

Strategic Planning: A Proposal from the Environmental Concerns Committee
December 18, 2007

We believe that the current round of strategic planning and the next capital campaign represent an important opportunity for Wabash to increase its environmental responsibility. In this proposal we outline a number of areas in which the College can reduce its environmental impact and increase the environmental awareness and responsibility of our students, faculty, and staff.

Environmental concerns have not traditionally had high visibility or status on our campus—Wabash is not a “green” campus by any objective criteria. Individual faculty, students, and administrators have made important improvements in our environmental awareness and actions but we have not had a comprehensive commitment to these matters. The establishment of the Environmental Concerns Committee in 2006 suggests that the College is ready to take on this new responsibility. The broad faculty, student, and administrative support we have received thus far, the current strategic planning initiative, and the imminent capital campaign lead us to suggest that the time is right to raise environmental issues to a higher priority in the culture, academic program, and operation of the College.

We will not detail in this document the need for these changes. Suffice it to say that we are entering a period of increased interest in environmental issues and a heightened sense of urgency about them. We feel that it is the responsibility of colleges like Wabash to lead rather than follow in matters this important. Indeed, such a role is dictated by our mission statement. The changes needed to make Wabash a more environmentally responsible institution will require a financial commitment. Some of these investments represent significant capital expenditures that ultimately result in future savings, many of which will increase as energy and other costs continue to rise. Other investments will not provide a financial return. Rather, they are investments in the kind of good work, citizenship, and education we value. As in many other areas, we make these investments simply because they are the right thing to do.

The mission of our committee is to increase environmental awareness and responsibility on our campus. It is neither our goal nor our charge to *determine* the environmental policies and practices on our campus. Consequently, the items that follow represent a set of potential actions and initiatives that we believe should be considered in the strategic planning process and as components of the capital campaign.

The decisions about which ideas to pursue and their priorities should be the business of the entire campus. We would be pleased of course to provide information and consultation as appropriate. The issues listed below are in no particular order of priority. Each requires both a financial and attitudinal commitment by the College. Our committee would be pleased to provide additional information about any of these initiatives or to participate more directly in the strategic planning process if that would be helpful.

Potential Environmental Initiatives

1. Reduce the College carbon footprint; work toward responsible energy use.
2. Commit to green building practices in new construction and building renovations.
3. Comprehensive recycling.
4. Environmentally responsible landscaping practices: reducing the use of fossil fuels, reducing the use of toxic chemicals, increasing the use of native plants.
5. Environmentally responsible cleaning and maintenance of Wabash facilities; increased use of non-toxic and biodegradable products.
6. Outreach to local environmental groups; provide community resources and leadership.
7. Increase environmental components of the academic program including coursework and immersion experiences.
8. Develop an environmentally responsible (and healthy) food service: increased use of organic, local, and environmentally responsible food sources.

Respectfully submitted,
The Environmental Concerns Committee
December 18, 2007

Dave Krohne, Chair
Marc Hudson
Peter Hulen
Ginny Maharry
David Morgan
Alice Phillips
Nathan Rutz
Brad Weaver