August 10, 2016

Mr. Jonas Haertle
Head, PRME Secretariat
Foundation for the Global Compact
801 2nd Avenue, 3rd Floor
New York, New York 10017

Dear Mr. Haertle:

Virginia Wesleyan College is proud to renew its commitment to the Principles for Responsible Management Education which we first formally endorsed in February 2009. Virginia Wesleyan College in general and its Management, Business, and Economics Department in particular reaffirm our support of the six principles and our responsibility to share with other PRME institutions information regarding our progress in implementing those principles and our plans regarding future progress in achieving the goals of the PRME initiative. Our progress and plans are described in the following SIP report.

Please note that Professor David Garraty is our contact person for any SIP comments or questions. He can be reached at dgarraty@vwc.edu or 757-455-3227.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Scott D. Miller, Ph.D.
President of the College
sdmiller@vwc.edu
Practical Actions in Support of PRME

Virginia Wesleyan College continues to expand its commitment to sustainability as evidenced by its selection to the 2015 edition of the Princeton Review Guide to 353 Green Colleges. The college’s new president, Scott D. Miller, has a long and distinguished record of commitment to sustainability. For example, in January 2016 he became a charter signatory of the Climate Commitment, a carbon neutrality and climate resilience initiative created by Boston-based organization Second Nature that sets new standards for climate leadership in higher education. The Climate Commitment joins the Carbon and Resilience Commitments ultimately derived from the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), a group that Virginia Wesleyan College has been a member of since 2007 and which President Miller help institute in 2006. This commitment to the Purpose and Values principles starts at the top of the college’s organization chart and is immersed in the culture of the college from there through the faculty to our students.

For example, the college’s Business major continues to require that students take an Environment course which is designed to help them achieve environmental literacy. The requirement can be met by a variety of different courses from the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. With the PRME-sponsored development of the Sustainability Literacy Test (SLT), the Business faculty have started the process of assessing the effectiveness of the various courses in achieving the desired level of environmental literacy. Several sections in the natural sciences and in the business program took the SLT in the Fall 2014 semester. That experience made the faculty realize that they needed to take the SLT themselves in order to be better able to evaluate students’ results. Thus, during the Fall 2015 semester, seven faculty members took the SLT. The results of that effort will shape efforts at assessing the Environment courses going forward.

With the college receiving an anonymous gift to build what will be called the Greer Environmental Sciences Center in honor of recently retired President William T. Greer, the Business faculty approached the Environmental Sciences faculty and interested others regarding the development of an Interdisciplinary major in Sustainability Management. The objective of the major would be to develop students’ functional business skills and basic technical understanding of environmental principles so as to be able to help organizations undertake and improve sustainability efforts. A committee was formed from interested faculty, a proposed curriculum was developed and approved by the committee, and the proposal has been forwarded for review by the appropriate divisions and commissions. With expeditious review by those bodies it is anticipated that the major will be put before the faculty during
the Fall 2016 semester in order to be able to offer the major in Fall 2017 in conjunction with the opening of the Greer Center.

In support of the Partnership and Dialogue principles, the Business faculty, under the leadership of the Department Coordinator Paul Ewell, continue to present the semiannual Business Conference, now known as The Marlin Prestige. The conference is planned and put on entirely by students in our Principles of Management class and continues to attract a wide variety of professionals from both government and industry. It is in the context of the Business Conference that the college works in support of the Dialogue and Partnership Principles of PRME. In the course of the four conferences since our last SIP report, the campus has welcomed a former GOP US Representative, a senior member of the Democratic National Committee’s executive staff, the CEO of the area’s largest regional bank, a senior executive of the Virginia Maritime Association, the Executive Director of the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center, a local municipality’s Coordinator of Business Recycling, along with numerous other business professionals.

