Sustainability Center
Annual Update

This booklet outlines the larger sustainability initiatives and events that occurred in fiscal year 2014. It is not all inclusive and does not include all details. For more information, please contact Allessandra Cairo at (708) 709-3764 or acairo@prairiestate.edu.
Illinois Campus Sustainability Compact

Prairie State College (PSC) was recognized by Governor Pat Quinn and the Green Governments Coordinating Council as a Silver Level Compact School. To achieve this recognition, PSC, through the Sustainability Center:

• Adopted a written statement acknowledging support for sustainability
• Created a focal point to lead sustainability work across the campus
• Created a website that raises awareness and generates interest about the institution’s sustainability efforts
• Created opportunities for students and faculty to provide suggestions for advancing sustainability on campus
• Fosters student involvement on several committees to guide administration on issues of sustainability
• Set measurable sustainability objectives through a sustainability plan
• Purchases green cleaning products; adopted policies to address new building through the sustainability plan; hosts campus wide events to encourage students to adopt sustainable practices; and partners with local entities to promote sustainability at the community level

PSC will continue to work toward achieving Gold Level recognition.

Illinois Green Economy Network’s Network Affiliate Program

Ms. Cairo was selected to represent an initial cohort of Network Affiliates to launch the program for the state-wide sustainability network, the Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN). This is an exciting opportunity to promote PSC’s sustainability initiatives on a state-wide level. As part of this program, Ms. Cairo was featured as the Illinois Green Economy Network’s February Network Affiliate of the month. A full interview was conducted and is available at www.igencc.org.

The National Council for Science and the Environment’s Community College Affiliate Program

Ms. Cairo was elected co-chair of the Community College Affiliate Program, a national organization working to advance interdisciplinary environmental and sustainability education. The organization will build upon its ongoing and extensive programs, connecting community colleges with four-year institutions, federal agencies, and other stakeholders in the environmental arena.

PSC is a founding member of the Community College Affiliate Program.
Department of Energy Workplace Charging Challenge Pledge

In June, Dr. Terri Winfree signed the Department of Energy Workplace Charging Challenge Pledge signaling a commitment to provide plug-in electric vehicle (PEV) charging access for employees.

In the Department of Energy’s (DOE) EV Everywhere Grand Challenge, stakeholders across the nation are working together to enable the U.S. to produce PEVs that are as affordable and convenient as gasoline-powered vehicles by 2022. As part of EV Everywhere, the Workplace Charging Challenge aims to achieve a tenfold increase in the number of U.S. employers offering workplace charging by 2018.

Local Committees

Ms. Cairo represents PSC by actively serving on the following:

- South Metro Higher Education Consortium (SMHEC) Sustainability Task Force
- SMHEC Annual Sustainability Conference Planning Committee
- SMHEC Annual Student Sustainability Summit Planning Committee
- Chicago Heights Active Transportation Team
- Homewood-Flossmoor Intergovernmental Green Team
Sustainability Revenue

In fiscal year 2014, sustainability brought in $19,251.71 in sponsorships, grants, and rebates, $798.92 in the sale of recycled goods, and an additional $2,275.00 in value for goods and services received, for a grand total of $22,324.63. These totals do not include energy savings from system upgrades. In fiscal year 2013, the College received several large grants for energy efficiency programs through the state that were no longer available in fiscal year 2014. Thus, the total in grants is down from last fiscal year.

Water Bottle Filling Stations

Since the first bottle filling station installation in January 2012, the PSC community has eliminated 77,803 plastic bottles from the waste stream. Six of the seven water stations on campus include an eco-counter which tracks the number of twelve-ounce bottles refilled.

To educate consumers about the stations, eco-friendly bamboo plaques above each station display the following message.

“This bottle filling station is helping PSC reduce our environmental impact by reducing the number of plastic bottles entering into the waste stream. Enjoy this complimentary filtered water, while reducing your carbon footprint and holding on to your hard-earned dollars.”

There are seven bottle filling stations on campus sponsored by the Student Government Association, Sustainability Center, facilities and operation department, and the office of business services and controller.

Impact: Eliminated 77,803 water bottles from entering the waste stream.

