

Pushing sustainability in CNS

BY WILLIAM EARL

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With the goal to make its building more environmentally efficient, the Center for Natural Sciences Sustainability Group met for the first time Thursday.

The group hopes to assess the “ecological footprint” of the CNS facilities and make the building more efficient while educating the community about sustainability. Because CNS requires the greatest amount of energy on campus to operate, it is a good starting point, said Susan Swensen, associate professor of biology and faculty head of the group.

The group, made up of students, faculty and community members, is in the beginning stages of operation, with members forming subcommittees in order to focus on goals.

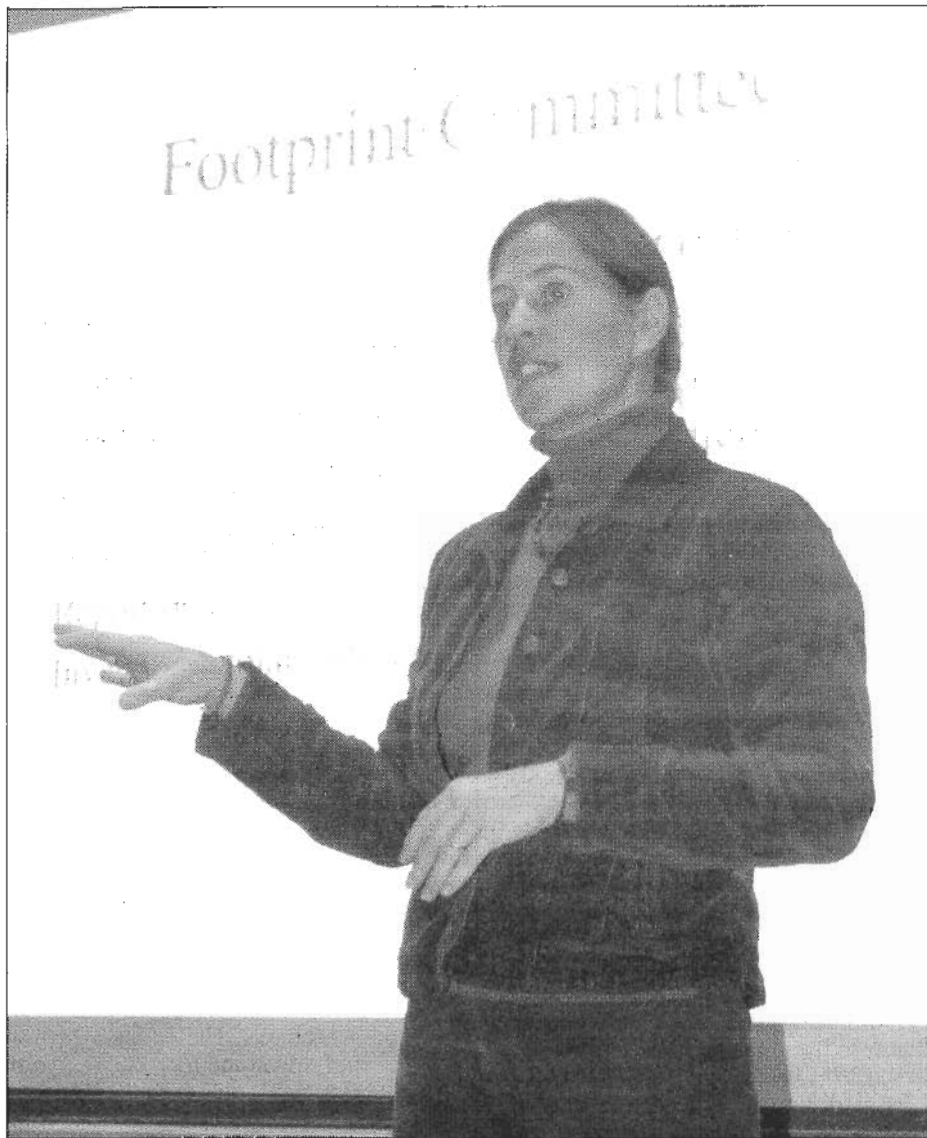
“A goal for this group is to give the community a vision of what a sustainability group could do,” Swensen said. “If we start small at CNS, we can generate a broad support base and become a model.”

The group has a multi-point plan to achieve its goals through a series of committees that would focus upon certain objectives. These include a footprint committee, which would assess the ecological impact of the facilities and how it can be lessened; a curriculum committee, which would suggest ways professors could bring sustainability into their teachings; a seminar committee, which could bring lectures to the college and an outreach committee, which could educate the student body about the group. A separate student committee is also being formed.

Senior Anthony Santoriello has been conducting independent research in sustainability education and is one of the driving members of the CNS group. He feels that students recognize the importance of sustainability issues in our rapidly changing world.

“The UN has declared 2005-2014 the decade of sustainability education,” Santoriello said. “We should strive to protect the future through teachings, operations and outreach.”

The group hopes that by sparking interest and dialogue between students and faculty, sustainability can become a target is-



MEGHAN MAZELLA/THE ITHACAN

SUSAN SWENSEN, associate professor of biology, speaks to the Center for Natural Sciences Sustainability Group Thursday during the organization's first meeting.

sue across the college. The group hopes to have a diverse body of people participating in the CNS sustainability group and for that to branch off to other areas of the school, hopefully leading to an office on campus.

Santoriello said that a strong student-col-

lege unification in terms of sustainability is the key ingredient to achieving goals.

“We as students are the leaders of tomorrow,” he said. “Ithaca College should step up as a leader for sustainability education.”