

AUGSBURG COLLEGE

Environmental Stewardship Committee  
Annual Progress Report  
May 2015

## *Environmental Stewardship at Augsburg*

The Environmental Concerns Committee began in the 1990's, growing out of faculty and staff interest in creating a sustainable campus. As a small, ad-hoc committee, this group spearheaded campus efforts on a variety of fronts, which inform the work of the committee today. Transitioning to the name Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC) in 2006, the committee became a committee of the President of the college and identified its values, methods of operation and a mission statement. The mission of the ESC is "The Augsburg College Environmental Stewardship Committee is a non-governing body committed to helping the college reach its goals. Its mission is to assist the governance structure of the college including: the President, all officers, staff, faculty and students in implementing best practices regarding environmental stewardship in both campus operations and curricular development." The Committee will accomplish its mission by acting in the following roles:

- Change Agent
- Strategic Planner
- Consultant
- Catalyst
- Collaborator

[www.augsburgcollege.edu/green](http://www.augsburgcollege.edu/green)

Augsburg College became a charter signatory to the American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) in 2007. Signing the agreement affirmed the institution's long-standing commitment to sustainability. Augsburg has seen many environmental improvements over the years, and the voluntary participation of staff, faculty and students has carried the bulk of this work. This report provides an overview of the past years programs and initiatives.

### *About this Report*

This document is a step toward a comprehensive report on the sustainability initiatives across campus. Its purpose is to provide an overview of Augsburg environmental stewardship programs and initiatives and serve as a platform for the college and for the ESC to assess areas for improvement. This report covers three main areas: Operations, Education, and Campus and Community Engagement. The final section identifies the current understanding of where ESC is headed in the future.

## Executive Summary

The 2015 report of the ESC highlights efforts and accomplishments of the committee during the 2014-2015 school year. Focusing on operations, education, and campus and community engagement, the ESC has made strides in several fronts. In summary:

### Operations:

- Purchasing shipments were reduced, allowing for fewer truck trips to campus.
- Recycling and trash audit completed by students
- New bins being purchased in select areas
- Improved waste and recycling signage still needed
- Carbon reduction fee still collected by students
- Community Solar Garden conversations occurred
- Transportation survey completed
- Bike Share program continues
- Subsidies for public transportation continues
- Transit Hall to be completed in summer

### Education:

- Campus sustainability map integrated into Admissions and slated for Transit Hall
- First dedicated Environmental Studies faculty began this year
- Environmental Studies minor modified
- Course release and increased stipend for ENV program director position
- New general education outcomes include sustainability
- Learning outcomes for ENV identified
- First ESC graduate fellowship
- CGEE integrates green travel
- International campuses lead the way in sustainable campus life

### Campus and Community Engagement:

- Campus Kitchens engaged the community on sustainable food systems
- Native American Film Festival on environmental justice
- MPIRG maintains a student committee on environmental issues
- Staff and faculty participated on various meetings and retreats with other colleges

### Looking ahead:

- Transitioning to a University Council Structure for ESC
- Move community building events to Environmental Studies

## 2015 Report

### Operations

#### *Climate Action Plan and Green by 2019*

The Climate Action Plan was created by the Green By 2019 Task Force in 2010. Using data from the 2009 greenhouse gas inventory and input from groups across campus, they identified the following initiatives:

- Implement energy efficient measures throughout campus (replacing existing roofs with white roofs; lighting; washer/dryers in residence halls; HVAC changes)
- Install IT upgrades to reduce energy consumption in computer labs and offices
- Invest in new energy management (EMS), financed through St. Paul Port Authority. 3-year loan repayment linked to anticipated savings from lowered energy costs linked to expected 14% overall reduction in energy usage.
- Replace campus vehicles with energy efficient models (e.g. purchase of electric cars; installation of charging station on campus; use of bio-diesel, etc.)
- Implement student-driven energy conservation program (“Auggies go Green”) with goal of reducing campus electricity consumption by 5% from current levels (as distinct from EMS reductions)
- Obtain LEED certification planned for new Center for Science, Business and Religion Center
- Pursue LEED certification for existing building/residence hall
- Establish definite plan by 2015 to produce renewable energy (either on or off campus) to replace steam when current contract expires in 2017 (e.g. potential for bio-diesel co-generation plant using fuel produced with McGyan technology and/or use of geothermal heat pumps)
- Increase commuting by transit, walking, biking and carpool by 50% by 2019, through continuing support of these forms of commuting.
- Incorporate sustainability principles/goals into master campus plan (beginning 2010)
- Minimize the leakage of coolant from the ice rink refrigeration system at the soonest possible date with savings in related energy use and cost of replacing coolant. A feasibility study of this will be completed by the end of 2011

Each of these Green by 2019 initiatives has had some progress, by tracking of each of these elements has not been completed by the ESC on a specific and measurable basis. On May 15, 2015 the Office of Planning and Effectiveness submitted the updated ACUPCC report. A narrative report is due in the spring of 2016.

