

DEPAUW 
SUSTAINABILITY
2012-2013 Year in Review

Introduction

While environmental awareness and action have a long history at DePauw University, the narrative of the past decade begins with the signing of the American College and University President's Climate Commitment (PCC) in fall 2008. Following the signing of the PCC, members of the newly created Office for Sustainability crafted a Sustainability Master Plan in 2011. After the creation of the plan, many of the pieces of our vision of campus sustainability began to mature. Critical to these changes was the announcement by President Brian Casey in May 2012 of the creation of a Sustainability Committee, made up of faculty/staff/students, which reports on sustainability issues to the Board of Trustees Building and Grounds Committee. The Sustainability Committee also has representation from the Office for Sustainability and is chaired by the Vice President for Communications and Strategic Initiatives (Sustainability at DePauw reports to this vice president). At the same time, President Casey announced that the Office for Sustainability would have an additional employee: a full-time Assistant Director for Sustainability. The Assistant Director was hired in September 2012.

Sustainability Committee

The Sustainability Committee was convened in fall 2012 and divided into two subgroups: Carbon Reduction and Institutional Change. The Carbon Reduction group tackled the topic of carbon reduction strategies and did a lot of work getting smarter on the best options available to us (geothermal and solar). This discussion came at a propitious moment, as DePauw is beginning a major building and renovation phase. This subcommittee has recommended to the University – and has been heard – that for each of these projects, we should not only be interested in appropriate LEED level and certification, but that we should also seriously consider alternative energies for all projects. As the projects continue to develop, the Office for Sustainability has had a place at the table with the architects and project managers to discuss energy options and LEED certification options. We are optimistic that the planned new Hoover Dining Hall will be a stellar example of what can be done when paying attention to sustainable building practices/uses.

A significant contribution made by the Institutional Change Subcommittee has been to finalize our definitions for *sustainability-focused* and *sustainability-related* courses. These definitions will help us understand how many such courses we offer, and will help faculty understand how they may develop/revise courses that will add to the sustainability program.

This subcommittee also has had rigorous discussion about topics such as recycling and behavior change strategies. One related outcome to those discussions is that DePauw was selected to receive 75 can/bottle recycling bins from the Alcoa/Keep America Beautiful program. We've received the bins and have distributed many of them to fraternities and sororities for their use. It is likely that next academic year this subcommittee will focus on one main topic and will create more substantial programs on campus. In some sense, this

subcommittee had a more difficult job than the Carbon Reduction Subcommittee, as they had a plethora of topics to consider, and had to consider how each might best be developed here.

The Sustainability Committee made its first report to the DePauw Board of Trustees Building and Grounds Committee in May 2013. The response was very positive.



Assistant Sustainability Director

We had a large and very good pool of candidates for this position, which is an indication that graduates from new programs educating people for this field are beginning to make their way into the job market. Out of these candidates, we chose Anthony Baratta, who is a 2010 DePauw graduate. Remarkably, Anthony is the first person to have e-mailed Brian Casey when he was named as DePauw's president. He told the new president that he wanted him to sign the PCC. Anthony has also been to the Bonn and Copenhagen climate conferences, has testified in front of the Indiana state legislature, and is a co-creator of our annual Energy Wars competition on campus. Anthony has worked out exceptionally well, taking on a number of tasks (such as creating a monthly newsletter) that we just were not able to get to before.

Curricular Activities

In the fall 2010 semester, with the support of an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant, DePauw began the creation of a fifth honors program, the Environmental Fellows. According to the program's description on their website,

This integrative program is designed for outstanding students who exhibit intellectual curiosity, high academic achievement and strong motivation to explore environmental issues from a range of disciplinary perspectives. Experiential learning opportunities, such as scientific research, internships or off-campus study, enhance the understanding that students gain through both their disciplinary major and cross-disciplinary environmental coursework. A capstone experience enables students to integrate all aspects of their environmental education. Upon graduation, Environmental Fellows are well equipped to address complex, real-world problems using multi-disciplinary approaches. They are prepared to be strong and successful candidates for employment in environmental careers, graduate study in disciplinary areas, and graduate study in discipline, and programs with an environmental focus.

