

An annual report of campus sustainability 2009-2010.

# COTTONWOOD UPDATE



The Sustainability Program at Luther continues to gain momentum as we work towards the goals laid out in the strategic plan. Following is a report which both specifically addresses ways in which we are working towards the strategic objectives and highlights other notable Sustainability happenings from the past year. While much work is coordinated through the Sustainability Office, looking at the report, one will notice that sustainability initiatives are increasingly being initiated, planned and carried out by staff, faculty, students and administrators across campus, thus demonstrating that a culture of sustainability is being created and adopted by members of the Luther College community. The achievements listed in this report represent the work and creativity of many.

## The Strategic Plan: Connecting Sustainability, Stewardship, and Global Citizenship

### Creating Awareness

#### *Create a Center for Sustainable Communities to be a catalyst for change locally and regionally*

- Coordination of Luther Gardens transitioned to Sustainability Office with the goal of developing creative garden-related programming that will reach more Luther students, staff, faculty, and community members.
- Sustainability staff represented Luther at Food and Fitness meetings and regional stakeholder meetings related to local foods.
- Greening of the Churches Conference brought together people from various faith traditions to talk about sustainability in the church.



#### *Make sustainability a part of every student's learning experience.*

- Luther received an ACM grant and is collaborating with Carlton College, Macalester College and St. Olaf College to develop, assess, and then disseminate well thought-out pedagogical strategies and practical, meaningful, usable activities for introductory courses across the disciplines.
- Sustainability curriculum survey demonstrates that sustainability is infused into the educational experience of our students in nearly all disciplines.
- Environmental Philosophy Projects continue to lead to positive changes on campus. Related initiatives include the creation of a Sustainable Living House and Edible Landscaping Garden.
- Sustainable Living House approved as a new student housing facility where students will explore community and sustainability at home while also reaching out to the Luther and Decorah communities.
- New work-study positions created to provide more students with hands-on sustainability experience (Web Design, STARS reporting, Reuse Sale, Shuttle, Redeemables Collection, Move-Out Week, Marketing, Film Festival). This is in addition to the current garden, recycling, sustainability and BWP positions we already offer.

#### *Nurture connection to place in all stakeholders.*

- Coordination of First Year Immersion Experiences transitioned to Sustainability Office.
- Addition of Local Foods tour to the Immersion Program to connect students to the faces and places that will produce much of the food they will consume during their time at Luther.
- Coordination of Backyard Wilderness Pursuits transitioned to Sustainability Office.
- Backyard Wilderness Pursuits given a prominent place in the Union where the program will be more visible to potential users.
- Acquisition of new equipment (kayaks, tents, sleeping bags) that will enable more people to make use of the natural environment.
- Videos produced for the admissions office and sustainability website that tell the story of Decorah and the outdoor opportunities that exist.
- Revamped the Sustainability website so it is an ever-evolving, visually appealing and highly informative site which demonstrates our connection and dedication to this place.

# Adopting Sustainable Practices

*Model stewardship and sustainability in all college operations to reduce Luther's environmental impact and mitigate operational costs.*

- The Assistant Sustainability Coordinator position has been continued into a second year, thus creating the ability for the Sustainability Office to continue to contribute substantively to the sustainability goals of the college.
- The Campus Sustainability Council met seven times throughout the Academic Year and progress was gained in each of the four task groups.
- Recycling efforts have been improved through the addition of bins in first year halls, better signage, more frequent collection and increased communication with building custodians.
- Compost is being collected throughout the entire year (in the past it was not collected during the Winter), thus reducing the amount of compostable items ending up in the landfill and the associated cost of disposal.
- Luther's purchasing of local foods increased from 12% in FY 2008-09 to 17% in FY 2009-10 (in the cafeteria).
- Low Flow Shower heads were tested by one third of students living on campus to determine the favored option and will be installed in showers around campus, thus significantly reducing water consumption.
- Following the installation of GoPrint, between 2009 and 2010, we saw a drop of over 668,000 printed pages or a drop of 35.8%.