#### *Purchasing*

Augsburg employees in charge of purchasing for their department came together to help contribute to the Green by 2019 initiative. They collectively agreed to coordinate and plan for deliveries to arrive just one day a week instead of multiple times, as was

the previous case. As part of the contract with the paper vendor, all standard copy paper is 30% post-consumer recycled. This past fiscal year, 44,798 pounds of paper was purchased of which 90.78% was 30% post-consumer waste.

Ideally, items purchased should be either made from post-consumer recycled material and/or compostable. Analysis of the purchasing records revealed that 82% of items purchased were not sustainably sourced [Figure 1]. It is unclear as to whether plastic items purchased are recyclable.



Figure 1

### *Dining*

A'Viands Food and Services Management has been working closely with Augsburg to contribute to the Green by 2019 initiative. In an effort to understand diners' needs and concerns, A'Viands conducts an annual sustainability focused survey on campus. Past results have indicated an increased concern for locally sourced and seasonal foods. A'Viands has responded by partnering with local farmers for produce and meat products and buying seasonally where appropriate. In order to appeal to those who refrain from eating meat and also reducing cost, many meat free options are also offered. Some items simply cannot be sourced locally and would be inappropriate to eliminate entirely such as bananas and other similar staple foods.

A'Viands also ensures that they manage waste appropriately by way of composting and partnering with Campus Kitchens to recover unused food. Tray-less dining continues to be offered, which allows for additional waste and cost reduction. Signs are displayed

throughout the dining area reminding diners to take only what they can consume. The system has been effective in reducing waste overall.

A'Viands held an awareness meal on Earth day including the Tiny Footprint coffee company who supplies our campus coffee, a raffle for a free bike, free re-usable food containers, coffee bean compost for gardeners, and an interactive display on seeds.

### *Recycling*

Student worker and Environmental Studies major, Lucille Krivanek, conducted research earlier this year on the current state of the recycling program. Her research focused on signage, accessibility and compliance across campus and recycling practices in the residence halls. She found that waste and recycling bins are available on every floor in the main buildings on campus and appear to be distributed appropriately. Several students stated that access isn't an issue, as there is usually a waste bin nearby. However, signage isn't clear particularly when it comes to compost. Appropriate use of the bins is of primary concern. A brief 3-day audit was done during January and February 2015, in which the recycling bins were monitored for appropriate use in each of the campus buildings (excluding Anderson and Mortenson Halls). A basic scoring system was used to rate the usage on each bin and the average was taken for the entire building. Foss and Memorial Hall were the only buildings that averaged a high score for proper sorting at the end of the audit. All other buildings demonstrated some compliance in the use of the recycling bins on average.

The audit also showed that the compost receptacles located in Christensen are not used properly: all bins were contaminated with mixed waste. Luci suggested improved signage and more differentiation between the bins to improve compliance. Currently, the waste and compost bins are the same color and shape with only the signs to tell them apart. There are several items that are less clear as to how they should be disposed of, cold-drink cups and eating utensils in particular. Pictures versus text would also be helpful and easier to understand at a glance. She also suggested educating first-year students on recycling at Augsburg during the Augsburg Seminar.

Custodial Services has also been working to improve the recycling system on campus and increase awareness on the new single stream recycling system. New signs are being posted in an effort to create more continuity and bring clarity on what is recyclable. The Residence Life Department has also been working on improving recycling in the dorms, particularly in Urness and Mortensen Halls. Custodial Services has been working closely with them to identify solutions. Currently recycling is made available on each floor in Urness by the elevators and in the basement and main floor in Mortensen. Inconvenience appears to be the primary reason for noncompliance. Proximity is an issue as well as the receptacle itself. Inappropriately sized or designed recycling bins do not encourage participation. New bins are being added to both halls in the lower level for recycling with proper signage. The new

receptacles will be more appealing for students to use and will be easier and more sanitary for the custodial staff to work with.

This past year it was brought to the ESC's attention that students would like to see outdoor recycling bins. Given the condition of the current waste bins outside, it was agreed that these should be replaced as well. Doing so will create consistency across campus and add to the campus aesthetic. Due to cost constraints, updates will be made in stages to include both outdoor and indoor receptacles, as needed. The recycling audit supports the need to replace several indoor receptacles to have more cohesion in style, size and shape. Phase 1 of the plan will include five outdoor sites for immediate updating. Receptacles will be updated/added outside of: Kennedy, Lindell Library, Christenson Center, Oren Gateway Center and Anderson Music Hall. The new bins have been selected, with the help and feedback of various parties. Purchase is currently pending, as details on graphics and exact cost are determined.

