Johannesburg: Partnerships Are the New Paradigm

Editorial by Prof. Moomow

While there were many missed opportunities at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, there were also many successes. Unfortunately, governments failed to set targets for adopting renewable energy. However, they did agree to increase the availability of modern energy services, including renewables, increase energy efficiency and eliminate subsidies for existing energy supplies. More importantly, the EU committed $700M, the US $43M, and numerous utilities additional resources towards new energy projects in developing countries.

The watchword from Johannesburg was partnerships among and between governments, NGOs and corporations. Perhaps the most important development was an announcement that Greenpeace International and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development would work together to address climate change. They identified climate change as the most critical issue facing the world, despite the fact that it was not on the agenda at the insistence of the US government.

Tufts was one of the few universities represented by a student delegation: 23 strong - 19 undergraduates and 4 graduate students plus three faculty. The students actively participated and made a real contribution to the process!

The work of TCI was noted in several discussions, and I came away convinced that our approach has been a pioneering one. The official recognition that sustainability requires the actions of communities, corporations and universities and not just governments, is an endorsement of the approach begun at Tufts in 1999.

We need to identify additional innovative ways in which the Tufts Climate Initiative can reduce our own climate altering emissions, and expand participation of our students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding communities. We have an unprecedented opportunity to help meet the sustainability goals set in Johannesburg.

Learning by doing:

35 undergraduates are greening the campus while learning how their lifestyle affects the environment.

The second year for TCI’s Eco-Representatives program has begun. Program Manager Anja Kolimus says “TCI started Eco-Reps when we realized that most students are confused about climate change, its causes, and the connections to other environmental issues and to their lifestyle.”

The semester-long program requires students to attend bi-weekly classes and commit to 1-3 hours of work per week. Each class is organized around a particular environmental topic, including recycling, climate change, water resources, food production, and consumerism. The Eco-Reps, who earn a $150 stipend, receive an extensive manual on environmental issues put together by TCI.

The students complete specific tasks focused on greening the campus. For example, Eco-Reps are helping to distribute 1400 newly purchased lids for recycling containers to reduce contamination of recyclables with trash.

They help with a program called “Do It In the Dark,” co-organized by the undergraduates’ environmental club. For a period of four weeks, residential halls compete against each other to see who can reduce their energy consumption the most.

Eco-Reps hold a light bulb exchange program in which students can trade their incandescent light bulbs for compact fluorescent bulbs that cost more but last longer and are three to four times more efficient.

Goals of the program are to train a core group of students as environmental educators and climate change activists, to increase overall awareness on campus of environmental issues, and institutionalize environmental stewardship within the student body.

"I think everyone cares about the environment, but people choose to ignore things," said Ted Shevin, an Eco-Rep from last year. "I like to think I'm getting through to people. I've convinced a lot of people to turn the lights off in the bathroom. It's a small triumph. If you keep hammering away at them, you get through!"

If you would like to get more information about Eco-Reps, or receive the manual, please contact Anja at anja.kollimus@tufts.edu.

TCI Working For A Solar Residence Hall

TCI is working with the Tufts Construction Department to design a new solar residence hall, planned for construction in 2003-2004. This project is an important next step in Tufts commitment to slow the generation of greenhouse gas emissions from university activities.

Tufts University will receive $500,000 from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative to support a rooftop building integrated photovoltaic system expected to generate about 32 kilowatts (peak) from the sun’s energy, solar hot water, and a series of efficiency measures that are expected to include high performance windows and decreased air conditioning loads. In addition, the project will provide educational material for student courses, faculty and staff awareness, and external audiences.

The design team sees LEED Silver as a realistic goal for the new residential hall.

The design team is using the U.S. Green Building national rating system, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), to evaluate design options. A preliminary evaluation of LEED applicability has been prepared and indicates that LEED Silver is a realistic goal.

TCI’s role in the project stretches back two years and influenced the Request for Design Services, that clearly states that the building shall incorporate many sustainable design elements. Today TCI staff, led by Sarah Hammond Creighton, are hard at work making the final design as efficient as possible.