*Reduce Luther's carbon footprint by 50 percent and develop a plan to achieve carbon neutrality.*

- \$185K EECBG grant was received and we are in the process of energy efficiency upgrades and installing electrical, water and condensate meters.
- Greenhouse Gas emissions continue to be monitored and reported by Facilities.
- \$45K Rocky Mountain Institute Grant was received and used to hire Sebesta Blomberg consultants to develop an Energy Conservation Program along with members of the Energy and Water Task Group.
- Energy Conservation Program adopted by the College in Spring 2010.
- Land Lease signed for the wind turbine.
- Climate Action Plan completed and submitted Fall 2009
- Energy Evolution competition coordinated through the Sustainability Office.



## Caring for Place

*Design and implement a campus land-use plan that affirms land stewardship, sustainability, and landscape designer Jens Jensen's original vision for the Luther campus in 1911.*



- Addition of signs for the Edible Landscaping Project (2010), Baker Village Gardens (2011) and Faculty/Staff Community Garden (2011).
  - Campus circulation improved with the elimination of the road through central campus.
  - Handicapped, Visitor and Admissions parking improved.
  - Updated land use plan being developed by Land Use Committee
  - Summer land use interns hired to help manage Luther's land
  - Wetlands Project completed
  - First Buckthorn Blitz organized and well attended.
  - River Landing Conversations ongoing
- Bentdahl Commons, Library lawn and Valders Council Ring projects developed and constructed for the purpose of creating outdoor gathering spaces and enhancing the aesthetics of the college.
  - \$100K grant received from Iowa DNR for Permeable Paving Project in parking lot across from Facilities.
  - River Landing Conversations ongoing
  - Edible Landscape Garden approved, planted and providing food to the cafeteria

*Continue sustainable and strategic enhancements of the plant and facilities with a focus on student learning, energy payback, campus needs, and economic return.*

- Valders renovation completed in a manner consistent with LEED standards.
- New windows installed in Ylvisaker and Towers.
- Sustainable Living House renovations happened, with a focus on energy efficiency.
- New electric, water and condensate meters installed across campus.

# Other Notable Sustainability Happenings during 2009-2010

In addition to the work that's already being done to address specific strategic objectives, below are other related initiatives that have taken shape over the past year.

## Transportation

### On Campus/In Decorah

- Exploring the feasibility of bringing a Car Share program to campus. Options include U Car Share and ZipCar.
- Decorah shopping shuttle created- Proposed by Environmental Philosophy students, funded by Student Senate and coordinated through the Sustainability Office, this shuttle will take twice-monthly trips to downtown Decorah and out to Walmart, starting Fall 2010.
- Nearly 25% of campus has an active membership to the Bike Share Program, which currently has 8 bikes.
- Additional bike racks have been placed around campus to accommodate increased bike usage.
- Increased numbers of bikes stored through Luther in Winter Bike Storage in the Ashmore-Jewell Barn.
- Addition of 2 hybrids to the college fleet.



### Off Campus

- Ride share site ([rideshare.luther.edu](http://rideshare.luther.edu)) developed by Brad Miller and Kevin Williams. This tool facilitates carpooling among students, staff and faculty to cut down on trips.
- Break shuttle service expanded to Chicago, Rockford and Madison commenced in Fall 2010.

## Food

### Purchasing

- Nearly 100% of all beef and pork served on campus is purchased grass fed, organic and local.
- Grown Locally is now on the Sodexo-approved list of vendors.
- Local grains currently being tested with the goal of sourcing more local, whole grains and using them in all campus baked goods.
- Increased local foods purchases in the cafeteria, working to incorporate local foods into other campus dining locations.



### Sharing our abundance

- Relationship established with First Lutheran Food Pantry so that excess inventory from Luther College can be donated.

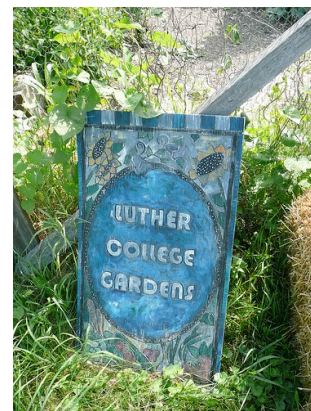
### Seasonality in the menu

- Catering is incorporating more local ingredients into the menu and becoming more seasonality minded.
- Hired a new General Manager and Executive Chef who are both dedicated to sustainable, local, healthy foods.
- Menus have been developed for special events based on what's available in the Luther Gardens.