### *Energy*

In 2010 day student government voted to enforce a campus greening fee. A semester based fee, of a few dollars per student, that was used to purchase wind energy offsets – essentially aiming to make the campus footprint carbon neutral. In 2013 further conversations with student government ensued and the recognition of maintaining our carbon footprint and purchasing off-sets became less palatable as students want to use green energy to meet the existing campus needs. In fact, students, have a desire to see a high impact initiative primarily focused around *generating* green energy. A local solar company presented to a cross section of Augsburg community members and conversation is underway to consider using the campus greening fee to purchase solar power and create a solar garden on the Kennedy Center building.

### *Transportation*

Transportation surveys were administered in 2013 and 2014 [Figures 2 and 3]. The first survey identified three commuter categories: students, staff and faculty. The survey was then revised for 2014 to allow for a fourth category for those who are in multiple roles. For the purpose of this report, we've combined all staff, faculty and multiple role categories to form one "employee" category for respondents. The student to employee ratio was fairly evenly divided in both years.

The number of respondents rose slightly the second year to 656 from 594. Although results represent just a small sample, it does provide some insight on the needs and motivations of different types of commuters. The results were relatively consistent in both years, showing that the average commute to be about 14 miles one-way. Commuters travelled to campus approximately 4 days a week, which equates to 112 miles total round trip per week. The survey also revealed that a high percentage of commuters travel alone by automobile. Distance, time of day and luggage are some of the key variables influencing how one commutes. Convenience and safety were the

primary reasons for not utilizing public transit specifically. Decreasing one's individual footprint has little influence when the compromise means a longer commute time with little to no savings.

When asked in the initial survey about raising prices on parking permits in order to fund promotions for biking and carpooling, 52% of respondents were opposed. That is unsurprising given the demographics: just under half of the respondents were employees and a large percentage of the students who took the survey were Adult Weekend or Graduate Students (41% in 2013 and 48% in 2014). These groups tend to have more limitations when it comes to how they commute. Additionally, 71% of respondents in the 2014 survey felt that Augsburg provides sufficient support and resources for green commuting, such as bike stands and subsidized bus passes.

A current transit hall is in progress as this report is finalized. A hallway in the Christensen Center is being identified as the Transit Hall, where a large wall sized campus map, access routes for bus, rail and bike will be found, along with ways to use the closely situated computer to check for schedules. The Transit Hall will also host a large version of the Campus Sustainability Map and will be a useful stop during admissions tours and will likely be useful to employee's students, and guests alike.

Recent conversations with ESC members have focused on a lack of clarity of offerings of subsidies for transportation. Questions have arisen such as: Who is in charge of determining the budget for subsidized commuter passes? Who should sell the passes? What area of the college is responsible for the ongoing relationship with Metro Transit?

### *Bike-Share Program*

Augsburg's Bike-Share Program allows students, faculty and staff to loan a bike for free. Bikes are checked out in the Lindell Library where Bike-Share members receive a helmet and lock key. Bikes are available during the fall, spring and summer months and are to be returned within 24 hours from checkout.

The program began in 2008 and has continued to grow in popularity over the years. The program currently offers 7 bikes for use. A total of 358 uses were recorded from July 2013-January 2015 (18 months), averaging about 20 uses per month.

Bike maintenance has proven to be the biggest challenge since implementing the Bike-Share Program. Student workers, hired and maintained out of the ESC budget, maintain the bikes. Due to high turnover, it is difficult to administer or enforce a regular schedule. The program has also had to replace two bikes over the past two years that went missing while on loan. Overall, the program has been successful and is a valuable service. Solutions to the maintenance issue are being explored. New partnerships, specifically with the maintenance department or grounds keeping, could potentially resolve the issue.



## Education

### *Academic Coursework*

A new course was accepted into the Environmental Studies major this year. Communications 260, Environmental Communications, was developed by Dr. Kristen Chamberlain and will serve as an option of courses to meet requirements for both the major and minor. The minor requirements were revised this past year due to an assessment finding of only 1 minoring student in the last 8 years. The ENV minor requirements are now in line with other programs across campus and we anticipate an uptick in enrollment in the minor from multiple disciplines.

