Sustainability Workshops 2016-2017
Green Campus Partnership Eco-Reps
Soomin Shin and Maddie Tilyou

Sustainability Workshops

Abstract

The concept of our project was to create a sustainability workshop to educate students on concrete steps they could take to incorporate sustainability into their lives. We designed these workshops to target student groups on campus and educate their constituents on how best to host sustainable events. Over the course of the first semester we designed the workshops drawing from models implemented at other schools as well as data collected from surveys we distributed. In the spring semester we focused on recruiting clubs and presenting our workshop. During second semester we also designed an online component of our presentation. This content was uploaded to the SSAP webpage. It is our hope that future eco-reps can continue to streamline the workshop and distribute it to more groups at Penn.

Goals

We wanted to both educate our peers in becoming more sustainable, while helping them to make a tangible and sustainable change in their behavior as well. This dual-goal presented a challenge as we did not want to be too informational in the workshop, but use the workshop as a starting resource for sustainability. To best reach the student body at Penn, we decided to focus this workshop on student organizations because they wield a large influence over students' experiences, and over the overall campus culture as well. One of the specific goals of the project was to impact clubs that may not have an existing interest in sustainability.

Main Stakeholders:

- Student Activities Council and Constituent Organizations sac@sacfunded.net
- College House System, House Deans, RAs, GAs
- Student Sustainability Association at Penn exec@ssapenn.com
Student Organizations Reached (contacts available at G.O @ Penn website)

- Penn International Impact Consulting (piic.upenn@gmail.com)
- Model Congress (Chief@pennmc.org)
- Venus Ultimate Frisbee (csown@sas.upenn.edu)
- Penn Taiwanese Society (penntaiwanesesociety@gmail.com)
- United Minorities Council (unitedminoritiescouncil@gmail.com)
- Asian Pacific Student Coalition (chair@upennapsc.org)
- Alternate Spring Break (altbreak@gmail.com)
- Penn Quidditch (mschofi@sas.upenn.edu)
- Dance Arts Council (dacchair@gmail.com)
- APO Service Fraternity (vpservice@upennapo.org)
- Class Board
- Without a Net (penn.withoutanet@gmail.com)
- Queer Student Alliance (qsa.chair@gmail.com)
- Penn Singers (pennsingers@gmail.com)
- Students for Sensible Drug Policy (ssdpatpenn@gmail.com)
- Stimulus Children’s Theatre (stimboard@googlegroups.com)
- Penn Vegan Society (pennveg@gmail.com)
- Outdoors Club (starg@sas.upenn.edu)
- CAUSA (Cuban American Undergraduate Association) (penncausa@gmail.com)
- La Vida Magazine (lavidaupenn@gmail.com)
- Front Row Theatre Co. (ftc.board@gmail.com)
- Colleges Against Cancer (pennrelayforlife@gmail.com)

Timeline of Project

1st Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/1-10/15</td>
<td>Plan out scope of project using CBSM guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/17-10/31</td>
<td>Conduct research on other school’s green event guides and workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>Announce survey at SAC GBM</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/28</td>
<td>Research and establish baseline of clubs’ current practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/7</td>
<td>Green Event Workshop Pilot (Penn International Impact Consulting, Model Congress, Venus Ultimate Frisbee, Penn Taiwanese Society, Penn Quidditch)</td>
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2nd Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>Evaluate Green Event Workshop Pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>Complete Revisions to Green Event Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>Complete First Draft of Green Living Workshop</td>
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2/9 | Announce Green Event Workshop at SAC GBM
---|---
2/22 | Present at SSAP Meeting
2/27 | Green Living Workshop Pilot in New College House
3/12-4/1 | Condense Green Event Workshop,
4/1 | Upload SAC Green Event Guide to SSAP website
4/5 | Meet with Dance Arts Council President
4/12 | Present at Asian Pacific Student GBM

**Findings from Research and Surveys**

Our first semester was almost exclusively focused on research and design.

**Other Schools’ Green Event Guides**

We found that most schools’ Green Event Guides were directed towards faculty and staff, but not for student organizations. For example, Johns Hopkins’ Green Event Guide focused on creating a checklist of procedures to follow before, during, and after events, but the guide educated University-wide events, instead focusing on peer-to-peer education.

An interesting peer-to-peer model of sustainability education we found was *Sustainable Works* by Santa Monica College, but we realized that this model was more of a long-term student commitment consisting of 15-25 students that meet weekly for 8 weeks to learn about the following topics: water, energy, waste, chemicals, transportation and shopping/food. We thought that this program would be too time-intensive for Penn students and would compete against existing programs (Eco-Reps, PEG), but perhaps this is a program that can be further developed.

**Club Baseline Activity**

To determine clubs’ practices before exposure to a green event workshop, we solicited survey responses, which were distributed through email after the Student Activities Council Meeting, which represents 220 clubs. Additionally, club baseline activity was measured by a survey distributed to organizations who participated in the pilot workshop as well.