Green Parking

PSC has dedicated eight spots at the front entrance for green parking. To date, 13 permits have been issued. To receive a green parking permit, faculty, staff, and students are required to bring a valid vehicle registration to campus police indicating they have a vehicle that receives 35 or more miles per gallon of gasoline (combined city and highway).

In addition to these eight spaces, PSC also has four dedicated spaces in B lot for electric vehicle charging.
The Path to Sustainable Change and Leadership Training

The Sustainability Center, in partnership with student life and the PSC Foundation, offered a student leadership training in October for PSC students.

The day started off with a welcome from Dr. Terri Winfree and her truly inspiring leadership message and was followed by a flurry of activities, discussions, and breakout sessions stimulating conversation and addressing key leadership skills for PSC students.

The purpose of this training was to provide students an opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to become a leader at PSC and beyond. The entire training wove sustainability throughout from the chosen decorations, plates, and utensils to the catering and messages in each segment.

Impact: More than 50 students attended the training with key administrators and staff stopping in and out throughout the day.

Homewood-Flossmoor E-waste Recycling Drive

Students from the PSC Sustainability Club and All Latin Alliance (ALA) volunteered at an E-recycling Drive sponsored by the Villages of Homewood and Flossmoor. Students assisted public works, the Homewood-Flossmoor intergovernmental green team and other volunteers, unload vehicles to properly dispose of unwanted electronics.

Impact: A group of six students went out into the community and represented PSC well.
Campus Sustainability Day

On October 23, PSC celebrated, for the second time, Campus Sustainability Day. Faculty, staff, and students were invited to meet and greet the sustainability club, learn about climate change, and attend a special presentation on the effects and solutions to climate change.

Activities took place throughout the day, both inside and out. Students from Professor Christa Adam’s biology class came out to enjoy a walk by the nature preserve, while students from Professor Ed Schwarz’s communications class discussed PSCs recycling initiatives and interviewed several faculty, staff, and students for a class project. The sustainability club held their first fundraiser of the season and other E-board members of the club participated in a Climate Change Discussion Panel with students from Bloom High School.

Several posters were submitted in a Climate Change Poster Competition with The Student Review taking first place. It was an extremely difficult decision, but their poster encompassed all four elements of the judging criteria - message, creativity, recycled/reused materials, and educational impact.

Impact: More than 60 students learned about climate change and the sustainability initiatives taking place on campus.

Green Jobs for Green Graduates

The Sustainability Center launched a green speaker series. The intent of this continuing series is to provide students the basic knowledge necessary to begin thinking about high demand jobs in the green economy, including the skills needed and career pathways that exist.

This year’s presentations included:
- **Green Jobs for Green Graduates**, presented by Ed Choklek, Senior Associate at FGM Architects and Vice Chair of the USGBC Illinois Chapter Higher Education Committee
- **Renewable Energy Strategies for Building Infrastructure Improvements**, presented by Michele James, from CTS Group
- **Industry Greening – the Jobs are Here**, presented by Bryant Williams, from Cook County Department of Environmental Control

Impact: Fifteen students learned about opportunities in the green economy.
Outdoor Map
1. Nature Preserve
2. Bicycle Parking
3. Six Water Filling Stations
4. Electric Vehicle Charging
5. Green Parking
6. Water Filling Station
7. Energy Dashboard
8. Community Garden

Main Floor Tech Wing
Water Filling Station Location
Campus Floors 1, 2, 3, 4

First Floor Water Filling Stations

Second Floor Water Filling Station
Third Floor Water Filling Station

Fourth Floor Water Filling Station
**South Metro Higher Education Consortium’s Student Sustainability Summit and Bard Center for Environmental Policy’s C2C Fellows Program**

Ms. Cairo served on the planning committee for the third annual South Metro Higher Education Consortium (SMHEC) Student Sustainability Summit which was held at Moraine Valley Community College in April. Six students from the student Sustainability Club attended the summit.

Attendees learned about sustainability from a panel of professionals currently addressing the social, economic and environmental issues that affect our modern day food system. A series of breakout sessions occurred after the panel presentation, where students actually attended lunch late just to hear more from each speaker!

