

Efforts for sustainable campus continue

By Caitlin Sievers | January 25, 2012



Mike Fabricius | The Metropolitan

Placing single-stream recycling bins is one of the ways the Sustainable Campus Program facilitates a more environmentally-friendly campus

Students are recycling more of their empty bottles and composting some of their lunch-time leftovers thanks to the Sustainable Campus Program.

The SCP is working to get students more involved and get the word out about their projects.

“The environment is a huge part of everyone’s life,” said Antwaun Johnson, student chair of the SCP. “People have to first learn what their impact is, and how reducing that impact can benefit everyone.”

Some of the SCP’s progress has been obvious because of construction going on in the hallways and bathrooms. The hydration station project retrofitted existing water fountains with water bottle refill stations, encouraging students to bring their own refillable bottles instead of buying disposable ones.

The upgrade to some bathrooms with low-flow toilets, sinks and urinals is saving almost 3 million gallons of water a year. Their campus-wide recycling program has reduced waste by 30 percent, according to the SCP website.

Another project that students may not have heard about is the SCP’s wind energy program. Auraria has offset energy use by 100 percent with Renewable Energy Credits.

One REC is produced for each megawatt-hour that is generated and provided to the electrical grid from a renewable energy source. One megawatt-hour is around the amount of energy it would take to power 330 homes for one hour, according to Clean Energy Authority.

This \$100,000 per year project ranks Auraria as one of the top 10 higher education centers in the Environmental Protection Agency’s Green Power Purchasers’ project according to the SCP’s website.

A campus-wide vote in 2007 approved a student fee to create and pay for the SCP. It is now funded by a \$5 per student, per semester fee that will be in place until 2015, according to Jerry Mason, faculty advisor to the SCP.

The purpose of the program is to get proposals for green projects from organizations or individuals and then present them to the Student Advisory Committee to the Auraria Board.

All proposals must pass by a two-thirds majority before the group endorses it, according to Johnson.

The SCP is required to have two representatives from each campus institution on the committee at all times. SACAB must also endorse all proposals before any work is begun.

Students are encouraged to submit their ideas for proposal to the SCP’s website.

Getting students into the habit of recycling instead of throwing everything in the trash can make a big difference, according to Johnson, a marketing and finance major at CCD. He wants students to think about how their actions are impacting the campus and the world, and work to make more mindful decisions about their energy use.

“We must come together to protect what we have been given,” Johnson said. “The responsibility is on everyone’s shoulders.”

Estimated revenue per semester for the SCP is approximately \$400,000, according to Mason. He thinks that students' decision to pay a fee to make the campus more sustainable shows Auraria's commitment to clean energy. "We do have a lot of active participants in these initiatives," Mason said. "It's not always the CU Boulders of the world that are really taking the lead in college campus green initiatives."

Representative positions in the SCP are available for one Metro student and one CCD student. Interested persons can submit a cover letter and resume to antwaun.johnson@ccd.edu no later than Jan. 31.

Students interested in getting involved with the SCP can volunteer for one hour shifts in the cafeteria to educate others about the importance of composting. Contact Jill Jennings-Golich at jill.jenningsgolich@ahec.edu for more information. The SCP meets every Wednesday at 2p.m. in Tivoli 329.

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