## Luther Gardens

### Increased program support and oversight

- Coordination of gardens successfully transitioned from Dining Services to the Sustainability Office.
- New equipment (4-row seeder, Vermont cart, harvest bins, wheel hoe, etc) procured.
- Addition of more work study positions for the Fall/Spring
- Plan established to ensure smooth transition from Summer to Fall.
- Relationships established with local gardening experts David Cavagnaro of the Pepperfield Project and Mike Bollinger and Katie Prochaska of River Root Farm.



## Education/Outreach

- Edible Landscape Garden created between Valders and the old greenhouse.
- Baker Village gardens planted with seeds from all over the world to serve as a model of diversity.
- Facilitated 3 Upward Bound and 2 Discovery Camp garden visits.
- Developing plans for engaging Luther students with the gardens (ie. Sustainability House, Norby residents, other floors to take part in volunteer opportunities)
- Facebook page created to keep current students, staff, faculty, alumni and friends up to date on the Luther Gardens.
- 27 Faculty/Staff Community plots fully subscribed.



## Improved coordination between LC Gardens and Dining Services

- Dining Services staff included in planning for the 2010 gardens.
- Frequent communication has streamlined delivery process and usability of items in the kitchen.

## Recycling and Waste

### Recycling Improvements

- Addition of 25 receptacles for collecting redeemable items, the proceeds of which go to Habitat for Humanity's local initiatives.
- Management of recycling program done via Google Sites for a streamlined approach.
- Contract signed with Pepsi so that Luther receives \$.06/item
- Increased communication with custodial staff in buildings across campus
- Document destruction managed by Sustainability Office.
- Increased opportunities for recycling during move-out week.
- Cell Phone recycling kiosk installed in the Union.
- Printer ink cartridge recycling bin installed in Olin and the Document Center.



## Outreach

### Presentations

- On Campus
  - 19 total, over 1400 people reached  
Ex: First Year Service Project Participants, RA's, Student Senate, Regents, President's Council and Legacy Trust, Community Assembly, Wellness Lectures, Various classes, United World Colleges Counselors, Dig-IN, Faculty
- Off Campus Presentations
  - 15 Total, over 625 people reached  
Ex: AASHE Conference, IAEE, Decorah Chamber of Commerce, Dubuque Growing Sustainable Communities Conference, Sustainable Endowments Institute Transportation Webinar, UMACS, South Winn High School, Valley Community Schools

## Increased collaboration between Public Information Office and Sustainability during 2009-10 Academic Year

- 36 Sustainability-related press releases
- 8 Sustainability-related videos
- Numerous photo shoots arranged

### Web Site Updated and Maintained

Played a significant role in hosting the first Oneota Film Festival. The theme of the films were all sustainability related.

Sustainability email group created and used to get out information about upcoming opportunities/initiatives

Sustainability Newsletter created and distributed quarterly

Sustainability Award created for faculty/staff who show innovation, creativity and dedication to sustainability on campus.

### Increased media attention

- Iowa Public Radio interview, KWWL Earth Day Feature, Waterloo Courier Feature, Inspire(d)

## Energy and Water

### Savings

- 8% reduction in water usage since 2005
- 32% reduction in landfill waste since 2005
- 700 gallons of water saved/day by going tray-less in the cafeteria.
- In collaboration with Pepsi, all campus vending machines have been de-lamped to save energy.

### Reuse Initiatives

- One-sided paper reuse boxes created and placed near printers
- Office Supply Reuse Station created in the Environmental Studies Office Suite where people can pick-up/drop-off anything office-related.
- Ashmore-Jewell Barn transformed from storage to a Reuse Store where items that the college no longer needs are sold. Profit from the sale of these items go to the sustainability office.