2014-15 Sustainability annual report

Prepared by Allessandra A. Kummelehne, Sustainability Coordinator
Sustainability Center Annual Update

This booklet outlines the larger sustainability initiatives and events that occurred in fiscal year 2015. It is not intended to be all inclusive, nor does it contain all details. For more information, please contact Alessandra (Cairo) Kummelehne at (708) 709-3764 or akummelehne@prairiestate.edu.

Mission

The students, faculty, staff and administration of Prairie State College (PSC) are committed to improving and protecting the environment while promoting fiscal and social responsibility. We seek to educate students to understand the pressures facing the local and global environment and to increase their awareness of the importance of the “green economy.” We will provide the skills and knowledge needed to address the social and environmental issues important to our community and to support public policies that will contribute to an excellent quality of life, both now and in the future.

PSC’s Sustainability Center was launched in 2011, and serves as a resource for students, faculty, staff, and community members interested in sustainability, including the emerging green economy, green jobs training, and energy efficiency.

Staff of the Sustainability Center seek to integrate sustainability into the daily operations of PSC through:

- modified curriculum;
- energy saving initiatives;
- behavior change campaigns;
- student engagement; and
- community outreach.

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Illinois Campus Sustainability Compact

PSC was recognized by former Governor Pat Quinn and the Green Governments Coordinating Council as a Gold Level Compact School in October 2014.

Ms. Kummelehne attended the 28th annual Illinois Governor’s Sustainability Awards ceremony, where she accepted, on behalf of PSC, the Gold Level Achievement Campus Sustainability Compact award.

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
- Fostered student involvement on several committees to guide administration on issues of sustainability
- Set measurable sustainability objectives through a sustainability plan
- Purchased green cleaning products; adopted policies to address new building through the sustainability plan; hosted campus-wide events to encourage students to adopt sustainable practices; and partnered with local entities to promote sustainability at the community level.
- Integrated sustainability broadly into campus operations and management by developing a sustainability plan that covers multiple topics and issues and incorporating sustainability at a high level in the strategic plan.
- Published an annual campus sustainability report.

PSC signed the Governor’s Campus Compact at the Gold Level in 2010.

Illinois Green Economy Network’s Network Affiliate Program

Ms. Kummelehne represents a statewide sustainability program through the Illinois Green Economy Network’s (IGEN) network affiliate program. This allows Ms. Kummelehne to represent PSC’s sustainability initiatives at the state level. More information about the program and Ms. Kummelehne’s involvement can be found at www.igencc.org.

Department of Energy Workplace Charging Challenge Partner Profile

In June 2014, PSC President Dr. Terri L. Winfree signed the Workplace Charging Challenge from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). As a result, PSC is now listed as a partner at the Department of Energy website (energy.gov/eere/vehicles/workplace-charging-challenge-partner-prairie-state-college) which highlights PSC’s participation in the Workplace Charging Challenge, providing the college recognition as a leader in workplace charging.

Local and Regional Committees

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

- South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium (SMHEC) Sustainability Task Force
- SMHEC Grant Committee
- SMHEC Annual Sustainability Conference and Student Summit Planning Sub-committees
- Chicago Heights Active Transportation Team
- Homewood-Flossmoor Intergovernmental Environmental Committee
Facilities and Operations

Sustainability Revenue
In fiscal year 2015, sustainability brought in $26,010 in sponsorships and grants, $269 in the sale of recycled goods, and an additional $5,615 in value for goods and services received, for a grant total of $31,894.

Tobacco/Smoke Free Campus
In compliance with Illinois State Law, a policy was adopted making PSC a 100% smoke/tobacco free campus. The use of tobacco products is prohibited from all college buildings, on college grounds including parking lots, and in college vehicles. Use of tobacco in personal vehicles is permitted.

Impact: The new policy ensures all guests on campus have access to clean air and a cleaner environment.

Energy Dashboard Upgraded at Health Tech Center
PSC was selected to participate in a second round of Illinois Community College Training and Energy Management (ICCTEMT) funding through IGEN. Through this funding, PSC received $17,000 to purchase upgraded equipment for our energy dashboard located in the Health Tech Center.