Following the summit, several of these students participated in the Bard Center for Environmental Policy’s C2C Fellows Program, which is a national leadership seminar for undergraduates aspiring to leadership positions in sustainable politics and business.

**Impact:** Six students received leadership training and became part of a national fellows program.

**Campus Conservation Nationals**

PSC participated in Campus Conservation Nationals, a national energy challenge in which we were charged with reducing our electric usage in the Health Tech Center over the course of a three-week period. As part of the competition, PSC competed directly against the following Illinois Community Colleges: Heartland Community College, John A. Logan College, Lewis and Clark Community College, Southwestern Illinois College, Moraine Valley Community College, Rock Valley College, Harper College, Joliet Junior College, McHenry County College, and Parkland College.

As part of the program, the college received funds to purchase and install weather strips to all outside doors of the Health Tech Center and to purchase power strips to automatically shut-down computers after 11 hours.

**Impact:** National recognition for participating in the competition.

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**Being a part of the PSC Sustainability Club has enabled me to share ideas of becoming more sustainable with my community of peers. As an active member of the club, I was also provided the opportunity to attend conferences, such as the SMHEC Student Sustainability Summit and the C2C Fellows Program, which helped develop my leadership skills.**

*Emmanuel Lopez, (Past-president, Sustainability Club)*
Earth Week 2014

This year’s Earth Week celebration took place on campus the week of April 21-26. Two large-scale events were planned, with several smaller, educational events taking place each day. Several sponsors were secured, including The Sustainable Business Center and UPS at the Emerald level ($500+), USAgain at the Jungle level ($250-500), and SouthSTAR Services, Magic Pure, Barnes & Noble College (PSC Bookstore), and ChiroOne at the Forest level ($100-250).

Large scale events included:

1. **A green vendor fair** which took place on April 23 in the Atrium. Twenty-six vendors and organizations participated this year, highlighting their green products and services, as well as career, internship, and volunteer opportunities.

2. **A community wide recycling drive** where PSC partnered with several organizations, including SouthSTAR Services Ecosafe Processors, USAgain, and Savers to collect electronics, small appliances, household items and textiles.

Additional events included an interactive animal demonstration where 80 students from the Jones Center and several classes from the Children’s Learning Center attended, a nature preserve clean up, and a green speaker series.

Earth Week 2014 was a great success with excellent feedback received from all participants, including students, faculty, and staff, as well as external vendors.

**Impact:** Faculty, staff, students, and external community members participated in and learned about sustainability at PSC through this year’s Earth Week activities.
Community Engagement

Philippines Clothing Collection Drive
The Sustainability Center, in coordination with the Sustainability Club, ran a collection drive for the victims of the typhoon that struck the Philippines. This was a great opportunity to help those in need while educating the college about the devastating effects of climate change.

Impact: Forty-five bags of summer clothing, towels, bedding and shoes were collected and shipped to the Philippines.

Energy Demand Reduction Trainings
Under the Illinois Green Economy Network’s (IGEN) Illinois Community College Targeted Energy Management Training (ICCTEMT) program, PSC was selected for a second year in a row to host a series of energy demand reduction trainings. These trainings were offered to PSC employees, students and business members of the local communities free of charge.

PSC offered the following three trainings in the spring semester:
- Preventive and Predictive Maintenance Equipment Best Practices, offered by Met Demand (March and May)
- The Path to Sustainable Change, offered by sr4 Partners (April)
- Facilitating Employee Engagement in Sustainability Initiatives, offered by sr4 Partners (April).

Impact: Thirty-two participants attended the series.

Electric Vehicle Road Trip
On June 25, the Illinois Green Economy Network electric vehicle (EV) road trip stopped at PSC. The EV road trip was part of a statewide effort to create a network of electric vehicle charging stations providing the infrastructure necessary to travel across the state without range anxiety (i.e. the fear of running out of electricity with no way of charging up). IGEN, with the support of Governor Pat Quinn’s office and the Illinois Office of Tourism, partnered with 11 community colleges from southern Illinois to northern Illinois in an EV Road Trip.

