Introducing the Green Gator Guide

Everyone knows real gators are green

Released this fall, the Green Gator Guide contains clear and direct actions to reduce the College’s environmental footprint. Topics include recycling, composting, water usage, energy savings, green shopping and eating, eco-travel and household hazardous waste.

Both the guide and the Civic Engagement Fall 2008 newsletter were developed by Dave Valentine ’10 as part of a summer internship.

Small actions help bring about big change.

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STUDENT INITIATIVES

EcoReps Program Comes to Allegheny

The Allegheny College EcoReps Program was established in Fall 2008 to foster an environmentally literate campus through peer motivation. The group is working with the CEED Office and Kelly Boulton ’02, the College’s Sustainability Coordinator, to help reduce the campus’ ecological footprint and inspire environmental responsibility in our community.

Save a Cup - Reduce Trash

Kudos to EcoReps Karl Duchmann, Stacy Goforth, Carlyn Johnson and Jess Longobardo for completing their kick-off event, the “One Less Cup Campaign.” Reusable Green Gator coffee mugs, made from recycled materials, were sold to emphasize the importance of minimizing disposable cup waste on campus.

Michael Zanie of Parkhurst Dining Services estimates that some 38,000 disposable coffee cups are used by the College each year. The cost and environmental impact for the College are greatly reduced if community members use the new Green Gator mugs.

Thanks to the twelve departments and Parkhurst Dining Services who supported this student initiative. The cups will continue to be available for purchase in McKinley’s.

National Collegiate Recycling Competition

RecycleMania, a national competition among colleges aimed at waste minimization, will run from January 18 through March 28. Allegheny’s EcoReps are leading the College’s team, which also includes Physical Plant, St. Moritz Building Services, CEED and Kelly Boulton ’02, Campus Sustainability Coordinator.

Campus goals focus on reducing unwanted bulk mail, implementing initiatives to limit printing in offices and labs, developing employee and student orientation programs to support waste minimization, and promoting the One Less Cup Campaign. Throughout the competition Allegheny will report recycling and trash data and then compare the data with other schools.

Watch for upcoming RecycleMania events. For info, contact the EcoReps at ceed@allegheny.edu.
Meadville City Council Hears Proposal from Art and Environment Freshman Seminar on Environmental Guiding Principles.

In early December members of Meadville City Council and Vernon Township Supervisors attended a student presentation outlining key goals associated with sustainable development. The students emphasized the role of Environmental Guiding Principles (EGPs) in stimulating economic and community growth.

The project is an outgrowth of the Core Commitments work undertaken in 2007-08 through a series of college-community dialogues on environmental responsibility. Building on the action steps from those meetings, students recommended creation and adoption of EGPs that would be used to create policy changes in development and planning. Consistent with the Keystone Development Principles, the EGPs would open funding opportunities for the city and surrounding areas.

Day of Action Against Coal

A Day of Action Against Coal was spearheaded by student Sam Rigotti ’10. The intent was to provide information on the environmental impact of coal use in order to promote a cleaner, greener, healthier, more economically viable future. A petition was also circulated on campus and hundreds of signatures were obtained. The petition and a fact sheet were delivered to Congresswoman Kathy Dahlkemper for her review and consideration.

FACULTY INITIATIVES

WRCP recommends funding for forest ecosystems education program

The Wild Resource Conservation Program recently recommended grant funding to the Sustainable Forestry Project to develop a high school-oriented program for forest study.

A central component of this state-wide program focuses on inclusion of modern forest research equipment that will be available for loan to high school teachers and will enable students and teachers to engage in hands-on, minds-on forest investigations. Training will be provided for site coordinators, high school teachers and a Web site devoted to module support. This initiative builds on earlier work funded by a grant from the Reese Foundation. The project is partnering with PA Audubon, Asbury Woods Nature Center (Erie), Juniata College, and the Crawford County Conservation District.
Entrepreneurship Week

The Managerial Economics Program, Development Office and CEED held the Second Annual Gator Innovation Challenge with student teams creating proposals for innovative projects to create wealth and/or address community problems. The contest was run in conjunction with Entrepreneurship Week USA.

Sam Moss, president of Gray Matters Capital and husband of Isabelle Moss ’67, gave the keynote presentation on “Investing in the World’s Poor: Can You Have High Social Impact and Financial Return?” Following Moss’s presentation, winners of the Gator Innovation Challenge ’08 were announced.

First place winners Ron Deems ’09 and Anthony Taormina ’09, proposed grass roofs to eliminate urban heat island effect, reduce utility bills, control storm water, and combat air pollution, while two teams tied for second place. Andrew Shipitalo ’09, Alex Hall ’09 and Sebastian Sobolev ’09 proposed establishing a local infrastructure for collecting, processing and distributing bio-waste as compost. Anna Kudla ’10 and Tamara Prairie ’10 proposed an infrastructure to manage unrefined gas emissions of cows and selling the product to natural gas processing companies.

Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Professor Jennifer DeHart, CEED’s Local Foods Network Director, recently completed a greenhouse gas inventory for the College. Developed with assistance from ES students, the inventory will be used to create a campus action plan to reduce our carbon footprint. Professor DeHart has also authored a grant proposal to assist the City of Meadville in developing their greenhouse gas inventory.
CEED Faculty Presentations at National Conferences

* Local Foods Network Director and Environmental Science Professor Jennifer DeHart attended the Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Conference in Raleigh, N.C. in November where she chaired a session on institutional change and presented a co-authored paper, “Green Honchos: How Allegheny College’s Taskforce for Environmental Responsibility Created Eco-minded Administrators.” The co-authors include all members of last year’s Task Force for Environmental Responsibility.