In general, the results indicate that while there is an overarching interest in learning more about sustainable club practices, most organizations were unsure how to be sustainable and realized that some of their practices were unsustainable. For example, out of 13 responses, only 23.1% knew where to obtain sustainably sourced food, but 46.2% claimed that they wanted to learn. Out of 7 responses, all of the respondents listed food-related choices as an unsustainable aspect of club events. Interestingly, 3/7 of the responses listed clean-up related issues as an unsustainable aspect of their club events while not creating a connection between sourcing less and having to clean up
less. We found that most clubs (75%) hold GBMs, while the second most common were social events, which informed our design of the workshop to relate heavily to GBMs.

The majority of clubs reported sourcing food mainly from places around the campus, such as Hummus, Allegro’s, and Greek Lady, while about a third of the clubs cited that they sourced food from Fresh Grocer, implying their usage of plastic grocery bags. Because we did not want to overwhelm the clubs with the number of questions in the survey, we limited our scope of the survey to mostly food-related activities.

Results and Recommendations

Over the course of the project, we modified our plan based on what actually was effective for clubs.

In the 1st semester, we designed a model in which about 10-15 representatives from clubs would attend an hour-long Green event workshop covering the following topics: Food, Sustainable Sourcing, and Promotion. After the pilot, we realized that two main motivators for clubs were funding and recognition. Since clubs are not mandated to attend a sustainability workshop, we had to rely on existing incentives. While we consulted SAC and GCP about creating funding incentives for becoming green club certified, the possibility for the monetary incentive seemed dubious.

Therefore, we think it is important to focus on how to recognize clubs in being more sustainable. By hosting resources for clubs on how to be sustainable on the SSAP website, we are also able to recognize clubs on this page. Currently, the criteria of being recognized as “Green Certified” only requires filling out one event recap form per semester with a picture of one behavior change reflecting how the club is being sustainable. In the future, we could create a tiered structure of recognition based on how many events were made sustainable. We would also recommend focusing on social media recognition (Eco-Reps/GCP facebook), as well as partnering with student publications, such as the Daily Pennsylvanian or the Penn Sustainability Review.

In the 2nd semester, we modified the workshop so that Eco-Reps go to the club GBM and conducts the workshop, having each workshop reach more people inside an organization. We made this modification because we found it difficult to motivate members of clubs to go out of their way to attend a Green Event workshop since it was not mandatory. We also decreased the time of the presentation from 1 hour (the original time as piloted) to 20-30 minutes, because we are presenting at the GBM. Moving forward, we would reach out to more umbrella organizations such as PAGE and GPA due to their wide reach on campus. Additionally, some future partners we would work with are the Athletics Department, as well as the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life.

In regards to marketing and garnering interest for the workshops, we found that our presentation at SAC meetings were a good way to get the word out, but not enough for clubs to sign up for Green Event workshops. Therefore, during 2nd semester, we relied on reaching out to clubs that we were familiar with through email, as well as cold-emailing clubs on the Penn club directory. Moving forward, we would continue reaching out to club leadership directly, instead of waiting for clubs to
reach out to us. After the workshop, we realized that it is important to follow up directly afterwards, as well as 1-2 weeks after to remind clubs. A way to remind clubs is to ask to include a link to the umbrella group’s newsletter, or we could ask the club to follow Eco-Rep social media, where the event recap form would be promoted. If this project were to be started again at a later time, we would focus on reaching out to as many organizations as possible early on.

Key Takeaways:

- Workshops that are not specific may be difficult to attract people
- Rather than having representatives from various clubs come to a workshop, it is more effective for Eco-Reps to go to their GBMs
- Targeting Umbrella Organizations, and then Constituent groups, is effective
- Set date of event 2 weeks in advance

Please contact soomins@sas.upenn.edu for access to the folder that includes the surveys, workshop presentations, and research.

Appendix

1. Link to John Hopkins’ Green Event Planning Guide
2. Saint Monica College Sustainable Works
   http://www.smc.edu/AcademicAffairs/Sustainability/Pages/Sustainable-Works.aspx
3. Survey Results

What is UNsustainable about your club events? (7 responses)

- Usually when we have food/dinks at our events, we don’t do a good job of cleaning up the best way we could
- Lots of paper cups and plates used, lots of merchandise ordered, shipped to us, tons of paper used during conference
- Chip bags
- Sometimes we don’t clean up as much as we’d like and we don’t recycle as much as we’d like
- We had an end of the year party with balloons and lots of disposable plates, cups, etc.
- Some wasted food at tournaments, some plastic water bottles at practice.
- PTS. Lowkey pretty unsustainable. We serve a lot of food at events that we use throw away plates and cup for