TCI Calendar

Climate Change Talk
with Ross Gelbspan, Prof. Moomow, Sarah Hammond Creighton
Thursday, October 10, 2002, 7-9pm
Fletcher School, Tufts University
Co-Sponsored by TCI & Rainbow Solution.

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Toward a Real Kyoto Protocol
with Ross Gelbspan
Wednesday, October 16, 2002, 5pm
Fletcher School, Tufts University

Grassroots Climate Protection Conference
Saturday, November 9, 2002
9am - 5pm
Fletcher School, Tufts University
Co-Sponsored by TCI & the Massachusetts Climate Action Network

~ Reporting on Nature’s Deadline:

The scientific, economic, business, political and public policy stories of global climate change
Monday, January 13, 2003
9am - 5pm
Fletcher School, Tufts University
Co-Sponsored by TCI, the Knight Center for Science and Medical Reporting at Boston University, and the New England Science Center Collaborative

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for more information go to:
www.tufts.edu/tci/events.html
Ross Gelbspan Named Senior Policy Fellow at Tufts

Ross Gelbspan, journalist and author, has been appointed as an Edward R. Murrow Senior Policy Fellow at the Fletcher School for the academic year 02-03.

"Soon after I began working on the climate crisis, it became apparent that Tufts is the center of the universe of climate policy studies - at least in the U.S. Not only does the university feature a number of blue-ribbon policy specialists, it is also blazing a trail for all other institutions of higher education with its Tufts Climate Initiative. I profoundly hope I will be able to make a substantial contribution to the intellectual life at Tufts in the coming year," he said.

Gelbspan will be speaking in different venues on campus during the coming year. On October 16, he will be giving a talk at Fletcher on a set of three macro-level, global scale policy strategies designed to reduce emissions worldwide by the 70 percent required by nature while, at the same time, expanding the overall wealth in the global economy.

He is also helping to organize a conference at Tufts for news editors from around the country on January 13, 2002. The conference is designed to sensitize news editors to the need to integrate their coverage of climate change more broadly into their general news coverage.

"The climate issue has so many dimensions - science, weather extremes, technology development, oil industry developments, diplomatic relationships, domestic political movements - that this story should be in the news at least three times a week," said Gelbspan. He believes that more thorough press coverage is the key to widespread public acceptance of the problem.

Gelbspan will also be assisting Dr. Frank Ackerman, Director of Research and Policy Programs at Tufts' Global Development and Environment Institute and Dr. Paul Epstein, of the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School, in their joint project detailing the extent and costs of the negative environmental and public health impacts of our oil-based energy economy.


Tufts Lighting Retrofits Cut CO2 By 750 Tons/Year

Until recently, all over campus, lights were left on overnight and during weekends. In many classrooms, the wiring was such that light switches were located far from the doors and in front of the room, which discouraged shutting off lights. Lights were also regularly left on in offices and bathrooms. But now, thanks to occupancy sensors, classroom buildings stay dark at night.

TCI has worked closely with the Betsy Iseinstein, Tufts Energy Manager and with the Tufts Energy Affairs Council (www.tufts.edu/energyaffairs) to encourage Tufts to invest in motion sensors. In 2001, Tufts decided to invest heavily in these lighting upgrades.

As of September 2002, Tufts has invested $350,000 to equip 17 of its buildings with motion sensors and high efficiency lights. The payback of all these projects is less than three years. The projected annual savings are around $130,000 and 1.24 million kWh in electricity.

This translates to carbon emission reductions of about 750 tons annually. To put this in perspective, this is the equivalent of driving a car that gets 25mpg for about 1.4 million miles.

Another 10 buildings are scheduled to be retrofitted in the near future.

"These lighting retrofits are a no-brainer for Tufts," said Tufts Energy Manager Betsy Iseinstein, “the university saves money, labor costs and at the same time substantially cuts CO2 emissions.”