* CEED Director Amara Geffen and Environmental Science Professor TJ Eatmon attended the annual Project Pericles meeting in Claremont, California in November. “Civic Engagement, Curriculum, Community: Creating Connections” highlighted Civic Engagement programs at Allegheny with special emphasis on CEED’s work on the “Meadville, PA: Not Your Run of the Mill Community” Project.

* Professor TJ Eatmon, who will be developing environmental education Programs for CEED, recently co-authored a paper on "Political Feasibility, Environmental Sustainability, and Economic Efficiency Analysis of Conventional and Advanced Biofuels Technologies in the US." The paper was presented at the Global Conference on Sustainable Product Development and Life Cycle Engineering in Busan, Korea.

Faculty-Student Collaborative Research

The CEED website now features peer reviewed, faculty-student collaborative research publications. Current papers include:

* Firm Closures in the Tool and Die Industry in Crawford County of Northwest Pennsylvania.


* Biomass, Nitrogen and Ash Content in Stands of Switchgrass and Big Blue Stem in Northwestern Pennsylvania.

* Feasibility of Biodiesel Production in Meadville, Pennsylvania.

Professor Richard Bowden and students presented their research on biodiesel production to Meadville City Council in the fall. Their recommendations include utilizing restaurant grease to fuel city vehicles.

These publications, along with instructions on submitting a paper, can be found at:ceed.allegheny.edu/publications.
CEED IN MEADVILLE

Mill Run Environmental Assessment
Several CEED faculty and students are at work on a DEP funded environmental assessment of the Mill Run Watershed. Amanda Bresnahan '09 is working with Professor Milton Ostrofsky on water quality testing and environmental writing, Alan Messenger '09 is working with Professor Scott Wissinger to assess fish and bug populations, and Student Davies Leader Robyn Snel-ling '09 is collaborating with both Alan and Amanda to complete the corridor assessments and map stormwater outflows along the stream.

More information is at the CEED Sustainable Communities website atceed.allegheny.edu/sc.

Installation of the Market Alley Mural was completed this fall. The mural, designed by Berry Breene '07, was funded by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, PA Downtown Center and a gift from the Richards family.

Shadybrook Park
This summer, CEED will partner with the city to implement a stormwater filtration project at Shadybrook Park, providing water quality improvements, trail enhancements and park beautification.

During winter/spring 2009, Allegheny students Julia Rozewicz '12, Katherine Bensel '09 and Emma Cook '12 will develop a college-school collaboration to create murals at the park and revitalize the playground area.
Interstate 79 Interchange Project

Phase I of “In Praise of Land & Water: Revisioning Stormwater on Federal Highways” was constructed during the summer and fall 2008. This natural stormwater retention and infiltration system merges Earth Art with best management practices in the environmental mitigation of stormwater runoff. Also demonstrating creative reuse of concrete from the demolished bridges, the project integrates a series of terraces designed to direct stormwater.

Images show an artist rendering of the stormwater retention and filtration system as initially proposed. Photo shows the actual construction as carried out in 2008.

The project will also feature native wildflowers and warm season grasses and was inspired by student art proposals. Most important was a proposal by Katherine Bensel ’09, whose concept generated substantial support.

The plan was developed by CEED’s design team, composed of Amara Geffen, sculptor and CEED Director at Allegheny College; Chris Brown, Derck & Edson Associates; Steve Halmi, Deiss & Halmi Engineering; and Environmental Reclamation Artist Angelo Ciotti. Phase II will be completed during the spring/summer 2009 and will focus on the cloverleafs adjacent to I-79 North.
Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania Get On-Site Visit

On October 2, 2008 the PROP Organics Committee held a training session at Allegheny College. Speakers covered a range of topics including year-round cropping and the use of woodchips, switchgrass, and other biomass as energy sources. Representatives from the College provided an overview of CEED and campus sustainability efforts, including food waste composting. Allegheny’s participation in the Northwest PA Keystone Innovation Zone program and general program goals were also highlighted.

Northwest PA Keystone Innovation Zone (KIZ) Update

CEED is partnered with the Northwest Regional Planning Commission to implement KIZ objectives. A five year strategic plan was recently developed. To date sixteen companies have been identified and registered with the state, including a new switchgrass pelletizing plant in Meadville that is awaiting KIZ designation. A logo design competition for the new plant will likely be held this spring. For additional information contact: ceed@allegheny.edu.

CEED is also seeking opportunities to assist KIZ businesses by providing internships for students to research job growth, innovation, entrepreneurship and commercialization in targeted zones. These internships will support KIZ businesses and projects in Advanced Manufacturing, Information Technology, Clean/Green Technology and Life Sciences. Interested? Contact Amara Geffen at ageffen@allegheny.edu or Sue Smith at susans@nwcommission.org.

Federal Funding for Clean Energy/Green Energy

CEED is actively soliciting manufacturers in the region to identify energy projects that can benefit from President Obama’s economic stimulus plan. Projects can include anything from software development to biomass production. Businesses and entrepreneurs involved in clean energy or green energy technologies should contact ceed@allegheny.edu.

Local Foods Featured at Make a Difference Day

After painting fences, raking leaves, collecting trash and reshingling a roof, Make a Difference Day volunteers were treated to a local foods luncheon prepared by Parkhurst Dining Services in Allegheny College’s Campus Center. Professor Jennifer DeHart, Director of the Local Foods Network, worked with students to create displays and a slide show spotlighting local farms and farmers. Students for Environmental Action (SEA) created table tents with local factoids.