### *Center for Global Education and Experience: Study Abroad and International Campuses*

This past year the Program Director of Environmental Studies met with colleagues from Mexico, Namibia (who were visiting the Minneapolis campus) about coursework for ENV. Without much effort, ENV students are able to take a semester long option in Mexico, and the Environmental Justice and Social Change Course, along with ENV 100, are both being offered on the Namibia campus.

- Continue to move more documents/resources to online formats, to avoid printed materials for students.
- Faculty led program applications continue to request faculty proposers to address the carbon footprint of their programs and ways that can be mitigated.
- Moving some initial advising/info session detail to online formats, so students can access those anytime/from home (rather than traveling to the office)

In addition, Augsburg's campuses around the world are leaps and bounds ahead of the Minneapolis campus as far as green facilities/set up:

- There's a [Permaculture garden](#) at the Windhoek campus
- There's a new [Environmental Sustainability class](#) being taught in Windhoek
- CGE as a whole has Environmental and Social responsibility at it's heart. You can [read more here](#) about our commitment to fair wages, environmental stewardship, community reciprocity, and programming that highlight these issues for students.
- The Mexico campus has composting and dry toilets.

**The study Abroad Proposal Form now includes a “green appendix”:**

### **Appendix 4: Creating a Green Program**

Traveling abroad has an undeniably negative impact on the environment, particularly given the emission of CO<sub>2</sub> as part of air travel. Since Augsburg College is committed to reducing the environmental impact of all of its operations as part of Augsburg 2019, we ask faculty to

incorporate green practices into study abroad programs. This can be done in two main categories – 1) program planning/logistics and 2) course assignments that raise students' awareness of their individual carbon footprint and that of the group.

Augsburg Abroad encourages faculty to consider environmental issues in program planning and/or course design and reference the list below when completing the “Strengths & Benefits Statement” for the proposal.

**Program planning aspects:**

- Carbon Credits
- Transportation on foot, by bicycle and/or by using public/mass transit
- Eating locally produced foods (either from markets, food for local preparation, or at restaurants)
- Home stays or green-building stays (hotels, etc. that meet have green features)

**Course design aspects:**

- Environmental impact of travel as part of curriculum
- Projects enacted back in Minneapolis that address climate change

*Learning Outcomes*

Four Augsburg College values were identified this past year with 8 new general education student-learning outcomes. One of these values, Thoughtful Stewards, encourages the learning outcome to “identify the broad foundations for sustainable living and apply them in demonstrative ways.” This outcome provides an opportunity for educational curriculums across the campus to consider and measure sustainability within their discipline.

Simultaneously, the Environmental Studies major has identified 6 student learning outcomes specific to the major, that will map to the college educational outcomes. Numbers 2 and 6 were chosen for assessment in the 2015-2016 school year.

1. Comprehend the nature and complexity of ecological processes.
2. Articulate the impact of humans and urban areas on the global environment, which sustains it
3. Identify the diversity of perspectives in environmental decision-making
4. Decipher the context and variety of human experiences in nature
5. Identify inequities in the access to and use of nature
6. Articulate a response to environmental problems grounded in the multiple disciplinary insights offered by the program

26 current students are working toward a major in environmental studies.

Internships for ENV students is progressing towards greater stability. Relationships have been developed with the Strommen Center to organize and coordinate the ENV offerings for internships, assure a growing page of options for students to pursue.

This past year was the first year a course release was offered to the Environmental Studies Program Director position, showing continued support for the discipline from the college administration.

### *ESC Graduate Fellowship*

This past year brought the first ever ESC Fellow to the college. A student in the MBA program, Thacarra Ferrer (Efa), is the first ESC Fellow. She receives tuition remission up to the highest allowable tax free expense and receives an \$800 stipend per semester. In exchange she works 10 hours per week for the ESC. We will continue this graduate fellowship into the next school year.

Efa's direct supervisor is the chair of the ESC, currently Christina Erickson. Efa and Christina meet weekly to discuss projects. However, Efa had frequent meetings with groups from across campus, including: purchasing, residence life, marketing and communications, facilities, transportation, students groups including MPIRG, and other staff and faculty who are part of ESC. Efa brought organizational skills to the ESC and helped organize, advertise and facilitate each monthly ESC meeting. Some of our biggest accomplishments after securing her time include, the transit hall, the campus sustainability map, this report, an updated webpage, a facebook page, regular blogs, restructuring of the work group, the transit hall, outdoor bins, recycling audit, the transportation fair, and a host of other events.

## **Campus and Community Engagement**

### *Student Group: Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG)*

MPIRG has focused on educating students on the Environmental Stewardship Committee's waste reduction efforts and the new organic waste pick up that will soon be starting in Hennepin County. This falls in line with MPIRG's citywide initiative to push Minneapolis towards Zero Waste. They participated in the installation of the "bike fix-it station" earlier this school year and they plan the "dump and run" program for student move-out weekend.

