

January 14, 2014

Summary: Environmental Council Fall 2013

Dear Dr. Ripich-

The Environmental Council has been busy over the Fall 2013 semester. We met four times, and had active and diverse attendance of students, staff and faculty at our meetings. This semester we had four broad accomplishments:

- Collected student, faculty and staff data on the feasibility of a between campuses (Portland—Biddeford) bus service to operate on Tuesdays and Thursdays (see below).
- Endorsed the internship proposal by the student group, Fossil Free UNE; these Spring 2014 internships (n=5) will focus on increasing education and awareness of divesting the UNE endowment from fossil fuel companies.
- Collaborated with library staff to initiate a study of paper waste in the library printing facilities; we will aid in summarizing the data and make recommendation(s) to reduce waste in the Spring 2014 term.
- Collaboratively operated the UNE River Ferry for seven weeks with the sustainability office (three additional weeks planned for the Spring 2014 term).

Transportation Proposal

The Environmental Council is proposing a bus service between Portland and Biddeford. The idea for a service was initially raised by faculty and staff who were looking for a more sustainable transportation option between campuses. We spent the semester analyzing feasibility data from the entire UNE community to better understand demand for this service. Overall, we believe that there are three reasons that such a shuttle would be successful.

First, the UNE dental and physical therapy students present a predictable population that is based in Portland and takes classes (in the Gross Anatomy Lab) on Tuesday and Thursday in Biddeford. Overall, 66% of the students in these programs (n = 90 surveyed out of >120 in the two classes) said they would ride a shuttle. The number of students interested in the service was actually higher if the shuttle could be offered at more than one time (which we are proposing).

Second, there is a large community of staff and faculty who live in the Portland area and have expressed interest in a shuttle. We conducted a very limited survey and found 15 staff and faculty who would ride a shuttle regularly.

The two possible populations using the shuttle would, we feel, add up to potentially a greater ridership than the Saco River Ferry (which we are not proposing further funding for).

Third, the University of New England's Climate Action Plan calls for a 5% reduction in transportation emissions from 2010 levels by 2016. Transportation emissions account for >1/3 of all University

emissions. In 2010 our transportation (Scope 3) emissions were 6925 metric tons of carbon dioxide. Therefore, this service can contribute to reducing these emissions.

Community benefits to a shuttle

We believe there are diverse benefits to the students, staff and faculty in offering a shuttle service between campuses, including:

- saving money (gas, tolls, parking permits)
- spending time reading/resting/studying/working
- community building
- avoiding time spent on parking
- arriving to class on time
- saving on carbon emissions
- decreasing student's car dependence; (dental medicine, PT and international students would potentially not need to own a car to attend classes on both campuses)
- decreasing pressure on the parking infrastructure on the Biddeford campus
- building greater interconnectivity between campuses
- generating publicity and serving as a student recruitment tool via green press/advertising
- facilitating easier interdisciplinary study where Portland campus students could take more humanities (elective) classes in Biddeford, complementing current endeavors by Vice President for Academic Affairs, Ellen Beaulieu and the Deans of the colleges

We are proposing a Tuesday and Thursday only bus service as a pilot because these are the days that the Portland students travel to the Biddeford campus, thereby conservatively serving the greatest predictable population. We recommend two morning trips from Portland to Biddeford and two afternoon trips from Biddeford to Portland. We have contacted Custom Coach, with whom UNE already has a service contract, to explore the potential cost of this service. Our current contract is established at \$729.00 per day for a 12 hour day (regardless of how many trips are provided) for a 29 passenger bus. For an additional \$10/day, the service could include WIFI. For a 16 week semester, running two days per week, the cost per semester would be \$23,328. We view this cost as a preliminary estimate as 1) there is likely greater demand than 29 people per day, and 2) the current contract is for 12 continuous hours of bus service, regardless of how many trips are needed. We are proposing four round-trips between campuses; therefore, it is possible we could reach a different agreement with Custom Coach or find another vendor. We believe funding for this service could follow a shared model, as with the UNE River Ferry. We suggest a 1/3 split between the President's Office, College of Dental Medicine and the Westbrook College of Health Professions. On 1/9/14 we emailed the Deans of these colleges our proposal.

A full proposal will be generated by the Environmental Council, using its "project initiation form", by April 2014, with a request for support from all identified stakeholders.