



SYNERGIES

The Sustainability Newsletter of The University of Texas at Austin

UT Adopts Campus Sustainability Policy



UT is one of the first public institutions of higher education in Texas to adopt a rigorous Campus Sustainability Policy. The policy calls for integrating sustainability in academic programs, operations, campus planning, administration and outreach.

Dr. Pat Clubb, Vice President for Employee and Campus Services and Co-chair of the Task Force on Sustainability said, "It reflects our commitment to sustainability here at UT, and will serve to guide us as we work together toward more sustainable practices and services."

Students in the Campus Environmental Center brought the first draft of the Policy to President Powers, who established the Task Force on Sustainability to recommend policies and actions that promote sustainability. The Task Force worked with the students toward the establishment of this Policy. The Policy requires that university policies, practices and curricula should, when possible, embody approaches that reduce life cycle costs, restore or maintain the functioning of natural systems and enhance human well-being. It calls for the establishment of procedures and mechanisms, including an oversight body, to guide its implementation and ensure accountability.

Visit: <http://www.utexas.edu/policies/hop/pm/01.A.03.html>

UT Wins 2008 Texas Environmental Excellence Award



On April 30 Dr. Pat Clubb, Vice President of Employee and Campus Services and Juan Ontiveros, Director of Utilities and Energy Management accepted the 2008 Texas Environmental Excellence Award (TEEA) in the Large Business/Technical category for UT's energy innovations. UT operates a co-generation power plant for electricity, and heating/cooling. Campus square footage has increased 13% and electrical demands have increased 25% over the past ten years. Despite these increases in demand, fuel consumption at the power plant has remained constant. Through a series of retrofits and equipment upgrades, the power plant's efficiency increased by 16% in the past decade. This prevented a substantial amount of pollutants from entering the atmosphere, including 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions, which is equivalent to taking 45,000 cars off the road, or planting 203,000 acres of forest! Awards are given annually, and the TEEA is part of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. For more information visit: <http://www.teea.org/winners.htm>

UT Becomes an Energy Star Partner



Dr. Pat Clubb, Vice President of Employee and Campus Services and Co-Chair of the President's Task Force on Sustainability announced that UT has become an official Energy Star Partner. Energy Star is a government program sponsored jointly by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Energy (DOE) that helps consumers, industry and state agencies save money and the environment through the purchase of energy efficient products. As an Energy Star Partner, UT will have access to extra resources to help inform electronics purchasing decisions. All electronic equipment purchased for the university in any department should be Energy Star products. In addition, Energy Star products will be required in new buildings and renovations. UT's partnership with Energy Star will help us reduce our energy consumption, saving money and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. To learn more about Energy Star products and partners visit:

<http://www.energystar.gov/>

Sustainable Development: To meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (Defined in the Brundtland Report)

Sustainability Tip of the Month: *If you are purchasing a new electronic device, choose an Energy Star product! They save energy, money, and reduce our carbon footprint. Visit: http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=find_a_product.*

Campus GreenLight Program



The Campus GreenLight Project is a partnership between the Environmental Science Institute, the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO), and the Campus Environmental Center intended to address environmental and sustainability issues at UT through education, outreach and research. The Campus GreenLight Project features several projects across the University. The Green Food Project coordinates with DHFS to renovate kitchens, increasing energy efficiency, auditing energy and water consumption, and raising awareness about sustainability. The Campus Power Down Initiative targets energy conservation during breaks in faculty and staff offices by powering down electronics through outreach efforts, and shutting down computer labs when they are not in use. Other projects include ESI's Hot Science-Cool Talks Outreach Lecture on Our Energy Future, and Solar Audits aimed at determining possible solar energy solutions for the UT campus. <http://www.esi.utexas.edu/greenlight/>

DHFS Plate Waste Study



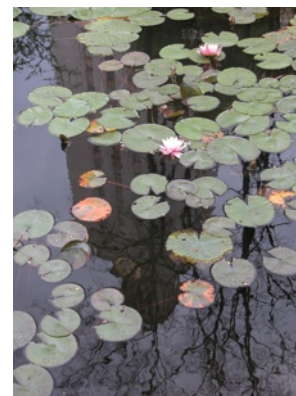
A plate waste study was conducted at Kinsolving Dining Hall in February 2008 to determine the amount of edible, post-consumer food waste. Food scraps were collected in buckets and weighed to determine total weight, and all inedible portions (fruit peels/cores, bones, napkins, etc.) were subtracted. The results of the study reveal that an average of 5.7oz of edible food is thrown away by each patron at every meal, resulting in 223,882 pounds, or 112 tons, of food waste during an academic year in Kinsolving Dining Hall and Jester 2nd Floor Dining Hall. In April a group of students and staff met to develop an action plan. The group agreed to several measures including student education, staff training, taste testing, and using smaller trays. DHFS set a goal of 50% reduction, and a second study will be conducted in Fall 2008 to determine the impact of the plan.

RecycleMania Competition



RecycleMania is an annual competition between colleges and universities in the United States that measures recycling rates over a ten-week period. 2008 was UT's 2nd time participating, and this year we competed in the Whole Campus Division. The competition ran from January 28 to April 5, and results were released on Earth Day. UT finished in 6th place for the Waste Minimization category, 12th in the Gorilla Prize, which measures the highest gross tonnage of recyclables, and 9th in the Grand Champion contest, which measures the overall recycling rate of the campus. Everyone can help by making sure to recycle all paper, aluminum and #1 and #2 plastic so we can improve for next year's competition, Spring Semester 2009. Learn more by visiting the RecycleMania website online. And remember to recycle! www.recyclemaniacs.org

Up Coming Events



May 7th --19th

Trash to Treasure collection drive. Donate your unwanted house wares, furniture, bikes and clothing, and they will be sold during move in this fall. Proceeds benefit the Campus Environmental Center. Call 232-7840 or visit: <http://www.trashtotreasureUT.com/>

June 6, 12:00-1:30

The UT Sustainability Network will meet in the Texas Governors Room of the Union 3.116.

June 17, 12:00-1:00

The Green Horns will meet in ACES 2.404B. This month's meeting will focus on gardening and saving water.