Augsburg has seen other environmentally focused student groups over the years but all have thrived or declined based on the student population. MPIRG has played an important role in providing a platform for students to be involved and advocate for environmental issues on and off campus. They continue to support the ESC by helping to inform students on campus greening initiatives, build general awareness on environmental issues and encourage student participation. Environmental Studies is hoping to build a stronger community of students in the major.

### *Intercampus Collaboration*

Sustainability is a priority for many campuses in the area and sustainability officers are always willing to share knowledge and resources and collaborate. The Environmental Stewardship Committee has fostered many relationships between other campuses in an effort to learn about and identify effective systems for Augsburg. Committee members have participated in sustainability lunches, informational meetings, tours and a sustainability retreat. While Augsburg does not have a sustainability officer/coordinator, the fellow, ENV faculty, or ESC staff members participate when they can. These events are a great way for sustainability officers in higher education to come together and share common issues as well as identify solutions in a collaborative environment. Developing and maintaining a sustainability network creates new opportunities to partner, problem solve and provides Augsburg an additional resource for information.

### *Campus Kitchen*

#### *Food to Share*

Campus Kitchen continued its collaboration with seven community partners to recover un-served food from A'Viands Dining Services and provide over 11,000 healthy meals to our neighbors, including: Pillsbury United Communities Brian Coyle Center – Youth Program, Peace House, Ebenezer Tower Apartments, and others. Students participating include interfaith scholars, service learners, general volunteers, and students fulfilling learning for course assignments.

In addition to diverting the A'viands food waste stream from a landfill or compost pile to a meaningful meal, Campus Kitchen partnered with Mill City Farmer's Market to glean 2,397lbs of fresh produce in its second year of the gleaning program. Much of this produce is made available for free to residents in the Cedar Apartments through a partnership with Health Commons. Leftover produce was used by Augsburg students during weekly cooking shifts to prepare special dishes for weekly meal deliveries.

The Campus Cupboard student food shelf collected over 1,300lbs of donated food that was made available to 128 students through the year.

#### *Food To Grow*

Over 80 community gardeners, including A'Viands, Health Commons, Bonner Leaders, and Trinity Lutheran youth program, produced over 12,000lbs of produce through the growing season.

#### *Food To Buy*

The West Bank Farmer's Market hosted a local Hmong farmer, Love Thy Neighbor Farm, and Growing Lots Urban Farm during the summer.

#### *Food To Know*

Campus Kitchens Collaborates with student learning. One example from this past year is with Ben Strottrup's "Science of Food and Cooking" class to host three panel discussions for the community: Beer and Entrepreneurship; Urban Farming; The Art and Science of Minneapolis Cuisine. Another learning event was the "Empty Bowls" event with Joe Underhill's ENV 100 and Robert Tom's AugSem Ceramics classes. Students served soup made from food pantry donations in student-crafted bowls, plus other local, sustainable dishes prepared by ENV 100 students. The event raised \$712 to split between two local organizations and the Campus Cupboard food shelf.

## Looking Ahead

A final ESC meeting was held in May of 2015. Twelve committed ESC members attended from across the college. Three overarching questions were asked: 1) How does Augsburg currently structure accountability for green results? 2) What are examples of where Augsburg has or has not effectively translated its green commitment into action? 3) How might an authoritative university committee be structured to effectively engage with decision makers who work in these areas to drive measurable green results? Participants were:

Steve Peacock, Community Relations  
Amanda Erdman, Residence Life  
Katy Risner, Office of Institutional Effectiveness  
Leif Anderson, Presidents Office  
Allyson Greene, Campus Kitchens  
Ian Kantonen, MPIRG  
Charles Exner, ENV Student  
Joe Underhill, Faculty  
Tom Ruffaner, Alum  
Dennis Stuckey, Facilities  
Andrea Dvorak, CGEE  
Christina Erickson, Faculty

Lively and useful conversation ensued, addressing each of these areas with commentary to the history of the ESC. In the end, it was universally determined that the move of ESC to the new University Council structure was a useful step forward and the committee members approved unanimously to move to this structure. More specific details will emerge with and from the college in the fall of 2015. Simultaneously, the energy of the ESC, as a cross-section of the campus community committed to green efforts, would be shifted to emerge out of the Environmental Studies academic program.

*This report was prepared by and with contributions from: Thacarra Ferrer, Christina Erickson, Allyson Greene, Katy Risner, Joe Underhill, Lucille Krivanek, Ian Kantonen, and many others.*