Sustainability Mission
Prairie State College (PSC) is 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.”

Vision
Our vision is to 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.

About Us
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, • student engagement, • energy saving initiatives, • community outreach, and • behavior change campaigns.

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Dr. Terri L. Winfree, president of Prairie State College (PSC), was recognized with the 2017 Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN) Presidential Leadership Award, in recognition of her outstanding leadership and tireless efforts in addressing and raising awareness about issues of sustainability on the PSC campus and in the community. The award was presented at the IGEN Annual Sustainability Conference on March 22 and 23.

PSC is an active member of the following state and national programs:

The Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN), which is a consortium of Illinois community colleges working together to share resources, common experiences and best practices to help grow the new green economy. IGEN, along with its member colleges is working to turn campuses into living labs, develop strong resilient communities, and open the doors to green careers.

The Illinois Food Scrap Coalition (IFSC), which is a group of solid waste agencies, counties, community and government organizations, businesses, schools, institutions, service providers, and processors dedicated to advancing food scrap composting in Illinois through program implementation, policy, and advocacy.

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Sustainability Education and Economic Development (SEED) Center, which is a joint initiative between ecoAmerica and AACC that aims to advance sustainability and clean technology education programs at community colleges by sharing innovative practices to help college administrators, faculty, and staff build the green economy.

In addition to these state and national initiatives, Ms. Kummelenehne represents PSC locally 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
• Prairie State Region Community Partners for Sustainability
• Homewood-Flossmoor Area Green Committee
Facilities and Operations

Sustainability Revenue
In fiscal year 2017, sustainability brought in $7,500 in grants, sponsorships and the sale of recycled goods.

Tobacco/Smoke Free Campus
In compliance with Illinois state law, in 2015 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.
In fiscal year 2017, Ms. Kummelehne continued to chair the committee and was awarded a third grant from the Truth Initiative (formerly the Legacy Foundation) in the amount of $5,000 to effectively communicate the policy with staff, students, and visitors through educational materials and fliers, student engagement and competitions, the installation of new signage, and two large scale events to encourage students and employees to quit smoking.

Impact: Since 2015, PSC has received $15,000 in grants from the Truth Initiative to ensure all guests on campus have access to clean air and a healthier environment.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations
PSC has four dedicated spaces in parking lot B for electric vehicle (EV) charging. Since installing two (EV) charging stations in November 2012, PSC has participated in several initiatives to promote the stations, including the Illinois Green Economy Network's EV Road Trip and the Department of Energy's Workplace Charging Challenge.
From July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017, 386 session occurred at PSC's EV stations, saving 1046 kg of greenhouse gases.

Impact: Since 2012, the charging community at PSC has saved 2,273 kg of greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere which is the equivalent of planting 86 trees and letting them grow for 10 years.

Bottle Filling Stations
Since the first bottle filling station installation in January 2012, the PSC community has eliminated 235,721 12-ounce plastic bottles from the waste stream, which is a 38 percent increase over last fiscal year. Eleven of the 12 water stations on main campus include an eco-counter on main campus which tracks the number of 12-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 its 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."

Impact: Eliminated 235,721 plastic bottles from entering the waste stream.

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Earth Month
A variety of educational activities were hosted throughout the month of April to celebrate Earth Month. Events included documentaries, guest speakers, a sustainability symposium, a quit smoking event, a kids at college event, and bio blitz!

Eight PSC students attended the SMHEC Student Sustainability Summit at Joliet Junior College this year during Earth Month. Eduardo Lopez represented the STEM Club as he presented the solar powered picnic table his group created, and Star Lawson represented the Student Government Association, presenting information on the community garden. Students from Professors Lee Anne Burrough and Ed Schwarz, and Adjunct Professors Erin Menig and Victoria Wittig’s classes presented their work during the PSC Sustainability Symposium. Student work addressed the built and natural environment, climate change, and alternative energy solutions. And, in the first ever campus bio blitz, 80 middle school students, 25 PSC students and 11 field experts conducted a mini bio blitz in the nature preserve.

**Impact:** More than 360 faculty, staff, students, volunteers, and community members participated in this year’s Earth Month activities.

Clear the Air Event
As part of the college’s Earth Month activities, students from the Nursing Club engaged students on campus during our “Clear the Air” event.

The event promoted PSC’s policy regarding tobacco use, and provided students with quitting plans and nicotine replacement therapy, as needed.

Visitors, who were comprised mostly of PSC students, had a chance to play a trivia games for prizes and sign a pledge to quit smoking or remain smoke free in order to be entered into a raffle to win four one-hour personal training sessions at the PSC Fitness Center.

Several students pledged to “quit cold turkey,” turning in their pack of cigarettes and making the pledge to quit smoking immediately. In return, they received a turkey sandwich, Subway gift card, and resources to help them quit.

