



Master Planning Council (MPC)

MEETING NOTES: Wednesday, June 8th, 2005

OFFICE OF THE ARCHITECT FOR THE UNIVERSITY

Sustainability: Economy, Equity, Environment

A Working Definition of Sustainability

From the MPC memo dated June 5th, 2005

Sustainability implies that the critical activities of a higher education institution are - at a minimum - ecologically sound, socially just and economically viable, and that they will continue to be so for future generations. A truly sustainable college or university would emphasize these concepts in its curriculum and research, preparing students to contribute as working citizens to an environmentally sound and socially just society. The institution would function as a sustainable community: embodying responsible consumption of food and energy, treating its diverse members with respect, and supporting these values in the surrounding community.

Attendees

David J. Neuman, FAIA
Architect for the University

Julia Monteith, AICP
Senior Land Use Planner, Office of
the Architect

Edward L. Ayers
Dean's Council Representative

R. Edward Howell
VP and CEO of the Medical Center

Craig K. Littlepage
Director of Athletic Programs

Rebecca White
Director of Parking & Transportation

Patricia M. Lampkin
VP for Student Affairs

Casey Williams
School of Architecture

Robert P. Dillman
Chief Facilities Officer

James E. Tolbert
City of Charlottesville, Director of
Neighborhood Development Services

Colette Sheehy
VP for Management & Budget

Gene Block
Vice President and Provost

L. Cameron Howell
Assistant to the President

Michael Shveima
Intern, Office of the Architect

Questions Posed to Members of the Council

From the MPC memo dated June 5th, 2005

1. Of the three E's that represent sustainable goals - Economy, Equity, Environment - how would you rank them in level of importance for the University of Virginia in the next 10 years?
 2. Given your position and its responsibilities, in which of these goals could the University achieve the largest results during the same period?
 3. Can you list which departments, academic or administrative, that can affect each of the E's at the University of Virginia?
 4. Which areas would be negatively affected by a shift to a more sustainable UVA in the next decade?
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7 out of 9 responders to the email, ranked the E's:

Economy

Environment

Equity

Does a proper balance exist in these three elements? It is apparent that each comes with unique opportunity costs. It is my belief that the university model means equity, since the goal is to bring to realization the greatest possible good for the community - be it in the realm of learning or research or any other endeavor.

- David Neuman

Responses from Around the Table

Ed Ayers: Job creation is a doable goal for scaling up the academic mission, but it seems to me that **environment** is the leading factor since we could control that best or have the most impact or effectiveness in this domain.

Ed Howell: There is another E we could consider here - **employment**. Furthermore, it should be recognized that the University is under-capitalized both in the Medical School and at-large. In fact we are currently struggling even to maintain the capital we have. One can note areas such as the sciences with *phenomenal* needs. In comparison, look at the new 300 million-dollar Science Center at MIT, for example. And finally, consider the circuitous and less-than-gracious routes one is forced to navigate through the Medical Center facilities - "way-finding" should certainly be considered a vital part of 'environment'.

Craig Littlepage: Ranked first on my list is **equity**, followed by environment. When one thinks of the great challenges we face as an institution, "opening up the doors to all" must be at or near the top of the list.

Pat Lampkin: I believe the perception of UVA would be to rank the three: economy, environment, equity. But as a representative of the Department of Student Affairs, I am inclined to rank **equity** first, followed by environment. Equity is essential to create one whole community, rather than a series or lesser groupings of smaller independent or divisible groups.

Casey Williams: **Environment** can be the leading edge, the catalyst for growing the economy and adding to the overall equity of the community more easily. Here, my background with the School of Architecture is apparent when I say that the Bill McDonough Triangle represents the ideal.

Bob Dillman: **Discipline** will bring a better solution. One must be mindful of all three and be careful of letting emotion drive decisions.

Jim Tolbert: **Environmental** choices can be fundamental.

Pat Lampkin: I share the same ranking order as Craig, with equity first and environment second. **Equity** is about expanding opportunities, opening up the choices for everyone. In terms of a "pie" metaphor, equity is not necessarily about evening out the slices, but rather expanding the whole thing. To cite a specific example, think of the challenge of immigration. Foreign-based students may not necessarily choose to stay anymore.

Colette Sheehy: Certainly not a surprising answer coming from the Department of Management & Budget: **economy** is on top. Cost-saving measures are crucial.

Gene Block: **Economy** would come first, especially in regard to practical terms such as bonds and cost/benefit analysis.

Cameron Howell: **Economy**, in terms of a gateway; a steward of the money has to withstand scrutiny and build trust and therein be free to pursue other goals.

Michael Shveima: As a graduate of the School of Architecture I agree with Casey on looking to the McDonough Triangle as an ideal. One could also think of these three E's in terms of states of matter: **environment** is solid, controllable; economy is liquid, assets can be enlisted for a variety of needs; equity is gas, every present - powerful if concentrated in the minds and actions of the community, and significantly weakened if let to dissipate.