Impact: Energy usage can be monitored and tracked on individual piece of electric and gas equipment, thus allowing the college to identify specific areas of opportunity for energy savings.

Bottle Filling Stations
Since the first bottle filling station installation in January 2012, the PSC community has eliminated 134,290 12-ounce plastic bottles from the waste stream. Nine of the 10 water stations 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.”

In January, PSC was asked to test a new model of bottle filling stations. In doing so, PSC received three final-production units - a $5125 value - free of charge. With the addition of these stations, PSC now has a total of 10 bottle filling stations on campus. The stations are sponsored by the Student Government Association, Sustainability Center, Facilities and Operations, and the Office of Business Services and Controller.

Impact: Eliminated 134,290 plastic bottles from entering the waste stream.

Butterfly Garden
Thanks to the generous support of the PSC Foundation and the fundraising efforts of the PSC Sustainability Club, PSC built a butterfly garden! The garden is located near the Courtyard between the main building and Conference Center, and runs along the library windows. On June 5, 9, and 10, students, faculty, and staff worked with Ms. Kummelhne and Margaret Burns-Westmeyer, University of Illinois Extension horticulture program coordinator, to build PSC’s butterfly garden.

Together, volunteers prepared the garden site, built a two-foot high berm, and planted a variety of native plants specifically selected for the site. Some of the plants planted include common milkweed, spicebush, cardinal flowers, false sunflowers, Virginia bluebells, and sweet Joe-pye weed. The pheromones released from this combination of native plants are likely to attract the following types of butterflies:

• monarch, swallowtail, checkered white, atlantis fritillary, European skipper, early hairstreak, spring azure, and a variety of other butterflies!

The garden can be utilized by classes in multiple disciplines, including but not limited to, science, math, arts, and communication. Butterfly gardens can:

• Educate students on ecology, native plants and insect life cycles
• Inspire creativity in students, especially related to music, art and writing
• Provide a relaxing environment for studying
• Promote environmental awareness
• Provide many environmental benefits

View photos of the process in the Butterfly Garden photo album on Facebook!

Green Parking
PSC has dedicated eight spots at the front entrance for green parking. To date, 17 permits have been issued. To receive a green parking permit, faculty, staff, and students are required to bring a valid vehicle registration to Enrollment Services indicating they have a vehicle that receives 35 or more miles per gallon of gasoline (combined city and highway).

In addition to the eight spaces, PSC also has four dedicated spaces in B lot for electric vehicle charging.

Impact: The entire college campus and community will enjoy the benefits of native plants and butterflies.
Outdoor Map
1. Nature Preserve
2. Bicycle Parking
3. Nine Water Filling Stations
4. Electric Vehicle Charging
5. Green Parking
6. Water Filling Station
7. Energy Dashboard
8. Community Garden
9. Butterfly Garden

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

First Floor - Main Area

- First Floor Water Filling Stations

Second Floor - Main Area

- Second Floor Water Filling Station

Third Floor - Main Area

- Third Floor Water Filling Station

Fourth Floor - Main Area

- Fourth Floor Water Filling Station
Green Curriculum

Horticulture Courses at PSC

This spring, through the Corporate and Continuing Education Department, PSC offered sustainable horticulture courses to existing professionals in the field. The two courses offered were BMPs for Community Trees, which targeted professional arborists, urban and community foresters, landscape architects, and landscape professionals with CEUs from the International Society of Arborists, and Landscape Concepts, which targeted turf managers, landscape architects, and landscape professionals with CEUs from PLANET. Both courses ran successfully with great reviews. These courses, along with three additional courses, are being offered this fall.

Impact: 14 students successfully completed at least one sustainable horticulture course.

