

Going Greener UEA

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Union notes:

1. As a result of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions key components of the climate system are becoming increasingly stressed, with both the mean ocean and air temperatures rising along with an intensification of the hydrological cycle (IPCC, 2001, 2007; Barnet et al, 2005; D'Arrigo, 2006; Osborn and Briffa, 2006, Treydte, 2006).
2. Peak oil is looming, not the end of oil, but certainly the end of cheap oil. Reduction in supply and continued demand will inevitably lead to escalating prices, which will leave oil-dependent organisations with serious economic consequences.
3. Currently the global economy is tied into a dependence on oil and other fossil fuels.
4. The UK government is legally committed to an 80% reduction in greenhouse emissions by 2050. However, a body of research is growing that even with these dramatic reductions the inertia in the system will take the climate system past a tipping point where large carbon stores and sinks, which overshadow the carbon stored in fossil fuels, will be irreversibly released.
5. To meet these targets, university funding in England has now been directly linked to carbon reductions as part of the Higher Education Funding Council of England's (hefce) Carbon Management Strategy (hefce, 2010).
6. Over 50% of the HE sectors CO₂ emissions are related to procurement, these emissions will be included in the 80% reduction targets (hefce, 2010).
7. The students union currently does not have representation on UEAs Planning and Resources committee, which makes decisions that have a large effect UEAs carbon emission.
8. There are large amounts of funding available for businesses such as the Students Union Services Ltd (up to £600,000) in the form of interest free loans to help facilitate a transition to a low carbon economy (Carbon Trust, UEA Revolving Green Fund).
9. Current plans to change light bulbs in the student union bar (agreed in 2007/08) that would save the SU over £1000 a year have not been implemented due to a lack of staff resources to manage this process, there are many other similar projects.

10. The transition town movement is a rapidly expanding grass roots movement aimed at tackling the twin problems of climate change and peak oil in a holistic manner.
11. Union council passed a Transition Campus motion in 2007/8.
12. The transition model encourages participation and takes into account psychological barriers to change, encouraging individual and communal wellbeing in parallel with action.
13. There are also structural elements though which inhibit pro-environmental behaviour. These can take the form of direct barriers to access resources (no recycling bins available) to motivational barriers (one choice in ten on a menu is a vegetarian option).
14. Previous student led environmental campaigns have focused on challenging these structural barriers at UEA by driving the university to increase the level of resources put in to reducing the institutions impact, monitoring current impacts and making commitments for improvement.
15. These campaigns have been highly successful and have led to:
 - UEA accepting an environment policy developed by over 300 students.
 - Employing a full time environment manager.
 - A comprehensive environmental audit.
 - Significant time-bound targets for the reduction of specific environmental impacts.
 - A carbon reduction strategy to cut UEA's total carbon emissions by levels significantly ahead of government targets.
 - An agreement to monitor business air travel with a view to stopping expenses for short haul flights.
 - The development of an environmental and ethical, procurement policy.
 - An inter-departmental E&E competition.
16. UEA has signed up to the Degrees Cooler program. They are one of 20 universities who are part of this scheme which is focused on pro-environmental behaviour change. The scheme is run by NUS with partner organisation; Student Switch Off, EAUC, LSx, People & Planet and Student Force.
17. The Degrees Cooler program is funded by the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (defra) and is a pilot project which will be linked to much wider funding if good results are achieved.
18. The Going Greener campaign element of Degrees Cooler is a grass-roots student led campaign which will vary at each institution it takes place. It is based on the Transition Town movement and Go Green campaign, focusing on removing barriers and encouraging behaviours in four areas; food, transport, waste and energy.

Union believes:

1. As individuals and an institution we have a social and ecological responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
2. The Transition Model will help the Students Union and UEA to meet the 80% reduction target and beyond.
3. Unless the Students Union and UEA are weaned off oil there will be considerable implications both socially and economically for students and the university as a whole.
4. Many students feel very strongly about climate change and seeing, wasteful and non-progressive practices on campus can lead to a diminished student experience.
5. University funding is now linked to their performance in reducing CO2 emissions, meaning that tackling climate change on our campus now directly affects students as students.
6. Attempts by the university to work towards sustainability should be encouraged, but should also be integrated into a wider holistic approach to sustainability of the campus.
7. Students have led on the sustainability agenda at UEA for a number of years and should continue to do so with commitment from the Students Union.
8. The students union would benefit from savings in energy bills.
9. The student voice on sustainability should be represented on all of the universities committees and contribute to UEAs carbon management strategy.
10. The students union should engage with diverse sections of the UEA community to develop a positive and inclusive, vision of a low-carbon UEA.
11. Students on a national level should have a key role in delivering the low-carbon future that will save guard our future wellbeing.
12. The union of UEA students should support the Going Greener campaign, in order to secure further funding off defra for student led environmental campaigning.

Union resolves:

1. To support the Going Greener UEA process, through an educational campaign about peak oil and climate change.
2. To set an example in each of the following areas and remove barriers the students union will:

- Waste: mandate the executive to work towards removing all non-reusable non-recyclable plastic glasses in the bars and lcr.
 - Transport: hold a termly 'Reward a Cyclist Day' where students who cycle in will receive a free cup of tea or coffee from the Hive.
 - Food: hold a termly 'Meat Free Monday' when the Bar, Hive and UFO will sell discounted vegetarian options.
 - Energy: employ an environmental member of staff (not necessarily fulltime) who can reduce the union's energy consumption and apply for grants.
3. To lobby the university to:
 - Offer a free low-carbon breakfast for cyclist on 'Reward a Cyclist Day'.
 - Sell meat free food in Zest, Blend and staff catering on 'Meat Free Mondays'.
 4. To engage students and staff to find out their vision for the future of a sustainable UEA which will be presented to the university.
 5. To set aside £5000 for on campus student led environmental projects that will reduce the CO2 emissions of the university community while improving the student experience. £4000 will be available for students to set up projects while £1000 will be used as a prize fund for the most effective projects.
 6. To lobby the university to match the £5000 fund for student led sustainability projects.
 7. To lobby the university to have a student representative as a member of UEA's Planning and Resources committee.
 8. To lobby the university to have termly open forums with UEAs Sustainability Committee and environmental members of staff, to discuss UEAs carbon reduction strategy.
 9. To lobby the university to assess the level of sustainability in teaching and bring monitoring of sustainability in teaching into the environmental management system.

Passed 29 April 2010
