

Summary

WORLD ENERGY CITIES ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP

Meeting

HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON,
2 & 3 MAY, 2011

ATTENDING:

Joe Pratt	University of Houston
Rune Fitjar	International Research Institute of Stavanger (IRIS)
Geoffrey J. Hay	University of Calgary
Richard Laing	Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen
Oluf Langhelle	University of Stavanger
Aslaug Mikkelsen	Rector, University of Stavanger
Sonia N. Mykletun	Texas-Norway Alliance (1 day)
Gunnar Nerheim	University of Stavanger
Gjerald Strickland	University of Houston (2 day)
Gillian Wood	Dalhousie University, Halifax (1 day)

The workshop was held in connection to the regular meeting in the World Energy Cities Partnership (WECAP) in Houston. The WECAP event started with a nice dinner at the Arcodoro Restaurant Sunday 1st of May, sponsored by Greater Stavanger, Norway.

PURPOSE

The workshop followed on from three previous workshops (Stavanger, Houston and Perth) in what is now called WECAP. The purpose of WECAP is to share research projects being proposed and developed by academic institutions in various energy cities, with a view to seeking collaborative partnerships and funding for joint international projects.

PRESENTATIONS

At the first day of the workshop, May 2nd, several projects were presented and discussed in the group:

- Energy Capitals Project - Professor Joe Pratt, UH
- Regional Innovation Cultures - Dr Rune Fitjar, IRIS/UiS
- Construction industry SMEs and carbon reduction – Professor Richard Laing, RGU
- Sustainable urban design and planning – Professor Richard Laing, RGU
- HEAT – Home Energy Assessment Technologies – Dr Geoff Hay, University of Calgary

A project proposal from Dr. Janet Stewart was also circulated. It centres on the concept of energy flows and flows of capital, and especially the cultural, social and political consequences of energy activity, and is to be submitted for funding from the Leverhulme

Trust (UK) with the aim of establishing an International Network linked to WECP (<http://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/funding/IN/IN.cfm>).

The 2nd day of the Workshop discussed the proposal from Aberdeen (from Kathryn Fowler and Mark Critchley, University of Aberdeen) to establish a WECP Doctorate Programme that will allow the development of a number of PhD Doctorate research projects to be established between Universities located in WECP member cities. The scheme would be funded through industry support, such support to be secured through the member cities.

The proposal was also presented to the Mayors of the WECP for orientation. In the discussions it was agreed that University of Stavanger should draft a Memorandum of Agreement (MoU) to be circulated and signed (after final agreement on the content) which would then be included in the final proposal. Aslaug Mikkelsen and Oluf Langhelle will take the responsibility for the MoU and coordinate it with Aberdeen.

It was also agreed that the proposal will need to be endorsed by the WECP in a formal process at the next formal WECP Conference, scheduled to be held in Doha, Qatar, on 4-8 December 2011. This means that the Universities will have to do the necessary paperwork and submit a formal proposal to WECP in due time before Doha.

The second day ended with an excellent lunch sponsored by University of Houston.

DISCUSSIONS

Again, a number of discussions came up during the workshop. One issue that permeated many of the discussions was on how to proceed and further develop the WECAP. So far, the only project which has succeeded is the project on Energy Capitals (Joe Pratt and Gunnar Nerheim) a project that was already developed before the establishment of the WECAP. It has taken longer to get other projects up and running (that is, externally funded) than was initially hoped for.

Thus, one of the reasons for the proposed WECP Doctorate Programme is precisely to enable the academic collaborations between member cities to progress more quickly. A WECP Doctorate programme would combine the mobility of students, the collaboration between Universities, and the outputs from research. This would have the additional benefit of requiring a lower amount of overall funding.

Sonia N. Mykletun, with long experience in academic exchange and collaboration, also suggested that the universities should explore already existing programmes and grant opportunities for exchange between universities in addition to the WECP Doctorate Programme.

Apart from that, it is clear that the individual attendees (and project owners) have to circulate the proposals presented in the workshop to relevant members of faculty in their own and other universities and relevant academic networks. It is also clear as pointed out by Gjerard Strickland, that the collaboration between universities must be based on personal relationships and common research interests.

The possibility of developing new projects between some of the participants based on the deliberations in the workshop was also discussed. Oluf langhelle and Richard Laing took on the task of developing a new project proposal for the next WECAP meeting in Doha.

20 May 2011
Stavanger, Norway
Oluf Langhelle