



Wednesday, June 6, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: MICHAEL ALFANO, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

FROM: Lynne P. Brown, Sr. Vice President for University Relations and Public Affairs and co-chair, Sustainability Task Force

Alison Leary, Vice President for Facilities and Construction Management and co-chair, Sustainability Task Force

RE: The Report of the Sustainability Task Force for the 2006-07 Academic Year: A Recap of Our First Year and a Roadmap to Future Achievements

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On behalf of all the members of the Sustainability Task Force, it is with great pride that we present you with our Year-End Report and Recommendations to the University Administration. Its findings and recommendations reflect not only the work of the Task Force's members, but also the deep interest and commitment of our community to the cause of sustainability.

You charged the Sustainability Task Force with conducting a comprehensive assessment of NYU's environmental sustainability efforts; recommending a prioritized plan – the Green Action Plan – to improve NYU's environmental footprint and save energy; engaging faculty, students and administrators in securing the successful implementation of the plan; and developing a method to award funds for research and demonstration programs in environmental sustainability.

A Year of Achievement

Our Sustainability Initiative is off to a promising start. In the space of one academic year we have:

- Made the largest-ever purchase of wind energy (118,000,000 KWh) by any American university
- Decided to move forward with the development of a new, cleaner, greener co-generation facility which will reduce pollutants and greenhouse gases while increasing efficiency
- Awarded 15 competitive grants in response to 46 proposals from students, faculty, and administrators for sustainability projects, including:
  - The Residential Energy Challenge, which will reduce energy consumption via a competition between dorms
  - The Healthy Landscape Demonstration Garden, which will employ chemical-free, sustainable, organic gardening techniques
  - The Solar/Wind Generation Project, which will gather data for the future development of renewable energy on campus
- Hired full-time sustainability staff
- Made sustainability a key principle in our strategic planning initiative, "NYU 200"
- Begun a collaboration with the City as it moves forward with PlaNYC 2030, and
- Joined several organizations – regional, national, and higher-education based – that emphasize campus sustainability

In addition, the topic is also of interest to faculty: this year, the Faculty of Arts and Science announced the creation of an Environmental Studies major.

The enthusiasm for enhancing sustainability is great. Not only have NYU's actions been recognized externally – in April, the Environmental Protection Agency named NYU a winner of its Green Power Challenge – but the response on campus to making NYU greener has also been positive, strong, and widespread. NYU administrative departments have launched or expanded numerous sustainable initiatives independent of the Sustainability Task Force's efforts, demonstrating a high level of collaboration and engagement, which bodes well for future initiatives.

### Towards a Greener Future

While we are energized by these early successes, we recognize that there is much work to be done. The Task Force focused principally on developing an ambitious and comprehensive set of recommendations that will improve NYU's impact on the environment, strengthen the health and well-being of the NYU community, and – where possible – introduce efficiencies and savings.

The recommendations range widely in scope and scale. Among the key recommendations:

- **Instituting a Sustainability Advocate Program and RA Sustainability Training Program** to train volunteer NYU staff and RAs to “green” their departments and residence hall by educating their colleagues and implementing sustainability improvements in their offices.
- **Creating Uniform Environmental Purchasing Policies** that establish standards for what constitutes an environmentally preferable product across many areas of university operations, as well as when such a product should be chosen over the available alternatives.
- **Carrying out a Comprehensive NYU Sustainability Assessment** in Academic Year 2007-08, with annual updates thereafter. While we have begun to document many of NYU's environmental impacts, we cannot fully understand where we currently stand without such an assessment. By establishing baselines about our current environmental impacts, we can prioritize efforts, set goals, and benchmark progress.

The peril our world faces from climate change and energy disruptions is recognized across the global community. Universities have always been a resource for finding solutions to overcome even the most daunting challenges. Through the Green Action Plan, NYU is poised to become a leader on sustainability efforts; we have committed and receptive partners among our own campus community, in City Hall, among our peers in higher education, and in the world community. We can take great pride in knowing that our devotion to these issues will be absorbed by our students, and those principles will resonate in the world as our graduates take leadership positions in all the fields of human endeavor.

Every member of the Task Force has sincerely devoted him- or herself to our efforts. In particular, however, we and the co-chairs of all the subcommittees would like to thank and recognize the hard work of Jeremy Friedman, Project Administrator for the Sustainability Task Force, and Regina Syquia, Manager of Special Projects, University Relations and Public Affairs.

We are excited about the challenge and eager to take it on. We thank you for your commitment on these critical issues, and look forward to continuing to advise and work with you on them. To that end, and at your suggestion, we will plan a meeting with you and The Steering Committee this month to begin the crucial work of reviewing and implementing these recommendations.