

To: Faculty Steering Committee

Re: Report from Campus Environmental Advisory Committee

Date: June 2, 2023

The Campus Environmental Advisory Committee (CEAC) met regularly this year. We did not start the year with a specific charge or mandate to explore particular issues. Without such a mandate, we explored a variety of campus issues that pertain to sustainability and the environment. In some cases, these explorations covered topics that already have considerable coverage by other College offices; for example, we learned about the long-term energy planning for the College and met with a consultant from Sasaki to learn about the wide-ranging campus plan with which they are assisting the College.

We do want to bring three issues to the attention of senior staff for future exploration.

I. Electrification of Landscaping Machinery

Annika Harrington '23 prepared a report as an intern with the Zilkha Center on the costs and benefits of moving from gasoline-powered to electric lawnmowers. She presented her work to the committee in December. Based on her research, we recommend that the College develops a plan to replace gasoline-powered equipment with electric equipment when feasible and in an orderly fashion as existing equipment needs to be replaced. Not only would such a policy have benefits in terms of our carbon footprint, it also reduces other harms by reducing noise and exposure to tailpipe exhaust. Even without the environmental benefits, the long-term costs of electric machinery are likely lower than using gasoline-powered equipment, especially as technology improves. Unfortunately, electric substitutes are not yet available for all types of machinery, but we think that switching to electric machines when feasible can generate both financial and environmental benefits. Our sense is that Facilities is amenable to moving in this direction.

If it would be helpful, next year's CEAC could continue with this issue, though it seems like a recommendation that is ready for implementation rather than merely advice.

II. Forest Management Plan

Felicity Purzycki and Tim Roberts from Facilities meet with CEAC in February to present information about a possible forest management plan. Based on a study from the Davey Resource Group from the summer of 2022, they had detailed information about the challenges on campus of managing trees. One appalling feature of the report was the amount of damage done each year to trees on campus from intentional vandalism. In addition, substantial unintentional damage occurs each year. Dealing with tree damage is costly so some sort of education campaign, along with other policies aimed at behavioral modification, might help address an important environmental concern.

Putting aside the impacts of human behavior on the health of the trees on campus, we learned that the urban forest management plan developed by the Davey Resource Group suggests that we need to invest more resources in tree management. Of course, we recognize that budgets are tight, but our sense from our discussion with Felicity and Tim is that some of the financial

needs should be a high priority because they fall into the category of deferred maintenance such that not spending money now might very well mean that we face substantially greater costs in the future. Our recommendation is that resources be put towards implementing a cost-effective forest management plan. Not only will such a plan have substantial environmental and aesthetic benefits, it would also be financially prudent.

III. Structure of the Committee

Several members of the committee feel that it has not been as effective as it should be in recent years. In part, CEAC has a very broad remit but relatively little concrete power over the broad range of topics. Moreover, many of the topics covered involve complex, multi-year issues, a discussion of which is not served well when membership changes frequently. We see two possible ways to improve the functioning of the committee. First, the structure of the committee could be reconstituted. We have attached a specific proposal to bring to the faculty to reform the charge and composition of the committee. Second, more guidance from Senior Staff regarding especially important issues for CEAC to address would be useful.

To: The Faculty Steering Committee
From: CEAC 2022-23
Date: May 29, 2023

PROPOSAL FOR CONSIDERATION:

The Campus Environmental Advisory Committee (CEAC) is a permanent committee created by a vote of the faculty. A change in its composition and/or charge requires faculty approval. We, the 2022-23 members of CEAC, ask the Faculty Steering Committee to consider and bring to a vote of the faculty the following proposal for revising CEAC's charge and structure.

Current charge and structure of CEAC
as shown on <https://committees.williams.edu/faculty-standing-committees/ceac/>

The Campus Environmental Advisory Committee (3 Faculty-6 ex officio-3 Students) acts as a forum for communication among students, faculty, staff, and administrators on environmental matters; advises and works to develop policy on matters of environmental stewardship in the operation of the College; assists in developing relevant environmental resources and strategies for Williams; and fosters a sense of shared environmental responsibility among various constituencies and individuals on campus.

