Sustainability Center Annual Update

This report outlines the larger sustainability initiatives and events that occurred during fiscal year 2016. It is not intended to be all inclusive, nor does it contain all details. For more information, please contact Alessandra (Cairo) Kummelehne, Sustainability Coordinator, at (708) 709-3764 or akummelehne@prairiestate.edu.

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 about the pressures facing the local and global environment to increase awareness and understanding of the importance of a “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 job trainings, 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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Local, State, and National Initiatives

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

The Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN), 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 American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Sustainability Education and Economic Development (SEED) Center, 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 a green economy.

The Community College Alliance for Sustainability Education (CCASE), formerly the Community College Affiliate Program (CCAP), which advances sustainability education and training and environmental science on associate degree-granting institution campuses.

Department of Energy Workplace Charging Challenge Partner Profile

In June 2014, PSC signed the Workplace Charging Challenge from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). This past fiscal year, PSC was recognized for demonstrating leadership by fulfilling the voluntary requirements of the Workplace Charging Challenge. PSC was recognized for supporting the development of the national PEV charging infrastructure and fulfilling the voluntary requirements of the Challenge in 2015. PSC was one of fewer than 30% of all Challenge partners to receive this recognition over the programs lifetime.

In addition to these state and national initiatives, Ms. Kummelehne represents PSC locally by actively serving on the following committees:

• 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 2016, sustainability efforts brought in $7,000 in sponsorships and grants, $1051 in the sale of recycled goods, and an additional $60 in value for goods and services received, for a grand total of $8,111.

Tobacco/Smoke Free Campus
In compliance with Illinois State Law, in 2015, a policy was adopted making PSC a 100 percent 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 2016, Ms. Kummelehne continued to chair the Smoke and Tobacco Free committee and was awarded a second grant from the Truth Initiative (formerly the Legacy Foundation) in the amount of $5,000. The funds were granted as means to effectively communicate the policy to staff, students, and visitors with educational materials and fliers, student engagement projects, competitions and two large scale events to encourage students and employees to quit smoking. A portion of the grant also was used to purchase new signage and outdoor banners.

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

Bottle Filling Stations
Since the first bottle filling station installation in January 2012, the PSC community has eliminated 170,619 12-ounce plastic bottles from the waste stream, which is an increase of 36,329 bottles since last fiscal year. Nine of the 10 water stations include an eco-counter, which tracks the number of twelve-ounce bottles refilled.
To educate consumers about the water 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.”

Impact: Eliminated 170,619 plastic bottles from entering the waste stream.

Butterfly Garden
Students from Dr. Christa Adam’s biology classes in April and June, joined Ms. Kummelehne to mulch and plant in the butterfly garden. The Sustainability Club raised funds during the academic year to cover the costs of new mulch and annual plants that give the garden a extra color until the native plants establishes themselves. The butterfly garden was created in 2015 and has been well received by the PSC community.

Impact: The college campus and community will enjoy the benefits of native plants and butterflies.

PSC Community Garden
The PSC Community Garden opened for its fifth season on May 25, 2016. Gardeners once again grew a variety of fruits and vegetables over the summer and beginning of fall.
In 2015, surplus crops were donated to Respond Now. The donation totals, in pounds, are as follows:
• Collard Greens – 87.43
• Tomatoes – 49.16
• Kale – 24.27
• Basil – 7.69
• Cauliflower – 4.2
• Cabbage – 24.09

Impact: 197 pounds of fresh produce were donated to Respond Now.
26 garden plots were sold and participants of all ages learning about gardening.

Green Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging Stations
PSC has designated eight parking spaces at of the circle drive, east of the main entrance for environmentally-friendly vehicles. To date, 19 permits have been issued. In addition four Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations are located in LOT B at the north end of the lot against the main building. 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.
To receive a green parking permit, a valid vehicle registration is required. Eligible vehicles must be on the Electric Vehicle or Low Emissions Vehicle list. The list is available at prairiestate.edu/sustainability.
Over the past year, the lifetime station usage increased by over 100 percent. Since November 2012, there has been 285 charge-ups, saving 290,809 gallons of gasoline.