Additional college efforts in support of the Partnership and Dialogue principles can be seen in the continuing partnership with APICS, the Association for Operation Management, which holds its local chapter meetings on campus in conjunction with the recently established VWC student chapter of APICS. Recent meetings have included presentations by leading professionals in the field such as executives with Virginia Beach-based Stihl Inc. and topics such as the Theory of Constraints. Additionally, the college regularly welcomes back successful alums to meet with and make presentations to students. Recent visits have included executives from Hasbro Toys and Canteen, the largest vending services company in the US. Finally, the recent appointment as chair of the Virginia Maritime Association’s Education and Training Committee of MBE Department Coordinator Paul Ewell will help strengthen our commitment to the principles of Partnership and Dialogue.

As a small liberal arts college, the faculty’s primary responsibility is in teaching undergraduates. While increasing in importance in promotion and tenure decisions, research continues to take a back seat to teaching and learning. However, effort is still expended by faculty members in support of PRME’s Research principle. For example, one faculty member undertook an investigation of the issues and evidence surrounding shared municipal services and presented his findings at the October 2014 meeting of the International Atlantic Economic Society in Savannah, Georgia. Applying effective business practices and economies of scale in the public sector clearly can have beneficial efficiency impacts which can further the goals of sustainable value for society. Additionally, Coordinator Paul Ewell continues his efforts as Executive Director of the Waterman’s Heritage Foundation of Virginia’s Eastern Shore. In addition to this effort, he continues to develop a database of over 45,000 digitalized photographs in his ongoing efforts to research and archive the Eastern Shore’s sustainable maritime history.

Professor Ewell’s interest in supply chain management and sustainability has carried over to his students. One student undertook an investigation of effective supply chain management with heavy emphasis on sustainability efforts in the field. She presented her findings at the 2016 meeting of SAM, the Society for Advancement of Management in Arlington, Virginia. Another student presented her research on the keys to social entrepreneurial success at the same conference. Both students received “Regional Student Achievement Awards” for their presentations as did a third student who presented a paper evaluating the college’s Business Conference, the Marlin Prestige. In addition, this third student also received a “National Student achievement Award”. Currently, two students and an alum are
working with Dr. Ewell on a research project designed to measure and evaluate the public’s perception of the commercial fishing industry.

Outcomes Assessment and Key Objectives

As noted above, the college continues to undertake efforts in support of the six Principles for Responsible Management Education. One strategic initiative however, outlined in our 2014 SIP, continues to elude us. The VWC Business Major Pledge commits our students to supporting the goals of the UN’s Global Compact as well as pledging to help achieve sustainable social, environmental, and economic value through effective and responsible business practices. However, while our goal has been to provide a public opportunity to take the pledge at a formal declaration of major ceremony we have yet to organize such a ceremony. Rather, opportunities to take the pledge have been offered to students in an ad hoc way at Business Conference sessions and student organization meetings. It remains an objective of the department to develop such a ceremony and to make the pledge an integral part of that occasion. As an interim step, the department will investigate the possibility of providing students a private opportunity to support the pledge when they fill out their official declaration of major paperwork.

Over the next two years we intend to continue to utilize the student-led Business Conference to support our efforts in promoting dialogue and partnership with the local business community. Moreover, with the college’s increasing support and encouragement of undergraduate research, the business faculty will continue to nudge students toward research efforts consistent with the college’s commitment to the Principles for Responsible Management Education.

Finally, the college is in the midst of developing and offering an online MBA program. As currently envisioned, the program will be based on four fundamental principles – the first of which is a firm commitment to the Principles of Responsible Management Education. In addition, a supply chain orientation with emphasis on sustainability, a commitment to ethical management decision-making, and a focus on fundamental and effective management practices compose the other three foundations of the proposed program.

Brief Self-Assessment

This SIP indicates that Virginia Wesleyan College continues to undertake activities and initiatives in support of the Principles for Responsible Management Education. In particular, the semiannual student-led Business Conference provides a forum for ongoing dialogue and partnership with the local business community. Undergraduate research has reflected PRME-oriented concerns and will continue to do so in the future. The proposed MBA program, once approved, will deepen the college’s commitment to PRME while the college will continue to be a leader in higher education in promoting sustainability both in its administration and in its teaching and learning enterprise.