

# Campus Conservation Nationals 2015 Case Study

## Concordia College Morehead, MN

### 1. SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

Private 4-year college with approximately 2,400 students

### 2. AUTHOR AFFILIATION

Nicole Schmiedt, Student Eco-Rep Coordinator for the 2014-2015 academic year.



### 3. COMPETITION TYPE & DATES

Concordia College held an electricity competition from March 8 through March 28, 2015. This timing was decided upon because it fell nicely between Easter Break and Spring Break in the academic calendar. It was also held in March because that is consistent with when we normally have the competition every year. By choosing the same period, students become more familiar with the competition every year.

### 4. OVERVIEW

The campus benefited from the competition in many ways. It brought many student leaders, student organizations, faculty and staff together for an important and fun event. It educated the community about ways to reduce energy in everyday living and it helped the college not only reduce its carbon footprint, but also its energy bill. The competition allowed students to make a real difference on campus by simply changing a few of their daily habits. The campus saved a total of 24,188 kWh over the course of the competition. There were eleven buildings that participated, six traditional residence halls and five apartment buildings. A majority of the student body at Concordia College lives on campus and both first and second year students are required to live on campus. Because of this fact, many students were involved in the competition. In order to get students involved through behavior change, the Eco-Reps on campus tabled in the student atrium and encouraged students to make pledges to reduce energy. The Eco-Reps gave away “It’s Electric” buttons as well as reusable bags and water bottles. They also had a raffle for students that posted about the competition using the hashtag #cordCCN. The raffle prizes were thrift shop t-shirts that were screen printed with the competition logo. For more direct outreach, the Eco-Reps posted bulletin boards and posters in each individual hall and they planned a “kick-off” event for their respective buildings. The most

successful kick-off event was a glow-in-the-dark dance. The students received glow sticks and wore neon clothing while attending the dance.

## 5. GOALS

The goals for the competition included exceeding the previous year's reduction levels, involving more buildings, students, and organizations, and planning farther in advance. We also hoped to engage more directly with students and further familiarize them with the competition and its importance.

## 6. RESULTS

Overall % reduction (electricity): 15.75%	Average CCN % reduction (electricity): 2.9%
Electricity saved (kWh): 24,188	
Equivalent savings: \$1,693	
Equivalent lbs CO2: 38,413	

## 7. GROUP COMPETITION

Competition name: N/A

Participating schools: N/A

## 8. PLANNING

### Competition Organizing Team

The organizing team consisted of seven Eco-Reps, the Eco-Rep Student Coordinator, and the Sustainability Specialist on campus. Eco-Reps are hired in the fall of every academic year and the student coordinator is determined at the end of every academic year. We met at least once a week, but for longer time periods as the competition date approached. Each Eco-Rep was held accountable for the residence hall that they lived in. They publicized in their hall, planned a kick-off event, and engaged students in their building. The student coordinator oversaw the planning and implementing of the competition and acted as both a supervisor and administrator for the group. For next year, I would improve the post competition student outreach. I would have the Eco-Reps provide some sort of feedback generator such as a survey or comments document. I would plan more updates post competition and better updates as the end date approached.

### Key Supporters

The team was supported by other student leaders in the art/graphic design department. They designed and helped format the poster and graphics for the competition. Other student leaders of student organizations were helpful as well. We worked with the manager for CobberMade, the screen printing business on campus to screen print the t-shirt raffle prizes. Furthermore,

the biggest help came from facilities management and the Residence Life staff in each of the participating buildings. Facilities helped with dashboard issues and keeping lights off during the competition. The Residence Life members, such as R.A.s and Hall Directors, worked to help engage students in behavior change and participation in competition related events.

### **Timeline**

The team was formed early in the fall semester of the academic year. The group got to know each other, worked on other initiatives, and began learning about CCN in the fall. Competition planning meetings began after Christmas Break and began with the designing of publicity and outlining the three weeks of the competition. From there, the behavior change and engagement strategies were discussed, prizes were decided upon and necessary communication was made with outside groups and organizations for finalization of the competition planning.

### **Funding**

Budget money came from an outside source. The budget was for the Eco-Rep program, but a portion of it was set aside for the CCN competition specifically. It was spent on advertising, prizes, and events that were planned. It was money well spent. It did not take much money to plan and implement a successful competition.

### **Resources**

I found CCN's planning guide to be the most helpful. All the resources provided by CCN allowed for the planning of a successful competition. They were full of expert advice and recommendations.