On June 23, the first college team started at John A. Logan College (JALC) (Carterville, IL) where Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon kicked off the road trip. The vehicle left JALC and headed north to the College of Lake County (Grayslake, IL) stopping along the way to plug in and charge up at several community colleges, including PSC.
Reggie Greenwood, Deputy Director of Economic Development, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association; Jim Garrett, President & CEO, Chicago Southland Convention and Visitors Bureau; and David Hinderliter, President & CEO, Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce were on campus for the special event, each taking several moments to make remarks on PSC’s sustainability efforts, particularly in regards to our electric vehicle charging stations and what that means for the regional economy.

The event was very successful and received quite a bit of media coverage.

**Impact:** State-wide, 38 electric vehicles were used and approximately 500 people at 11 Illinois community colleges and the Executive Mansion in Springfield were involved. At PSC, more than 50 were present.

### Community Garden

The community garden officially opened for its third season on May 22. Our 2014 gardeners were extremely diverse and included students and faculty from the Children’s Learning Center, PSC students, faculty, and staff, as well as multiple members of our local community.

A student worker has been managing the garden, providing helpful information to gardeners, ensuring water is available and assisting gardeners with their plots as needed.

With a third successful season and plans for expansion, the garden will open again in 2015.

**Impact:** Twenty-six garden plots sold and participants of all ages are learning about gardening.

### Richton Park Building Safety Day

In June, PSC’s sustainability department participated in Richton Park’s Building Safety Day. Building safety day was open to Richton Park residents. We presented the sustainability initiatives taking place at PSC as well as answered general questions related to sustainability. This is the second year in a row the Sustainability Center has been asked to be present at this event.
Electronics Recycling

PSC’s electronics recycling partnership continues with SouthSTAR Services EcoSAFE Processors. Through the bitter cold, snow, and college closings in January, PSC, with the assistance of the ITR department, was able to recycle two skids of e-waste from our Industrial Electricity and Computer Electronics Technology classroom labs, more than 300 obsolete desk phones, and a large UPS (the battery backup for the old phone system) to EcoSAFE Processors, an organization that transforms old electronics into new opportunities for people with disabilities.

**Impact:** Two skids of e-waste, a UPS and more than 300 obsolete phones were properly disposed of while supporting a local, not for profit organization.

Recycling at PSC

Brian Wright, sustainability intern, repainted all of PSC’s repurposed recycling bins and added informational signs to each one. Additional bins were added throughout campus, including outdoors at high traffic entrances/exits.

PSC maintains its relationship with Republic Services, who provides the college with weights of each recycling load picked up. From July 2013 to June 2014, PSC recycled a total of 19.83 tons of materials.

**Impact:** Recycled 80.6 tons of materials since 2011.
Effective and Innovative Practices for the Strategic Facilities Manager

Ms. Cairo had a chapter published in a new book, “Effective and Innovative Practices for the Strategic Facilities Manager.” In her chapter, Case Study: The Power to Save Energy is in Our Hands, Allessandra discusses PSC’s energy dashboard and behavior change campaign that took place last year in the Health Tech Center. In the chapter, Allessandra outlined how to identify and engage stakeholders on campus to implement a successful behavior change campaign for energy efficiency.

Illinois Association of Community College Biologist Conference

Ms. Cairo presented at the annual Illinois Association of Community College Biologists (IACCB) Conference in Springfield, IL on the evening of Oct. 11. The presentation focused on the sustainability efforts taking place at PSC and encouraged community colleges across the state to engage their own faculty, staff, and students in implementing similar initiatives as part of the new Illinois Green Project.

4th Annual South Metro Higher Education Consortium (SMEHC) Sustainability Conference

In October, Allessandra Cairo, sustainability coordinator, gave a presentation about the Illinois Green Economy Network’s energy efficiency grant PSC received in 2012. The presentation was an overview of the grant as well as the steps PSC took to reduce our electric and gas usage through the installation of an energy dashboard system and implementation of a behavior change campaign.

Chicago Heights Rotary Club

In March, Allessandra Cairo, sustainability coordinator, had the opportunity to present the college’s sustainability initiatives to the Chicago Heights Rotary Club.
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