This program has been a catalyst in identifying, selecting for admission, and nurturing bright students interested in all facets of environmental issues. The program has also encouraged us to review what courses are available that are either *sustainability-focused* or *sustainability-related*. Funds from the grant have helped faculty restructure current courses and/or create new courses so that we are increasing the number and types of courses in disciplines across the University. Funds have also allowed for the hire of a tenure-track faculty member in the political science department. We will have our first class of seniors in the program in the 2013-14 academic year.

Many classes outside of the Environmental Fellows program, of course, educate students about sustainability in today's world. Two Winter Term courses, for example, taught students about waste minimization and recycling this year.



Co-Curricular Activities

Symposium, Lectures- DePauw University is privileged to be home to The Janet Prindle Institute for Ethics. This year the Prindle Institute sponsored a terrific, three-day conference titled, “Cool Talk for a Hot Topic: The Ethics of Communicating About Climate Change,” followed by an undergraduate symposium on Environmental Ethics. Moreover, in addition to various speakers and documentaries screened throughout the fall and spring, the Timothy and Sharon Ubben Lecture Series generously funded the highlight event of the year: a keynote speech given by Dr. Jane Goodall.



Eco-Reps – The 2012-13 academic year was our second year with our Eco-Reps program. The previous year we received a grant from the Ball Bros. Venture Fund that enabled us to start the program – we believe it was (at that time) the first of its kind in Indiana. We had a dozen Eco-Reps who were paid a stipend from the grant. They were all first-year students and all living in University-owned housing. Eco-Reps, with their enthusiasm, and their improving knowledge about all things Sustainable, are role models for friends and others in their living units. They also work with the Sustainability Interns to ‘get things done.’ From that first year experience, we recognized that it was great to work with first-years because they bonded together and will do produce significantly in their four years here; however, the down side is that we spent an inordinate amount of time educating them about Sustainability (even though several had had some experience in high school), and educating them about the institution’s infrastructure. Several stayed with us this year even though for all the Eco-Reps this is now a volunteer assignment. Also, this year Eco-Reps have had representation from the freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior classes, as well as more cultural diversity.

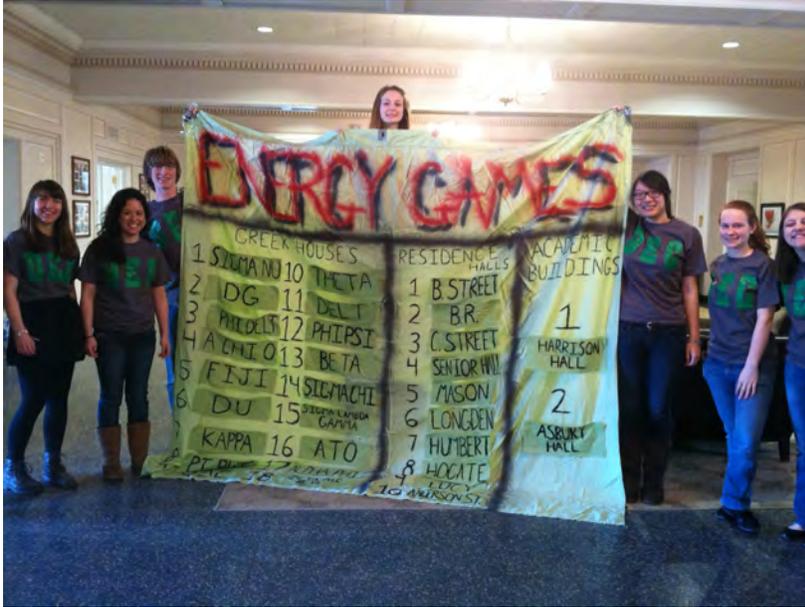
Greco-Reps – Since signing the PCC, we’ve also had a program in which students from fraternities and sororities could participate: the intent here is that they would work on

“greening” the Greek houses. The program has gained new life this year, with more participation from more houses. In addition to monthly meetings, one of the remarkable things that the GreEco-Reps did was to have a dinner at the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority house so that all the house mothers could talk about 'going green.' This sorority has been without doubt the leader in that area on our campus, and the dinner has opened the door for other Greek units to follow suit.



Undergraduate Sustainability Interns – Since the inception of our Sustainability program in 2008, each year we have had two (paid) undergraduate Sustainability Interns, and will continue on with that next year. These students are academically excellent, are well connected on campus, and have knowledge about and passion for Sustainability. They lead the campus-wide annual events throughout the year: Energy Wars, RecycleMania, Earth Week, and Move Out Days. One of our interns for the next academic year is a member of our cycling team, and one is an international student. With their work, we hope to make greater connection to those parts of the DePauw community.

