I. Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy

Following is feedback for Kathy Johnson on the EPPP:

The consensus of the committee was that the report does an excellent job of stating the purpose of the policy, and laying out the multiple issues that go into deciding whether a product would be “environmentally preferable.” We’d like to commend the group of staff and students who put it together for their thorough work in this regard.

SRC felt it was less clear how the policy would be put into use on a practical level: both what the intentions were about which purchases the policy would apply to, and how easily Macalester community members could apply the policy. We had a set of suggestions to put on the table for discussion:

- Clarify whether all purchases at the college should be held to this standard, and if not which ones might be;
- Prioritize which purchases would have the biggest impact under this policy;
- Prioritize which purchases could most easily be brought into alignment with this policy;
- Prioritize, if possible, the multiple features described in the report, e.g., which is more important, packaging or manufacture;
- Consider providing support to the community in the form of lists of products or producers, so a staff member wanting to buy more sustainable products could look up the information locally – could this information be maintained by student volunteers or workers, or put together from existing sources online;
- Create a shorter, one-page summary of the policy to distribute to staff, faculty, and students with very concrete suggestions about ways to take these issues into account when making purchases;
- Consider ways to avoid multiple letters being sent to the same suppliers by different purchasers on campus, perhaps by maintaining a central repository of letters, or limiting letters to suppliers to those who sell sufficient supplies to campus;
- Develop a pilot program with several different kinds of purchasers and products to test how easy or difficult it is to work within the policy;
- Develop “Best Practices” documents to inform purchasers about what they could be doing about, for example, parties on campus, cleaning supplies, office supplies, etc.
- Talk to our partners in the ACTC about joint purchases, sharing information, etc.
II. Increase Visibility of Committee

Ideas include increased coverage in the MacWeekly, outreach to student activist groups, meeting with student organization leaders and frequent emails to all Mac community members.

Next meeting will be scheduled for February 2009.