**Impact:** 33 students committed to remain smoke free or adopt a quit smoking plan.

Green Speaker Series: Conservation at Home
Twenty-five students attended “Conservation at Home,” presented by Margaret Burns-Westmeyer of the University of Illinois Extension. The program addressed creating habitat and plant pathways to sustain and reclaim our environment. The presentation was well-received by both students and faculty.

**Impact:** 25 students learned ways to sustain and reclaim our environment.

Green Speaker Series: Within the Economy Of Nature Lie the Solutions to Climate Change
Twenty-five students attended “Within the Economy of Nature Lie the Solutions to Climate Change,” presented by PSC adjunct professor, Victoria Wittig. Dr. Wittig presented the causes and consequences of climate change and how solutions are found within the economy of nature using an “ecocentric” approach that moves society forward to the “Ecozoic.”

**Impact:** 25 students learned about climate change and solutions.
Gardening with Purpose
On May 19, Ms. Kummerlehne visited the John H. Blakely Senior Center in Glenwood where she gave a presentation on gardening to 45 seniors. The presentation reviewed the sustainability initiatives taking place at PSC, the community garden located on campus, and tips for gardening purposefully.

Impact: 45 members of the community learned about PSC’s sustainability initiatives and the community garden.

Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN) Smart Grid Program at PSC
PSC regularly participates in the IGEN Smart Grid program. Through this program, PSC hosts a series of outreach events and utilizes the Smart Grid Education Outreach Kit to educate consumers on the smart grid.

Impact: 21 community members have been educated on the smart grid.

Kids@College Go Green! Earth Day Celebration
On April 22, children between the ages of four and 13 joined PSC for a free event where they participated in hands-on activities, science experiments, and take home art projects as we celebrated Earth Day at the Matteson Area Center (MAC).

A number of PSC students volunteered, and staff from the MAC helped out all morning. Hands-on experiments included a Vender Grill, recycled art projects, planting lettuce in a bag (sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension), a health lab, fingerprinting by the PSC Police Department, and touch-a-truck featuring the Matteson Fire Department.

Impact: 80 children learned about sustainability and the Kids@College summer program.

Prairie State Region Community Partners for Sustainability
Communities in PSC’s district are working together toward a sustainable future by aligning environmental issues, sharing resources, and committing to action. Through the Sustainability Center, the group created a Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/PrairieStateCPS) and is working to create a catalog of all area sustainability initiatives, including events, programs, projects, and resources.

PSC communities are working together to encourage their mayors to sign the Greenest Region Compact 2, which articulates high-level goals for communities and a future sustainable region.

The group meets regularly at PSC, and was created through the South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium Link and Leverage Series where three sub-regions were identified to work closely together to replicate successes, eliminate duplicated efforts, and learn from each other moving forward.

Impact: Five communities in PSC’s district regularly are represented and moving toward a sustainable future.

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

-Albert Einstein

Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN) Sustainability Conference
On March 22-23, Ms. Kummerlehne attended the annual IGEN Sustainability Conference. The two-day conference brought together representatives from Illinois community colleges to share best practices, lessons learned, and successes to advance sustainability across the state through our collective impact.

During an evening awards program, PSC President Dr. Terri L. Winfree was awarded the Presidential Leadership Award for her dedication, leadership, and vision to incorporate sustainability into the culture of PSC.

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Bloom High School Health Fair
The nursing club was invited to Bloom Trail High School for a second year to promote PSC’s smoke/tobacco free initiatives and educate students about the harmful effects of smoking.

Impact: The Nursing Club had 60 high school students enter the raffle by signing the “Smoke Free” pledge.

PSC UIE Urban Agriculture Demonstration and Research Site
The Village of Matteson approved a joint project between PSC and the University of Illinois Extension (UIE) serving Cook County to develop the South Cook Urban Agriculture Demonstration and Research site (SCUADR) at the Matteson Area Center.
The project will “train the trainer” and provide hard skill development through hands-on learning in urban (plant-based) agriculture and 1) fill the gap in southern Cook County which has a void of intensive urban farming training programs, 2) create a showcase project for the College, UIE, and Matteson, 3) develop a community food system, 4) offer credit and non-credit earning opportunities, 5) provide career pathways in the field of urban agriculture, and 6) enhance economic development.

Through the SCUADR, PSC and UIE will work together to:
• generate revenues via produce sales to fund new and existing programs;
• provide a business incubator site for future urban farming startups in southern Cook County; and
• serve as the premier Urban Agriculture Training Site for all of Cook County.

Impact: The program will provide hard skill development through hands-on learning in urban agriculture.

Electronics Recycling
PSC continues their partnership with NewSTAR 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.

Impact: 2,649 pounds of electronics were diverted from the landfill.