

## DEPAUW STUDENT GOVERNMENT

White Paper No. 5

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

### **Introduction:**

Sustainability is a growing part of the DePauw experience, both in and out of the classroom. DePauw students, faculty, staff and administrators have recently taken many steps that demonstrate our commitment to a sustainable future. Some examples include the addition of the Office of Sustainability and the permanent position of Assistant Director of Sustainability, which reflect the importance of a space to collaborate on environmental projects and the presence of consistent support year after year. Additionally, the implementation of Environmental Fellows as a Program of Distinction, and the subsequent increase in environmentally-focused courses, demonstrate DePauw's response to the need to integrate issues of the environment into our academic curriculum.

On a larger scale, DePauw joined many other universities in 2008 by signing the American Colleges and Universities Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), pledging to take steps toward carbon-neutrality by the year 2040. This eventually led to the pledge to reduce carbon emissions that occurred in December of 2012 when DePauw Student Government passed a resolution encouraging sustainable practices in all university additions. It states, "Therefore, be it resolved, that as DePauw continues toward carbon neutrality, solar power, wind power, geothermal heat pumps, and all other viable renewable energy and energy efficiency measures should be utilized to the greatest extent possible on the DePauw University campus" (Fadel, Slate, Chance).

### **A Greener Future for Campus: The Hoover Dining Hall**

The previously outlined examples are clear steps toward a more sustainable campus and planet. They also demonstrate that sustainability is an important issue to this campus. As a university, we need to continue to make future decisions, especially regarding construction of new buildings, that bring us closer to becoming carbon neutral.

As plans of the newest addition to our campus are being finalized, we want to ensure that our values of sustainability are being upheld. As the Hoover Dining Hall will be a central part of our campus, it must serve as an example of what is most important to our university. In order to achieve this, the Campus Sustainability Committee is reviewing the efficacy and viability of several alternative energies. Among these are microturbines, which have the capacity to reduce the amount of lost energy by generating electricity at the site and by capturing the heat emitted by an engine, reducing carbon emissions by up to 60%. According to Renewable Energies, a site based in the UK about different renewable resources, reports that "modern plants are limited to efficiencies of about 33 - 60% at most, so 40 - 67% of the energy is exhausted as waste heat." The use of a microturbine system in the new Hoover Dining Hall would bring a high degree of prestige to our university, as we would be the first in the state of Indiana to use this technology. While it would initially run on natural gas, it would have the potential to shift to biofuel in the future, decreasing emissions even further.

Due to the importance of a visual representation of green technology, we believe that a photovoltaic system (solar panels) would also be a positive addition to Hoover Dining Hall. While a photovoltaic system would not have the capacity to harness enough electricity to power the entire dining hall, it would be an impressive step forward and would significantly contribute to lessening our carbon footprint.

Another highly innovative system that we would be excited to see on campus is a greywater system that would reuse sink water and collected rainwater for toilet tanks and flushing water, which is not necessary to purify. This system would help us preserve resources and prepare for an ever-changing climate and the potential future of living in a water-scarce reality. Again, with a greywater system in place at our university, we would be the first university in the state of Indiana to implement this progressive technology. These technologies, especially if used in combination, would allow us to further our efforts toward the goal of carbon neutrality by 2040.

### **Importance: Sustainability in Higher Education Makes Sense in the Long-term**

We believe that it would benefit the university tremendously to make as many sustainable additions as possible to the new Hoover Dining Hall. In addition to the important environmental benefits of a more sustainable dining hall, such as decreasing the use of raw materials and waste in construction and conserving water and energy, there are other potential tangible gains to the university as well. These sustainable additions will enhance our educational mission by serving as a physical learning tool and by translating our classroom-acquired knowledge of environmental systems and alternative energies into action. Further, they will attract and positively influence prospective students, who are also becoming more invested in sustainability. A more sustainable dining hall will also serve as an example for other institutions of higher education, especially in the state of Indiana, which is notoriously driven by coal power. Additionally, it is important to note that these additions are financial investments that will save the university money in future operating costs, and will eventually pay for themselves.

### **Conclusion:**

An institution of higher education is a unique environment that allows for social, environmental and technological innovation. We need to seize this opportunity to be on the forefront of sustainability in higher education, and to be leaders of an important cause, starting with the construction of our campus facilities. Sustainability is valued by the students of DePauw University and we, the students, hope that you take the suggestions above into account when making upcoming decisions concerning the Hoover Dining Hall.

Sincerely,

Allison A. Orjala, 2014 & Jacquelyn E. Stephens, 2014

This initiative comes with the pledged support of the following students: Kojo T. Addaquay, 2016; Curt R. Hardacre, 2015; Shannon K. Crosby 2014; Laura E. Crawford 2014; Leif I. Anderson, 2015; Zhiyan Jiang, 2015; Elizabeth K. Dilbone, 2015; Sara C. Lejsner, 2016; Sandra Bertin, 2015; Sandy Tran, 2014; Andrew Petersen, 2016; Anna Urso, 2014; Olivia Flores, 2014 (DSG Vice President); Walker H. Chance, 2014 (DSG President).

Motion by: Ashlylahit

Seconded by: Dore D

Aye: 14


Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Nay: 1

Abstain: 0

Abstain: 0

  
Walker Chance, President

Attest:

  
Colleen McArdle, Secretary

