

Campus Conservation Nationals 2015 Case Study

Western Technical College La Crosse, WI

1. SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

Public, 2-year, 14,587 total students (3,710 FTEs)

2. AUTHOR AFFILIATION

Morgan Schmidt, Student and Sustainability Assistant in the Sustainability Department; Shannon R. Havlik, Sustainability Coordinator, Western Technical College



3. COMPETITION TYPE & DATES

Electricity

January 2015 through February 2015

4. OVERVIEW

At Western Technical College, La Crosse, WI, we take pride in our sustainability efforts. Campus Conservation Nationals is something we've had the pleasure of participating in for three years and the competition has benefitted our school in many ways, most directly, our students. This year our Residence Hall saved our college 20,518 kWh by teaching students how to save electricity in their rooms. Almost forty of the suites participated, which had two to four students in each room. We held energy audits in their rooms two to three times per week. This competition gives Western students the opportunity to take on more leadership roles and gain an awareness of sustainability on our campus. In addition, our Residence Hall students are engaged in a fun, friendly, competition in which they are able to connect with the community on and off campus.

5. GOALS

Our goals for Western Technical College's CCN competition were:

1. To encourage more than 50% of the rooms of our 100 rooms in the Residence Hall to sign up for Energy Watch (Energy Watch was our key piece that our energy auditing system implemented to increase participation in our competition). This goal was not met, however over a quarter of the rooms (30 rooms) participated in our voluntary competition.

2. To enlist a team in the competition. This goal was met. We received help from past and present work study students to help in the Sustainability Department as well as help from Residence Hall student leaders and staff.
3. To be competitive with previous years' results on our campus. Unfortunately, we were unable to measure this result as our findings last year were recorded incorrectly so we were unable to measure this accurately.
4. To create more events for the competition to add an extra element of fun and engagement. This goal was met with much success. We held three events for the students that were well attended and generated positive feedback.

6. RESULTS

Overall % reduction: 25.70%	Average CCN % reduction (electricity): 2.9%
Electricity saved (kWh): 20,518 kWh	
Equivalent \$: \$1,846	
Equivalent lbs CO2: 35,147 lbs	

7. GROUP COMPETITION

Competition name: N/A

Participating schools: N/A

8. PLANNING

Competition Organizing Team

Our CCN team members were:

- Shannon Havlik, Sustainability Coordinator and supervisor to the competition
- Morgan Schmidt, Sustainability Assistant and student leader of the competition
- Leah Durnin-Hoover, Student Life Coordinator and Residence Hall leader
- The Resident Assistants, six students supporting activities in the Residence Hall

For our competition, we didn't have to recruit members of the team as we already had key participants. The Resident Assistants were a new addition added by the Student Life Coordinator, Leah. The team met initially before the competition to plan and several times during the competition to keep things running well. The only changes we hope for next year is an increase in team members.

Key Supporters

The support from CCN's organization team, Abigail Karp, was a major asset to our competition. She was available to answer any questions we had, provide support to our team and solicited advice whenever possible. Abby was a large key supporter to our competition.

Timeline

Our timeline began in August 2014 when the CCN webinars began. This was when the competition planning began and a team for the competition started to form. In fall 2014, we began to meet with the team and plan out the competition together. The competition was held January 2015 through February 2015.

Funding

The Residence Hall Director helped financially fund many elements of the competition along with Western's Sustainability Department. The expenses were minimal as money was spent for some marketing efforts and on incentives. The money was extremely well spent when looking at the money saved and the environmental benefits.

Resources

We found our best resources were planning guides, webinars and networking throughout campus.

9. OUTCOMES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS - OVERALL

At Western we believe in the Triple Bottom Line and looking at not only the fiscal impacts and the impact on the environment, but also how sustainability impacts people and social systems. This was a great chance to implement that philosophy.

Our competition was successful on many levels. We saved our college more than \$1800 in three short weeks, reflecting the financial importance of behavior changes. We gained sustainability awareness throughout campus and improved our culture of sustainability as well.

Overall this program aligns with Western's Sustainability Plan and Energy Management Conservation Program extremely well. We are able to use our Residence Hall to extend our college-wide energy conservation efforts directly to our students and also use the Residence Hall facility as a living lab to teach these students how to make efficient choices when it comes to consumption. It's also a wonderful chance for students to lead sustainability efforts and learn valuable skills at the same time

10. OUTCOMES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS – STUDENT LEADERSHIP

The student members and leaders of our CCN Team were able to directly connect with Western Technical College's core college values.

At Western we value the success of our students and hold ourselves accountable for providing excellence in student learning, based on the diverse needs of each student and built on a foundation of integrity, teamwork and respect.