DePauw Environmental Club – The longest-lived co-curricular club related to Sustainability on our campus is the DePauw Environmental Club (DEC). This is a place to meet and explore one's interests in all facets of Sustainability. The Office for Sustainability works with (but does not sponsor) DEC. It's a great incubator for students wanting to learn about these issues. Members from DEC have also been most helpful in the previously mentioned projects (Energy Wars, etc.) sponsored by the Office for Sustainability.



Student Government- Members of DePauw Student Government approached the Office for Sustainability with hopes of improving and starting recycling programs at Greek houses. This partnership led to the revitalization of GreEco-Reps. DePauw Student Government also passed a resolution calling for more renewable energy and energy efficiency at DePauw in the fall, and passed a resolution calling for divestment from fossil fuels in the spring.

New Programs

Community Bikes – Students in the capstone course of our Management Fellows Program first conceived idea of a campus/community bike program. (Students in that course are required to develop a program of use to the campus and surrounding community.) A first set of students developed one plan and a second set of students a year later improved upon it. The second group brought the plan to fruition. This second group obtained monies from DePauw University and from the People Pathways (a local group dedicated to developing multiuse recreational trails in our community) to buy 20 Worksman bicycles, with baskets and bells. They recognized that selling advertising (affixed to the baskets) to local businesses would address the ongoing need for such items as locks for the bikes and maintenance. We rolled out the bikes at a football home game last September, and the program has been very well received by students on the campus and (to a lesser extent) by the community. We continue to work to let the community know the bikes are for everyone, not just for campus use.

Campus Farm – Several years ago, some members of the DePauw community brought forth the idea that our university should have a campus farm, and even determined where the farm should be; specifically, on seven acres of land owned by the University. The major hindrance in making that vision a reality is that our students go home for the summer. Discussions with the University’s food vendor at the AASHE Denver convention made us recognize that they

regularly lay off employees in the summer, and that several of these employees grew up on farms and/or live now on farms. These individuals could be the reliable backbone to both teach novices how to garden and to keep the farm going in the summer. Within a few months, during the 2011-2012 school year, two students came forth, saying they represented other students, and saying they wanted to start a campus farm. The next step included all those from around the University interested in this topic: we met regularly throughout that school year. Among the things we decided was that we would start with one acre in our farm, and we would use organic practices. The food produced at the farm will primarily be used in our campus dining facilities, but a percentage will go to a local food pantry as a way to recognize food insecurity exists in the surrounding community. The Office for Sustainability wrote a business plan, and the startup costs for the farm were eventually funded by two trustees. And, after a very wet spring in 2013, the campus farm is up and running.



Student Sustainability Fund – During the spring semester, DePauw Student Government debuted a Student Sustainability Fund of \$10,000. More than 30 applications were received from students to advance sustainability at DePauw, such as purchasing a scale to facilitate recycling competitions. The Office for Sustainability hopes to see the continuation of the fund during the 2013-2014 school year.

Divestment from Fossil Fuels – Like many campuses, ours has had activity related to the goal to divest from our endowment investments in fossil fuel companies. This began when one faculty member and several students attended the 350.org-sponsored March on Washington in December, 2012 and came back stimulated by what they'd learned about the divestment movement. One student created and circulated a petition to divest DePauw of fossil fuels. In February, 2013 we also sent four students to the national conference at Swarthmore College, to discuss student-led campaigns urging institutions of higher education to divest their

holdings in fossil fuels. Upon their return, the four generated interest from a larger group who all continued obtaining signatures on the petition. At the end of the semester students met with the president of the University to present their cause and the petition. This meeting occurred at the same time the University was making a selection of an investment management contractor. One of the criteria in selecting our current contractor was the experience they have in helping institutions such as ours with fossil fuel divestment.

Conclusion

Sustainability is advancing at DePauw. We are proud of this year's achievements and we are eager to continue our progress in the upcoming year. While we will always have improvements to make, the progress we have seen is directly related to support from all sectors of our University community. We are gearing up for an update of our carbon footprint and our Sustainability Tracking and Rating System (STARS) evaluation this fall. This data will provide further information, metrics, and guidance as we continue towards environmental protection, social justice, and economic vitality.

