside the Bottle Campaign” indicates greater need for public understanding of beverage issues on campus (e.g., reduced use of cups; enhanced environmental sustainability practices by drink vendors, particularly related to bottle composition; changes in consumption patterns). He also encouraged business units on campus to consider purchasing water-bottle refilling stations to replace older drinking fountains in their departmental offices or areas.

Rich Miller also reviewed UConn's newly released #1 green campus ranking produced by the University of Indonesia (ranks 215 universities worldwide in 2012). We benefit from strong presence of environmentally-oriented sponsored research, education/outreach, and student group activities on related issues (e.g., EcoHusky, EcoHouse/Spring Valley Student Farm, campus sustainability website and blog, etc.).

Rich Miller discussed the emergence of divestiture petitions (on this campus and others nationally) encouraging universities to remove fossil fuel holdings from their endowment portfolios. Shareen Hertel pointed out that the PCCSR's mandate does not cover this issue because of the institutional separation between the University and the UConn Foundation; however, Kevin Edwards (portfolio manager for the UConn Foundation) is open to speaking with the Committee and Chair Hertel will invite him to do so for the February 2013 meeting. In the meantime, she will have circulated to the PCCSR related correspondence between an emeritus faculty member at UCHC and President Herbst.

Rich Miller also noted that the PCCSR has received a commitment from Assistant Vice Provost Dana Wilder to fund a 20-hour/week Graduate Assistant to support the Office of Environmental Policy and PCCSR for the academic year 2013-14. Funds to cover this position will come from revenues generated from the beverage contract that Coca-Cola holds with UConn, and will be drawn from that portion of the funding available for scholarships (i.e., at the discretion the President, to be requested annually subject to approval).

Update on Vendor Code of Conduct

Kim Fearney and Leslie Langworthy briefed the committee on the state of approval of the proposed UConn Vendor Code of Conduct, and on its integration with ongoing policy revisions underway through Purchasing. President Herbst's cabinet has approved the code, and Shareen Hertel will make an informational presentation at the February 2013 Board of Trustees meeting. Thereafter, the Office of Ethics and Compliance will post the code as new "policy" online and will link that posting to the PCCSR website. Once its current major revision of purchasing policies is completed, the Dept of Purchasing will integrate the code into all bids and purchase orders of selected vendors.

General discussion of intent and logistics of implementing code followed. Kyle Muncy and Tim Tolokan discussed integration with licensing efforts more generally. Waldo Klein signaled the steadily incremental nature of these reforms; Kim Fearney and Bill Simpson noted their constructive nature and the scope of involvement of the Office of Ethics & Compliance in education/investigation. Gina DeVivo-Brassaw encouraged that the PCCSR consider a Fall 2013 outreach event to faculty and staff to create practical awareness of the code and its relevance for business practice across units, University-wide.

Update on Sourcing

Kyle Muncy noted that UConn is continuing to follow developments in Bangladesh related to factory fires in that country involving apparel workers. He discussed proposed restitution packages for families of victims that have emerged in draft form from European monitoring organizations and unions (e.g., Clean Clothes Campaign based in the Netherlands, and major European garment unions). The proposed restitution claims focus on major brands with connections to these factories (including Disney Corporation). UConn continues to monitor the situation and can use its relationships with suppliers as leverage to ensure the restitution is successfully made to families.

Kyle Muncy also discussed current proposals from the Fair Labor Association for revisions of its structure of licensee categories (specifically, reforms related to “Category B” licensees) and their potential negative impact on UConn’s ability to manage its supply chain using FLA monitoring services.

The proposed reforms are likely to make it extremely difficult for suppliers which manufacture small volumes of collegiate product and currently audit only a portion of their supply chains using the FLA’s services to continue to do business with mid-size licensing programs like UConn’s. Proposed increases in the cost/scope of monitoring would render it not cost-effective for firms in Category B to do business with any but the largest collegiate licensing programs. There is widespread opposition to these reforms, and Kyle will report back after a February 2013 meeting of licensing directors that will take place in Kansas City.

No new business; next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, February 27, 2013, at 3:00 p.m.