

Minutes
Saint John's Arboretum Advisory Council
Monday, October 5, 2009, 1:00—4:30 p.m.
Natural History Museum, New Science Center, SJU

Present: John Geissler, Scott Daninger, Sarah Gainey, Terri Barreiro, Tom Wicks, Glen Miller, Joel Stanek, Ashley Ver Burg, Tom Haeg, Greg Miller, Steve Saupe, Jenny Kutter

Welcome to Joel Stanek, SJU Senate Community Relations Representative, and Ashley Ver Burg, CSB Senate President, to the Advisory Council for the 2009-10 school year.

Committee Reports

Education

- K12
 - o Started a new wrap-up discussion at the end of field trips this fall. It can either be facilitated by the teacher, or by Arboretum staff. Asks questions like: What did we learn? What do we still wonder about? What comes next? We're getting positive feedback from teachers, teachers are absolutely willing to stay longer to wrap-up, and the discussion is a good bridge between the Arboretum and the classroom.
 - o Energy Educators workshop—funded by Xcel Energy—a 3-day workshop for classroom teachers to give background, energy info, and curriculum planning time to incorporate energy issues in the classroom. Grant also provided funding for the teachers to bring their classrooms on field trips. Teachers will educate colleagues in schools. Good timing for this workshop as we're currently developing more energy-related curriculum.
 - o ISD 742 teacher training—an annual training for teachers in the St. Cloud school district. The district pays for up to 40 teachers to attend the training each year
- Community
 - o Library Programs are rapidly expanding. Over 700 kids were reached this summer. The programs are designed as hour-long indoor presentations along the library's summer reading theme. Ed committee is discussing charging mileage or limiting the radius of how far we'll travel with these programs to make sure they're an efficient use of staff time.
 - o MN Natural History Lecture Series: The first lecture in September was on fossils, alternative energy is coming up in October. The lectures have so far been well-attended and we look forward to this year's line-up.
- CSB/SJU
 - o Took all 1000+ first years on a walk in the Arboretum during freshman orientation. We had over 50 volunteers to lead the students in groups of about 20. Nobody walked on the Chapel Trail. We've had great feedback and already see increased participation with the first-year class. The Orientation committee is looking to repeat the event next year.

- Involvement: an annual event in which clubs/organizations on campus have the opportunity to introduce themselves to students. We had more than 20 new student members join this year and several more signed up to be on the volunteer list.

Lands

- Abbey/University relationship
 - Abbey and University are in the process of gradually separating into two separate corporate structures. The Advisory committee should keep these future changes in mind, but recognize that most of the affects will likely be behind the scenes, not affecting day-to-day operations of the Arboretum.
 - Lands=Abbey; Education=University. Arboretum functions will continue to be balanced between the two.
- Solar Farm
 - Saint John's Abbey and University are installing 3.9 acres of solar panels in a field west of Flynttown. The field will have 1800 solar modules producing 575,000 kWh annually (enough to power 65 homes). It will be the largest PV system in the Midwest, 4x larger than the current system in MN. A motorized tracking system will allow the panels to follow the sun, increasing the efficiency of the panels by 15%.
 - The panels are expected to offset 20% of Saint John's peak energy needs in the summer, and 4% of overall needs annually.
 - The solar farm is the first step in the Abbey's initiative to enhance the monastic community's commitment to education and green energy.
 - The project is funded by a grant from Xcel Energy. Westwood Renewables is doing the installation. A groundbreaking ceremony is being held on Wed, Oct 7.

Fundraising

- Jim Dwyer: Saint John's just finalized an endowment from Mildred & Bernard Kathmann that will fund both the Saint John's Pottery Apprenticeship Program, and Saint John's Arboretum educational programs, including: student employment, fellowship, environmental research, environmental education, related natural resource issues, and logistical support for these projects. The funds will be made available upon the donor's death.
 - Jim recommends that the committee put together a list of priorities for fundraising, or a message we'd like him to "sell" to potential donors. If he knows what we're working on, he can more easily direct funding our way as he has discussions with donors.
- Bus Campaign: Members have already funded 13 buses = 1040 students = \$2080, 30% of our goal of \$7000. We're on track to have a successful campaign. It's been fantastic to see the variety of donations—even some CSB/SJU students have tacked an extra \$2 or \$4 onto their membership renewals to help pay for bussing!