Horticulture Courses at PSC

Best Management for Community Trees

Dates: Tuesdays, Oct. 06 – 27
Course Code: PIHMG-054-C1
Time: 6 – 8 p.m., Cost: $129
Registration Information
1. Visit prairiestate.edu/webadvisor
2. Click Instant Enrollment
3. Click register and pay for non-credit courses and programs
4. Refer to course codes

Landscape Concepts

Dates: Wednesdays, Oct. 07 – 28
Course Code: PIHMG-055-C1
Time: 6 – 8 p.m., Cost: $129

Gain an understanding in turf grass selection, identification and maintenance. Learn about the establishment of turf and the basic safety and operation of turf equipment.

Turf Management Concepts

Dates: Saturdays, October 10 and 17
Time: 8 a.m. – 12 p.m., Cost: $75
Course Code: PIHMG-057-C1

Increase your knowledge in invasive plant species and an in-depth knowledge of the most common invasive plant species to the Midwest.

Landscaping and Sustainability

Dates: Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 3 - 4
Course Code: PIHMG-058-C1
Time: 6 – 8 p.m., Cost: $75

Gain an understanding in overall landscape safety aspects and hazards identification, including basic poisonous plants.

Invasive Plant Species

Dates: Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 10-11
Course Code: PIHMG-059-C1
Time: 6 – 8 p.m., Cost: $75

Participants will gain an understanding in selecting, placing, conserving, protecting, maintaining, and managing invasive plant species in landscapes. Learn widely accepted practices and standards used by professional turf managers, landscape architects, and other tree care and landscape professionals.

Student Engagement

Homewood-Flossmoor Community Recycling Drive

Ms. Kummelehne partnered with the Homewood-Flossmoor Intergovernmental Green Team and SouthSTAR Services' EcoSafe Processors to host the 4th annual Homewood-Flossmoor Electronics Recycling Drive. A group of eight PSC students joined Ms. Kummelehne on Saturday, October 18, at Parker Junior High in Flossmoor to help unload vehicles and sort electronics.

Impact: Ten tons of electronic materials were collected and diverted from the landfill and eight students from PSC immersed themselves in the community.

Campus Sustainability Day

On October 22, students from the Sustainability Club and Phi Theta Kappa worked with Ms. Kummelehne to promote the green initiatives currently taking place at PSC. A number of students were unaware of several initiatives, including our green parking, electric vehicle charging and recycling program.

Students from the Sustainability Club did a fundraiser where they sold floppy disk pencil cases and our Red Solo Cups.

Impact: More than 50 students learned about the sustainability initiatives taking place on campus.

Homewood Disposal Field Trip

In November, a group of students from the Sustainability Club and Phi Theta Kappa toured the Material Recovery Facility at Homewood Disposal where they learned how recyclable materials are collected, processed, and sold. Participants gave great feedback.

Impact: 15 students participated in the event.

The world we have created today has problems which cannot be solved by thinking the way we thought when we created them.”

-Albert Einstein
Earth Month at PSC

PSC celebrated “Earth Month” this year with a series of events scheduled throughout April. All events were hosted by the Sustainability Center. This was the first year the college has expanded the events through a complete month, after celebrating “Earth Week” in previous years.

The month’s events began on Wednesday, April 1, with documentary viewing and discussion of “Switch: Discover the Future of Energy.” The Sustainability Club was on site selling organic popcorn for $2, with all proceeds benefiting the PSC Butterfly Garden.

On April 4, the first time, PSC’s Health Promotion Programming and Sustainability Center partnered to host a “Get Healthy, Go Green! Health and Wellness Fair.” The purpose of the fair was to increase awareness about health issues that affect our diverse student population and encourage a “greener” lifestyle for a healthier self and healthier environment, as well as to provide screening tests and exams at a free or affordable cost.

The Atrium was full with faculty, staff, students, and more than 45 vendors. The Cottage on Dixie stopped by for a special cooling demonstration in which they made homemade hummus using local and organic ingredients showcasing “it’s easy eating green.” SouthSTAR Services EcoSafe Processors were on site collecting electronics, and the Cook County Sheriff’s Department collected expired and unwanted prescription drugs and Shark Shredding provided information about shredding and protecting your identity. A master gardener from the University of Illinois Extension program discussed worm composting, which is great for those living in apartments. The Citizens Utility Board (CUB) discussed ways to lower utility bills. A group of 20 faculty, staff, and students took a field trip to Homewood Disposal on April 14. A family-owned business for waste, transportation, recycling and disposal service company. While at the facility, the group learned how recyclable materials are collected, processed, and sold.

