

A white paper petitioning for a stronger focus of sustainability for the Hoover Dining Hall and suggestions for its further development.

Administrative Response

The DSG white paper on Hoover Hall rightfully acknowledges the various steps that DePauw University has taken to support its commitment to environmental sustainability in recent years. The white paper's argument that the construction of new buildings offers the University an opportunity to move towards carbon neutrality is also well-founded. For this reason, sustainability efforts have been incorporated into the planning for Hoover Hall, and a firm has been specifically contracted with to manage this aspect of its design (Heapy Engineering).

A number of the technologies the white paper has suggested might be implemented have also been identified and discussed in relation to the Hoover Hall project. In all of these cases these technologies offer advantages to the University that should encourage us to pursue them. In the case of microturbines, for example, there is an attractive return on investment; in the case of a solar array, there is a benefit of making visible our commitment to environmental responsibility. In some cases, however, Hoover Hall may not be ideal as a site for these technologies. This can be because of its limited level roofline (or other design details), as in the case of a solar array, or because our existing infrastructure would push us towards a different location (the microturbines' CHP efficiency would work best if installed at the central heating/cooling plant, for example).

But all of these technologies (including some you mentioned that I have not covered here, like graywater systems) continue to be of interest to the administration and to the Campus Sustainability Committee. We are currently actively researching funding opportunities for both solar arrays and microturbines in order to develop a plan for these technologies that can work in the context of DePauw's current finances. Our overall goal of working towards carbon neutrality will require that we find ways to move forward with these kinds of renewable energy technologies. Meanwhile, we are also working through the Hoover Hall design process to maximize the building's energy efficiency and otherwise minimize its carbon footprint, and conversations continue about how best to manage University sustainability concerns in a time when Facilities is heavily burdened with projects.

The DSG's investment in these issues represents a valuable concern for the long-term strength of our University, and for this reason the administration welcomes this white paper, and encourages the DSG to work with the Campus Sustainability Committee to further develop its ideas about how the University can continue to strengthen its sustainability program in the years ahead.