Trends in demand for Arboretum programming

By 2013, if current trends continue, we expect to see:

- 8-10,000 preK-12 students served annually
- 75% of CSB/SJU students served at least once annually (3,000)

- 5-8,000 people participating in community events annually

What do we need to do to handle more people? How many people is too many people? Perhaps we should think about our limit

- Fuel prices: how will that affect numbers in the future? When do we raise our transportation reimbursement rates? We already pay more than \$14,000/year.
- Is what we do unique to who we are? Should we do more to highlight spiritual connections (not just science)?
 - o Spirituality/connection to Abbey is unique to Arboretum—different from other nature centers and Arboretums
 - o Holistic spirituality—renewal from nature
 - o Integration of nature/spirituality in lives, in other parts of campus
- Consider doing more to integrate audiences
- Deepen and broaden CSB/SJU student connection
 - o CSB/SJU student body seems to be craving more connections, want more hands-on experiences
 - o Strategic on-campus partnerships
 - School of Theology: internships for SOT students—help develop spirituality outreach & programming? Partner to host summer Institute on the Envr?
 - Environmental Studies
 - Student Development—Student employee leadership team: look into possibility of outdoor leadership course and/or certificate through the Inspiring Leaders Certificate Program (ILCP)
 - Admissions
 - Internships: somebody to focus specifically on CSB/SJU community outreach?
- Current educational goal reads: “The experience at Saint John’s Arboretum gives all guests improved environmental literacy and **emotional connectedness** to the natural world, which will motivate responsible environmental decisions.”
- **Take Home: The focus on spiritual renewal in the environment could really help address the emotional connectedness piece of our current goal, tying more people to the land at Saint John’s as well as to outdoor experiences in the natural world in general and is something unique to Saint John’s.**

Key directional priorities through 2013:

- Expand curriculum/programming to meet demand and quality standards. NEED:
 - o Staff
 - o \$ to develop
 - o \$ for users

Focus: do more to develop CSB/SJU relationships

- Solve space issue: office/meeting space is tight in the science centers. NEED:
 - o Partner with Abbey
 - o Partner with University
 - o Capital

Identity committee will meet later this month and continue to work on this issue.

- Add staff to support growth/volunteers. NEED:
 - o Fundraising
 - o Partner with Abbey/University
 - o Partner with env. studies

Focus: spiritual renewal, CSB/SJU community outreach intern, paid volunteer coordinator

- Add big grant fundraising. NEED:
 - o Identify sources
 - o Improve assessment evaluation tools to be more competitive
- Protect land and Arboretum status long-term. NEED:
 - o Partner with Abbey & University
- Assessment/accountability. NEED:
 - o Training?
 - o Design/framework of system to use—grad student to help?
 - Can get ideas from CSB/SJU assessment office

Tentatively scheduled for ed committee discussion with assessment office this winter.

- Strategic Partnerships. NEED:
 - o Cultivate stronger relationships with groups on campus
 - School of theology, campus ministry, admissions, others

**Attachment A—Discussion reference:
Recently Unfulfilled Requests AKA Sarah (sometimes) says NO!**

- Engineering non-seed plants classes (high school classes)
- School vacation campus/trips (i.e. Edina)
- Scout programs/promotion at St. Cloud event
- Earth Day speaker at schools
- Additional MN Master Naturalist classes
- CSB/SJU events focused on outdoors vs. EE
- In school presentations before/after field trips
- Bad weather options – indoor – for schools
- Community outreach – off-site
- Natural history questions—over the phone, in person
- Service-learning projects with elementary school kids

Council discussion:

- Looks like most things we're saying no to are off-site. If we're trying to build connections to the Arboretum and the environment, these decisions seem prioritized well.
- How to address increased use of Arboretum as resource for nature-related questions?
 - o On the one hand we're getting our name out there as a resource for the local community.
 - o On the other hand, do we have the staff to cover these questions?
 - o We currently answer what we can, refer people to the extension service, could try to utilize resources in biology more
- How to balance CSB/SJU events focused on outdoors vs. EE
 - o If we're too strictly EE focused are we missing opportunities to build relationships, connections, memorable experiences that tie people to the Arb and land?
 - o Don't want to duplicate the services of the Outdoor Leadership Center and Peer Resource Program. Another area to build strategic partnerships...