## **9. OUTCOMES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS - OVERALL**

The competition was successful in reducing energy use and increasing student awareness and participation. All the buildings that participated showed signs of student engagement. Furthermore, more of the campus community became aware of the competition and its importance. It also helped the Eco-Reps program to grow and flourish as it finished its second full year of existence. It made the program more well-known across campus and showed that the program can be very useful and successful for the sustainability efforts of the college.

## **10. OUTCOMES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS – STUDENT LEADERSHIP**

The organizing team gained knowledge in the areas of sustainability, behavior change, and event planning. They honed their skills of collaboration, communication, and independence while also becoming more advanced in group coordination and personal responsibility.

## **11. OUTCOMES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS - MARKETING, EDUCATION, & BEHAVIOR CHANGE**

### **Implementation & Outcomes**

The name of our competition was “It’s Electric” which, in and of itself, lets students know that the way to make a difference in the competition is to reduce electricity usage. We encouraged students to visit the dashboard by providing a link to it on all of our posters, and by also having a scanning code on the posters so students could scan the code with their smartphones and be directed to the dashboard. Finally, we had students make pledges to reduce energy on the dashboard while tabling in the student atrium during the competition. For prizes, we had buttons, pens, water bottles, reusable bags, and notepads. We also had screen printed thrift shop shirts for raffle prizes. The thrift shop shirts also allowed us to engage the local community by promoting buying used clothes from the local thrift shops. The most successful event we hosted was the “Glow-in-the-dark” dance. Over 100 students attended the dance on behalf of CCN and it really helped spread the word about the competition.

### **Effectiveness**

The competition was far more effective than the previous year’s competition. Many more students participated by making pledges and posting on social media about their behavior changes. I think the students adopted conservation behavior to a higher extent this year because we made public the pledges people were making, we promoted and taught students how to use the dashboard, and we provided fun incentives and prizes to win.

## **12. CHALLENGES**

The main challenge our team encountered was keeping the energy and excitement up throughout the entirety of the three-week competition. We had stable funding and resources, and began planning well in advance, but still found it somewhat difficult to find the right people to reach out to when needing help with design and advertising. We responded by reaching out to a few people and using the connections our group members had to find others with the skills we needed to create an effective poster design. Furthermore, we focused more on direct engagement in specific buildings during the last week of the competition in hopes of keeping the excitement high up until the end of the competition.

## **13. WISDOM & GUIDANCE**

I would like others to know that planning and implementing a successful competition is not as daunting as it may seem. I am a student and did the majority of the planning myself (because we did not have a Sustainability Coordinator at the time) and oversaw the Eco-Reps program and our planning meetings. It was a great leadership role to have and was extremely fulfilling as the competition and its successes came to light. It is also good to know that reaching out to

other students, faculty, and staff is the key to success. The competition cannot be implemented alone. While the planning can be done by mostly one person, it is important to bounce ideas off of others and to consider what has been done in the past, and what will be the most successful in future competitions. Furthermore, do not hesitate to utilize CCNs planning guide and other material as well as contacting a CCN member directly. Most of all, remember to have fun. Try not to be too wrapped up in slight road bumps or challenges. Everything works out in the end, and the most important goal is educating and teaching others ways to be more sustainable in everyday life.

#### **14. CONTACT**

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Graduates December 2015

*\*Open to being contacted by other schools for questions and further information*

#### **15. SUSTAINABILITY AT CONCORDIA COLLEGE**

Concordia College will embrace a concern for sustainability that is rooted in the responsibility to ensure the environmental, economic, and social health of the college and of our global community. Concordia College's sustainability vision is interwoven with our commitment to global learning, with our faith tradition and abiding commitment to ethical deliberation, and with the values and practices of the liberal arts. More specifically, we envision Concordia as a place where: college operations have as little negative ecological impact as possible, the principles of sustainability – environmental, economic, and social – are fundamental in all decision-making processes, conversations about sustainability are a regular part of community life, insights into the sustainability challenge and ideas about creating sustainable ways of living are constantly generated and explored, students, faculty, and staff develop the perspectives and skills needed to work for sustainability in the wider world.

[www.cord.edu/sustainability](http://www.cord.edu/sustainability)

#### **16. POSTERS, PHOTOS & VIDEOS**

<https://youtu.be/99sT5NfEyug>

<https://www.facebook.com/Cord.Eco.Reps>

<https://twitter.com/ConcoEcoReps>