Impact: The use of the charging stations at PSC has saved 973,226 kg of greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere.
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
Green Curriculum

Greening Your Curriculum Faculty Workshop

Ms. Kummelehne worked with PSC’s faculty sustainability committee to develop a Greening Your Curriculum workshop.

Six faculty members participated in the two-day development workshop, designed to enable participants to integrate sustainability across the curriculum. Faculty learned how to introduce sustainability concepts through the lens of their discipline. Through these revised courses, students will have opportunities to explore sustainability through artistic, cultural, historical, mathematical, philosophical and scientific lenses to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the subject.

On day one of the workshop, held on Tuesday, May 24, groups toured local businesses to learn about sustainability initiatives, including:

- Coyote Run Golf Course
- SouthSTAR's EcoSafe Processors Warehouse
- Homewood Public Safety Building
- The Cottage on Dixie
- Homewood Disposal Recycling Facility

Day two of the workshop was held on the main campus where faculty discussed their experiences on the tours, reviewed assigned readings, shared resources and was able to begin working on modifying their curriculum with the assistance of their colleagues.

This was an exciting opportunity for PSC faculty and the committee hopes to continue and expand this modified GYC program for years to come.

Impact: Six faculty will incorporate a sustainability activity into their curriculum which will provide at least 150 students the opportunity to learn about sustainability during the upcoming academic year.

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

-Albert Einstein

Student Engagement

Reduce, Reuse, Rebuild?

On November 18, Bryant Williams, Senior Director of the Rebuilding Exchange, gave two presentations to more than 40 students and outside guests as part of the sustainability center’s green speaker series and came back by popular demand on March 16 where he spoke to another 25 students.

Mr. Williams discussed his experience working with the Rebuilding Exchange and educated the audience on the economic and environmental impacts of waste diversion. Mr. Williams also discussed environmental justice, the local economy and job creation, and provided real-life examples from the local, state and federal levels.

Environmentalists of Color Network

On February 25, Anthena Gore from the Environmentalists of Color (EOC) Network discussed her involvement with the EOC and their initiatives in the Chicagoland area. The EOC is an interdisciplinary network of leaders of color who are passionate about a vast array of critical environmental issues, ranging from habitat conservation to environmental justice. The network cultivates opportunities for community support and professional development so that environmentalists of color can thrive in their field.

The Story of the Monarch

On April 27, as part of the College’s Earth Month activities, 50 students from for Professor Hung and Professor Adam’s classes attended The Story of The Monarch, presented by Dolly Foster, Horticulturalist and Monarch enthusiast this morning.

Foster discussed the monarchs’ life cycle, habitat and migration pattern, as well as what people can do to help.

Impact: 130 students learned about various topics in sustainability and future career opportunities.

Get Healthy, Go Green! Health and Wellness Fair

PSC hosted the second “Get Healthy! Go Green! Health and Wellness Fair” on October 14. With more than 35 vendors, the fair provided valuable services to our campus community, including flu-shots, blood pressure and cholesterol screenings. Additionally, to encourage a greener lifestyle for a healthier self and a healthier environment, vendors were on campus promoting green alternatives and health-related programs.

Ms. Kummelehne worked with SouthSTAR Services EcoSafe Processor’s to arrange an onsite collection of unwanted, residential electronic and the Cook County Sheriff’s Department to accept expired or otherwise obsolete prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

Impact: PSC students received valuable health care services and learned about a greener lifestyle.
Student Engagement

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society Presentation
On October 19, Ms. Kummelehne spoke with members of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society about social justice and its effects on recycling. This information was helpful for the groups Honors in Action project.

The Great American Smokeout
On November 19, the PSC Smoke Free Committee participated in the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout Day. Sustainability Club members, Pioneer Peer Educators and the PSC baseball team volunteered alongside staff to educate the campus about the health risks of smoking. Games, giveaways, and helpful resources were provided as a way to give smokers the encouragement needed to quit.

Impact: More than 30 students and guests stopped by the table to learn about the health benefits of quitting smoking for good.