On April 15, the Sustainability Center hosted amateur meteorologists and storm chasers Danny Neal and Adam Lucio for two 90-minute presentations. With more than 50 attendees in each presentation, Mr. Neal and Mr. Lucio discussed the ins and outs of Illinois weather, from climatology to extreme events.

On April 16, attendees visited the Sustainability Club-sponsored table in the Atrium, which featured “The Polar Melt Down.” Participants were able to participate in an interactive activity to learn about the melting ice caps and the effect of climate change on arctic species.

On April 17, Phi Theta Kappa brought a group of homeschooled to the college for a trash to treasures program, where Ms. Kummelene was a judge for their art contest and then gave a presentation on sustainability and what that means at PSC.

On April 20, the Sustainability Center, in partnership with TRIO and several on-campus clubs, facilitated Thrifting 101, a two-hour presentation that taught more than 20 students the financial, social, and environmental benefits of thrifting. While Ms. Kummelene covered the sustainability component (i.e. the three Es - economy, equity and environment) of thrifting, students presented the fashion side of it, and provided advice on how to get started with thrifting. They also put together a fun game of “name that price” to show students just how cheap designer brand clothing can be at a thrift store.

And finally, closing the month’s festivities, the faculty sustainability committee led the charge to clean up Halsted Street during “Adopt-a-Highway.” Through this program, PSC adopted a two-mile stretch of Route 1.

Impact: More than 360 students participated in Earth Month this year, and they learned about sustainability at PSC and in their own lives.

Clear the Air

On April 9, the Smoke Free Task Force held their kickoff event announcing PSC becoming a smoke/tobacco free campus. Volunteers from the Sustainability Club, Cheer Team, Nursing Club, and Baseball Team helped the task force handout information about the college’s new policy, free cessation classes being provided, and turkey sandwiches to those who chose to quit cold turkey.

Impact: 100 students visited the table to learn more about nicotine and the effects of smoking.

SMHEC Student Sustainability Summit

On April 10, the Fourth Annual Student Sustainability Summit, created for students, by students, was held at Joliet Junior College. The theme this year was “Opportunities.” Student attendees heard and learned from their peers through a series of breakout sessions, networking opportunities, and panel presentations. In addition, more than 20 representatives from regional organizations were present to discuss opportunities available in the green space, including but not limited to, volunteer opportunities, student-made opportunities, internships, and career pathways.

PSC had 11 students attend the conference. Three of those students presented on their experience in the Indiana Dunes independent study program during an afternoon breakout session. All students represented PSC well and learned about many opportunities, some of which they’d like to implement on our campus.

Impact: 11 students engaged with their peers from across the region.

Sustainability Club Awards: Club of the Year 2015 and Most Charitable Club

On Friday, April 24, at the Student Leadership Awards Ceremony, the Sustainability Club was recognized with two awards. The group won Most Charitable Club and Club of the Year for the 2014-2015 academic school year.

This year’s club members worked extremely hard to promote and expand their club, educate their peers on the importance of sustainability at PSC, volunteered at numerous events in the campus, and raised more than $1,000 for the PSC Butterfly Garden. They were certainly deserving of this award.

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PSC Community Garden
The PSC Community Garden had a successful 2014 growing season with 26 plots sold to faculty, staff, students, and community members, and opened in May 2015 for a fourth year. Gardeners grew a little bit of everything, including corn, sunflowers, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumbers and more. The children from the Children’s Learning Center were back for their second season and surplus crops are, once again, being donated to Respond Now. The garden saw some upgrades this year, including some new tools, a new threshold to make accessing the shed easier, and the first ever garden party.

Impact: 26 garden plots sold and participants of all ages learning about gardening.