Appointed faculty membership includes the chair of the committee and two other faculty members, appointed by the Dean of the Faculty. Student membership consists of three students appointed by the College Council. The committee's ex officio members are the Director of Facilities Management, the Director of Design and Construction, the Director of Dining Services, the Director of the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives, the Chief Technology Officer, and the Director of the Center for Environmental Studies.

The committee reports to the President of the College and to the college community as a whole. In keeping with the committee's mission, members of the college community may attend meetings at the discretion of the chair.

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Proposed new charge and structure of CEAC

As it would appear on the CEAC website (<https://committees.williams.edu/faculty-standing-committees/ceac/>).

The Campus Environmental Advisory Committee provides advisory functions to the President and Senior Staff and works to develop policy on matters of environmental stewardship in the operation of the college.

Appointed faculty membership includes the chair of the committee and two other faculty members, appointed by the Dean of the Faculty. The chair normally serves a two-year term and faculty members serve staggered two-year terms, i.e., the two faculty members overlap for one year. Students appointed to the committee likewise serve staggered two-year terms beginning as juniors. Additional committee members are the Director of the Center for Environmental Studies, the Associate Director of the Center for Environmental Studies and the Director of the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives (*ex officio* members). The Provost, or a designated representative at the Associate Provost level, serves as *ex officio*, non-voting member.

The committee's work program is set prior to the start of the academic year through consultation between the committee chair, Senior Staff, and the Director of the Zilkha Center. If there is a change in committee chairs, the outgoing committee chair will also be included in the consultation. The committee meets at least monthly during the period between Convocation and Commencement.

The committee reports to the President of the College and to the college community as a whole. It submits an annual report summarizing its work and any recommendations for operational and/or policy changes to the President of the College and the Faculty Steering Committee following the conclusion of its work, typically in June. In keeping with the committee's mission, members of the college community may attend meetings at the discretion of the chair.

Membership

3 Faculty, including the committee chair
Director of the Center for Environmental Studies
Associate Director, Center For Environmental Studies
Director of the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives
The Provost or a designee at Associate Provost level
2 students

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Below is the current charge and structure of CEAC, as listed on the committee's website, with proposed deletions shown in blue and proposed new language shown in green.

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Membership:

3 Faculty, including the committee chair

Director of Facilities Management

Director of Design and Construction

Director of Dining Services

Director of the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives

Associate Director of the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives

Chief Technology Officer

Director of the Center for Environmental Studies

The Provost or designee at Associate Provost level

3 2 students

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RATIONALE:

CEAC has grown into a large committee with an expansive charge and high turnover rate. As a result, it cannot always provide effective, timely advice, recommendations or policy proposals on complex questions of campus sustainability — its most important function. CEAC is also charged with performing communicative and community-building functions that are already performed by two campus units, the Center for Environmental Studies and the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives, as well as by student groups such as the Williams Environmental Council. Furthermore, many of its six *ex officio* members are already involved in sustainability-related work as a regular part of their positions at the college. Because of the diversity of topics that CEAC has been and will be working on, their involvement in regular committee work is not necessary and instead burdens their schedules and makes scheduling meetings more difficult. Instead, they would be consulted and their expertise included on an as-needed basis.

The current members of CEAC believe that a smaller, more balanced committee of faculty, staff, and students coupled with multi-year appointments and direct deliberations with the Provost, would eliminate these redundancies while providing better advice on issues such as the college's long-term sustainability goals, reporting practices and measures of accountability, building certification policies, and strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition to the faculty chair and two faculty appointed by the Dean of the Faculty in consultation with the Faculty Steering Committee, the proposed streamlined CEAC membership would include the Director of the Center for Environmental Studies, the Provost or appropriate designee (*ex-officio*), the Associate Director of the Center for Environmental Studies (*ex-officio*), and the Director of the Zilkha Center (*ex-officio*). This composition and the proposed service length of two years would, furthermore, improve the continuity of CEAC's work on particular issues, which often extends over multiple years.