

Green Universities and Colleges Policy and Legislation Work Group

2011 Governor Quinn's
GGCC Sustainable University and Colleges Symposium

Heartland Community College
October 28, 2011:

Policy and Legislation Work Group

The role of this work group is to:

- identify legislative or policy barriers related to sustainability in higher education,
- work with state leaders to remove these barriers, and
- assist state leaders in the development of future legislation and/or policies.

Members: To ensure that the work group's recommendations are representative of higher education throughout the state, we welcome a diverse and engaged group of committee members. All interested parties are welcome to join.

Background

- State legislation and policies tremendously effect higher education's ability to further their sustainability efforts. Therefore the Green Universities and Colleges Sub-Committee, part of the Illinois Green Government Coordinating Council, launched a policy work group on its October 2010 conference call.
- The subcommittee has been working on a list of policy issues, first discussed at the October Green Colleges and Universities Committee conference call. The list included 17 items that have been discussed and prioritized over the last several months.

The Top 4 Priorities

- Priority 1: Waste Reduction.

All of the items in this category could be advanced by increasing the state's solid waste reporting requirements (from 5 yrs. As required presently to every two years) and requiring noticeable progress (e.g. 5%) during each reporting period. No potential obstacles. First need to identify whether the reporting period is identified in the legislation or if it is determined by the agency overseeing the reports (DCEO).

- Mandate construction waste recycling with all new state building projects and renovations.
- Mandate carpet recycling at state buildings, universities and schools. Address surplus property.
- Address composting.
- State GHG policy with corresponding funding for GHS reduction plans

The Top 4 Priorities

- Priority 2: Funding.

Although everyone agreed that funding was a top priority, there are some discussions occurring about establishing a revolving loan fund at the state level. Therefore, the committee will wait for further updates on those conversations before continuing work on this topic.

--Allocate funds to each of the state universities and community colleges for the purpose of awarding sustainable programs and resolving deferred maintenance backlog.

--Improve net metering policies. Require utilities to credit government agencies 100% for energy created by owned or leased alternative energy sources. Net metering is more of a utility issue than a funding issue. Need to benchmark other states' legislation. Would require a legislative change.

--Increase state procurement contract length. State procurement code restricts contract length to max of 10 years, with the exception of this statute (110 ILCS 62/5-10), which currently only allows for EIU's renewable energy project. In order for big renewable projects to be feasible, they will be through contracts with 3rd parties to construct and/or operate. But the pay back is in the 18-30 year range. No company is going to be able to realize a payback in 10 years. Would require a legislative change.

The Top 4 Priorities

- Priority 3: Water
 - Policy needs to change to make it easier for installing gray water system. Mandate with all new state building projects and renovations over 25 million the addition of gray water systems. Main purpose: Reduce use of potable water. Potential obstacles within Cook County, unions.
 - Local building code prohibitions of gray water systems. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is in the process of developing a green amendment to the plumbing code. David Smith of DCEO , the person who reviews the 5-year waste audits from state schools, has expressed interest in talking with the group about how the waste audit information is used.
 - Waterless urinals would require a policy change. Kevin Greene, IEPA, suggested (April, 2011) that “an initiative to change state policy on waterfree urinals would be a challenge” and that given our priorities and resource limitations, we might decide to move in a different direction.
 - Mandate that all state buildings, universities and schools use storm water management.

The Top 4 Priorities

- Priority 4: Purchasing
 - Mandate with CMS a focus on Green Purchasing especially energy joint purchasing agreements. Main purpose: With savings begin to purchase clean alternative energy within the State of Illinois No potential obstacles anticipated. Main supporter large wind farms within the state.
 - How are purchasing departments adjusting to the changes from Senate Bill 51 that took effect on January 1, 2011?
 - Create a preferred green purchasing policy

Next Steps

- Set the agenda for 2012
- Provide an opportunity for new members to join.

Questions/Suggestions/Volunteers

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