The core values are:

- Learning
- Excellence
- Accountability
- Diversity
- Student Success
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Respect

The student members on this team used these core values and built our CCN program around these values. Because of this they developed and strengthened their skills & knowledge in each of these areas.

They also used graphic design, marketing, leadership, communications and other technical skills. This project gave these students an amazing experience in planning, organizing and using their collective and individual talents.

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

Implementation & Outcomes

Throughout our competition we utilized multiple levels of communication. We staffed tables with information in our student union to spread our message. Posters, flyers and emails were distributed around our campus. We also made a point to start talking about our competition with our peers to gain support. Our main tagline for Sustainability at Western Technical College has always been *It's Easy Being Green*; therefore, we used this often as a tagline for the competition. Our prizes included a Wisconsin State Park Pass and items from our campus shop. One of our most successful events was a free night of roller skating which many students were able to carpool to and enjoy. Our competition theme was the 'Energy Games' which we were inspired to do based on other schools development of this concept. This was successful because the Hunger Games movies (of which the theme was a spinoff) had been very popular the past few years. Our students seemed to really enjoy these aspects of the competition. We had posters developed with each Resident Assistant as a Tribute for the Energy Games.

Effectiveness

In our CCN competition, we were quite successful in educating students about sustainability practices. These students went above and beyond what was asked of them. Each task asked of the students involved was met with eagerness and drive. Additionally, the

students often were providing new ideas for how to be more energy conscience both in their own lives and on campus.

12. CHALLENGES

At Western Technical College one of our major challenges was time. With many essential team members, it's often difficult to coordinate schedules. Moreover, another challenge for the competition was gaining awareness of the competition and interest in the efforts. Some strategies that we used to deal with these challenges were keeping a good information flow through emails, posters, phone calls and schedule merges. Regular meetings were also a key piece in the success of our competition. Both our time issue and lack of awareness issues were fixed through extensive and thorough communication.

13. WISDOM & GUIDANCE

Campus Conservation Nationals is an amazing effort and a lot of fun. My main words of advice to the other colleges are to plan ahead as much as possible and watch the webinars. Learning as much as possible from others is a huge help when organizing a competition. Also, listen to the students. They know what is of interest to their peers, what works for them and what doesn't. Strive to gain as much insight from the students as possible. At Western, our greatest accomplishment was our collaboration with the Residence Hall students and staff. Without them, our competition would not have had the success it possesses today. Finally, have fun with it and get creative. Anything is possible!

14. CONTACT

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

15. SUSTAINABILITY AT PIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Western Technical College is doing a wide number of things to reduce its impact on the environment in a fiscal and socially responsible way.

Much of what Western is doing revolves around creating a culture of sustainability. The college community needs to be invested in order to turn off lights when leaving a room, to unplug appliances over long weekends and breaks, and keep doors shut to allow the HVAC systems to work more efficiently. These are some of the actions taken that have shown significant costs savings and a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. While turning off the lights may not be

innovative, it is easy and highly replicable. Tracking and showing the impact of those actions is innovative, highly replicable, and very effective. Western created a marketing campaign around sustainability at the college with the slogan of “It’s Easy Being Green” with a frog logo. Using the frog logo, the Neon Leon program rewards participants for their involvement. This energy efficient tree frog audits the entire campus and collects data that in turn gets shared college-wide in order to improve conservation efforts and change habits.

The adoption of a Sustainable Culture Policy was instrumental in effecting change within course curriculum at Western. Progress has been made to map sustainability practices into curriculum and the Quality Review process each program is evaluated with. Currently, about 40% of course listings include sustainability.

Western’s creation of living laboratories has been a unique opportunity for students across multiple disciplines to gain experiential learning. The living labs provide real world access to environmental practices while simultaneously providing benefits to the community at large. We have a Passive House Instructional Facility, providing local builders the chance to build to Passive House standards. Another living lab is Western’s Hydro Power Station which provides learning opportunities for students while simultaneously reducing the College’s own carbon emissions and reliance on fossil fuels. There are an estimated 600 dams in Wisconsin, but no formal training program exists in the state for those who run and maintain the dams. Western plans to offer a certificate in hydro technology.

“It’s easy being green” is not just a slogan for Western’s sustainability efforts; it’s a rallying cry for every administrator, employee, and student to reduce their impact on the environment. It is a teaching style, work style, and a lifestyle change. It’s the right thing to do to improve quality of life whether as an individual or as a member of the campus community and the communities around us.

www.westerntc.edu/green/

16. POSTERS, PHOTOS & VIDEOS