The Polar Melt Down
The sustainability club hosted a fun and interactive demonstration on climate change in the Atrium in November and March. In this musical chair style game, students learned about climate change and its effects on the arctic.

Impact: 80 students participated in the events.

Student Club Summit on Professional Sustainability
The 2015 Student Club Summit on Professional Sustainability was held December 15. The one-day training session for PSC’s student leaders reinforced leadership skills, promoted teamwork and reviewed proper protocols needed for successful tenure as student officers.

In a follow-up session on February 5, many students returned to participate in the Strengths Finder 2.0 activity over lunch. Together, students discussed their strengths, how to better utilize those strengths and what they learned about themselves during the activity.

Impact: 17 students participated in the event.

Advanced Public Speaking Class Presentation
Ms. Kummelehne was invited to speak to Professor Ed Schwarz’s Communication 102 class on March 3. She discussed the importance of sustainability and spoke about initiatives that have been implemented at PSC over the past several years.

Student Engagement - Earth Month Activities

Clear the Air Event
Students from the Nursing Club, along with several task force members, including Ms. Kummelehne, Diane Miller assistant professor, nursing and Michelle Giuliani, operations support specialist, Corporate and Continuing Education, collaborated on an effort to engage students on campus during the Clear the Air event on April 19.

The purpose of the event was to promote PSC’s policy regarding tobacco use. Visitors, who comprised mostly of PSC students, had a chance to play a trivia game for prizes and sign a pledge to quit smoking or remain smoke free in order to be entered into a raffle to win four 1-hour personal training sessions at the PSC Fitness Center.

Also, several students pledged to “quit cold turkey” where they turned in their pack of cigarettes, made the pledge to quit smoking immediately and in return they received a turkey sandwich, Subway gift card and resources to help them quit.

We had 48 students enter the raffle by signing a “Quit Smoking” or “Smoke Free” pledge and 5 students “Quit Cold Turkey.”

Impact: 48 students learned about the positive health effects from quitting smoking and remaining smoke free.

Around the World
The Sustainability Club presented on how the effects of climate change can be felt around the world. Participants received mock passports and was given the opportunity to explore various endangered species from around the world in a unique poster presentation in the Atrium on April 7.

Impact: 30 students participated in the event.

Student Sustainability Summit
Several PSC students from attended the 5th annual Student Sustainability Summit created for students - by students at South Suburban College on April 8. A student from Professor Lee Anne Burrough’s Independent Study course, presented research she completed during the spring semester.

Students from all 12 SMHEC colleges attended the event and learned about sustainability efforts initiated at other colleges, networked with their peers and had an opportunity to meet with professionals in the field.

Impact: 5 PSC students attended this regional conference and met students from surrounding institutions.

Comfort Zone
On April 13, Ms. Kummelehne hosted a special screening of Comfort Zone, a documentary that has a unique approach to stimulating dialogue about climate change. Sustainability Club members viewed the short film and had a great discussion afterwards.

Impact: 12 students learned about the effects of climate change in the Great Lakes Region.
Kids@College
In July 2015, Ms. Kummelehne taught children about sustainability during week four of the PSC Kids@College program at PSC. The week’s theme was “Let’s Build It,” where students discovered the process of building from the ground up and the various jobs needed to complete a project. Ms. Kummelehne’s lesson focused on sustainability and the three R’s (i.e. reduce, reuse, and recycle). In her trash-to-treasures workshop, Ms. Kummelehne discussed the basics of sustainable living and encouraged each child to build a home or building using reusable materials.

TRIO Talent Search Service Learning Project
On August 6, Ms. Kummelehne gave a short presentation on sustainability to high school students in the TRIO Talent Search Program at PSC. Following her presentation, Ms. Kummelehne led students through the nature preserve on campus to pick up trash and discuss sustainability-related programs at the college. It was a great learning experience and the group removed several large bags of litter from the area.

Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN) Sustainability Conference
On January 28-29, PSC President, Dr. Terri Winfree and Ms. Kummelehne attended the Illinois Green Economy Network’s Sustainability Conference at Heartland Community College in Normal, IL. This was the second state-wide sustainability conference that brought together colleges from Illinois to share best practices, lessons learned, and successes to advance sustainability across the state. On the first day, Ms. Kummelehne was a facilitator for a small group discussion and on the second day, Dr. Winfree participated in the Presidents’ panel discussion.

Adopt A Highway
In the summer of 2014, the Faculty Sustainability Committee, on behalf of PSC, adopted a stretch of highway on Route 1 from McDonalds at Vollmer Road to 183rd Street. On October 21, the faculty sustainability committee led the final “Adopt-A-Highway” event, where students, faculty and staff met to clear litter from PSC’s adopted section of Halsted Street. With more than 20 participants, the last scheduled cleanup was extremely successful.

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

Link and Leverage Series
Ms. Kummelehne has been an integral part of planning the South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium’s (SMHEC) Link and Leverage forum series. During this fiscal year, SMHEC partnered with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to work to align environmental issues, resources and actions at the local and regional levels to help municipalities achieve meaningful and measurable environmental sustainability and resilience.

On October 22, Ms. Kummelehne attended the first forum of the academic year at Moraine Valley Community College. The event was highly successful and linked local organizations, municipalities and institutions of higher education to make the south Chicagoland Metropolitan area the greenest region. The success of this event was due in part because of the partnership between SMHEC and PSC. (This is a guess. The sentence was incomplete.)

On January 21, Ms. Kummelehne attended the second forum where attendees discussed their progress, problems and solutions to make the south and southwest suburbs of Chicago the Greenest Region.

Ms. Kummelehne facilitated a session on “Sustainable Communities” and participated in the share fair where she was able to promote PSC’s sustainability initiatives to all attendees.

And finally, on May 19, Ms. Kummelehne attended the third forum in the series at Joliet Junior College, where attendees discussed their progress, problems and solutions to make the south and southwest suburbs of Chicago the Greenest Region. This particular forum divided the group up by sub-regions to complete asset mapping and determine steps for moving forward. Ms. Kummelehne facilitated the Homewood-Flossmoor sub region in which Park Forest Mayor John Ostenburg and Flossmoor Mayor Paul Braun participated, as well as others from the following communities: Homewood, Flossmoor, Park Forest, Matteson, University Park and Chicago Heights.

Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN) Smart Grid program at PSC
PSC was selected to participate in the FY’16-17 IGEN Smart Grid program. Through this program, PSC will host a series of outreach events and utilize the Smart Grid Education Outreach Kit to educate consumers on the smart grid which will be installed in homes throughout PSC’s district beginning in 2017.

PSC was also assigned a smart grid kiosk which is being used as an educational tool for all those who visit the main campus.

Community Preparedness for Emergency Crises
On April 19, Ms. Kummelehne led a discussion on climate change and its effects on our local community. The discussion focused on severe weather affecting our region, local health concerns and resources for residents.

Impact: 36 residents of the area attended the presentation that took place at the Homewood Public Library.
Campus and Community Engagement

Kids@College Go Green! Earth Day Celebration
On April 30, children between the ages of four and 13 attended a free Earth Day event at the PSC Matteson Area Center (MAC). Participants enjoyed hands-on activities, science experiments, and take home art projects. Students from the Sustainability Club volunteered and staff from the MAC helped with the event. Hands-on experiments included dry ice activities, a vender Graff 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 an opportunity to touch-a-truck featuring vehicles from KLLM and the Matteson Fire Department.

Impact: 70 children learned about sustainability as part of the Kids@College summer program at PSC.

Bloom High School Health Fair
On May 12, students from the Nursing Club attended Bloom High School’s health fair to engage students and teach them about the harmful effects of smoking and tobacco use. Similar to the college’s Clear the Air event, visitors who stopped at PSC’s table had a chance to play a trivia games for prizes and sign a pledge to quit smoking to be entered into a raffle to win a Subway gift card.

Impact: The Nursing Club had 55 high school students enter the raffle by signing the “Smoke Free” pledge.

Waste Diversion

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 timers per year. Equipment is brought to EcoSafe’s Steger facility where it is disassembled and sorted into various commodities.