Adopt-a-Highway
Last summer, the Faculty Sustainability Committee, on behalf of PSC, adopted a stretch of Route 1 from McDonalds at Vollmer Road to 183rd Street. In October and April, the faculty sustainability committee led the “Adopt-A-Highway” events, where students, faculty and staff met to clear litter from our adopted section of Halsted Street. The committee looks forward to a second year of Halsted clean ups.

Impact: 20 participants entered the community representing PSC and cleaned up litter.

Clear Your Clutter
On March 24, the Sustainability Center hosted its second “Clear Your Clutter” event. Employees of the college were invited to clear out their office and bring gently used office supplies to the staff lounge. Employees were able to rummage through the supplies that were dropped off and take whatever supplies they could use in their own job. Eight tables full of notebooks, pens, calculators, folders, binders, etc. were available throughout the day, and a very limited amount of items leftover at the conclusion of the event.

Impact: Employees are encouraged to decrease spending by reducing, reusing, and recycling office supplies.

Millennium Reserve
Ms. Kummelehne represented PSC at a series of Millennium Reserve Green Infrastructure Mapping Workshops. The Millennium Reserve is a partnership that brings together communities, government, and businesses who have committed to common goals and shared action agenda. Geographically, the Millennium Reserve stretches from downtown Chicago southeast to the Indiana border and southwest to Park Forest.

Participation in these workshops provided the opportunity to review the draft green infrastructure maps and identify opportunity areas for site-based green infrastructure strategies. As a result of attending these workshops, PSC’s prairie preserve has been identified on these maps, which will provide leverage when seeking future grant funds for restoration.

Impact: PSC’s campus has been identified as an area of opportunity for future green space planning.

Waste Reduction Plan
PSC submitted an updated Waste Reduction Plan to the Illinois College Assistance Program for Recycling. Every five years, the college is required by law to submit an update. PSC has met the state’s 40 percent diversion rate goal and will continue to meet or exceed this expectation. The next update will be due in 2020.

Electronics Recycling
PSC continues their partnership with SouthSTAR Services EcoSafe Processors, an organization that transforms old electronics into new opportunities for people with disabilities. Obsolete electronics, including CPUs, monitors, keyboards, mice, printers, fax machines, phones and more are picked up by EcoSafe Processors one to two times per year. Equipment is brought to EcoSafe’s Steger facility where it is disassembled and sorted into various commodities.
Prairie State Network (PSN): Partnerships between Municipalities and Universities/Colleges

The Prairie State Local Government Sustainability Network is an independent peer forum of top-level municipal professionals in Illinois who manage projects, staff, and budgets for sustainability, energy, and climate planning.

Ms. Kummelehne was invited to speak about her work at PSC, the relationships she has built within the college’s community, and her involvement with the South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium (SMHEC) and how it all connects.

For more information or to download the presentation, visit prairiestatenetwork.com/.

Growing Sustainable Communities Conference

Ms. Kummelehne attended the Growing Sustainable Communities Conference in Dubuque, Iowa, where she presented PSC’s involvement with the local community in terms of sustainability. Genny Boesen, from SMHEC, joined Ms. Kummelehne at the presentation, and together they talked about the work that has been taking place over the past year.

SMHEC Annual Sustainability Conference

In September, Ms. Kummelehne attended the fifth annual SMHEC sustainability conference at Joliet Junior College, where she moderated a panel discussion on building sustainable communities. She also facilitated a municipality breakout session. Ms. Kummelehne represents PSC on the SMHEC sustainability task force and also served on this year’s conference planning committee.

SMHEC Community Action Forum

On February 6, the SMHEC Sustainability Taskforce hosted the first Community Action Forum at Moraine Valley Community College’s Southwest Education Center in Tinley Park. More than 60 representatives of manufacturing, healthcare, government, and nonprofits in the Chicago Metropolitan Southland region attended the forum to continue the conversation that started at Joliet Junior College in September at the annual SMHEC conference.

Ms. Kummelehne had the opportunity to serve on the planning committee and as a facilitator at the session. The program was extremely successful with an overwhelming amount of attendees requesting SMHEC to host subsequent forums.