



weber green

Weber State University's Environmental Issues Committee -

Our Mission

The Environmental Issues Committee shall help facilitate the modeling of best practices for economic and environmental sustainability at WSU. The committee shall serve as a local and state-wide source for scientifically based information and for leadership on environmental issues affecting Utah, the Wasatch Front, and WSU Campus Committees.

Your Green Link

news and information

April 2015

Mark Your Calendars!

Faculty Retreat

- **May 14-15: Faculty Sustainability Retreat and workshop**
- **April 29: Deadline to sign up for the retreat**
- **May 8: Deadline to sign up for the workshop**

Community Solar

- **May 28: 5:30 p.m. in the Dumke Hall (Hurst Center). First Susie Hulet Community Solar workshop. To secure your seat visit:**

www.weberstatesolar.org

Susie Hulet Community Solar Program Launching May 28!

The Sustainability Practices and Research Center (SPARC) at WSU has teamed up with Utah Clean Energy and several community volunteers to help bring the Susie Hulet Community Solar Program to homeowners in the Weber, Davis, and Morgan County region. The program will provide homeowners with the following three benefits:

- A simplified and streamlined solar installation process
- Selected installer(s) pre-screened and selected by an expert community volunteer committee
- Cost savings through bulk purchasing

Currently the volunteer committee is vetting solar installers. Those who are able to meet high quality expectations at the lowest cost will be selected in mid-May. The program will launch officially with a public workshop on May 28th, at 5:30 p.m., in Dumke Hall (Hurst Center). The workshop will provide interested homeowners with the opportunity to learn more about the program, obtain information from the installer(s), and have their questions answered.

Additional public workshops will be held at various locations throughout the summer. Participation is simple. Go to www.weberstatesolar.org and complete the solar survey. Once the program is launched on May 28th, the installer will contact all survey respondents to set up a site visit and provide a quote. Homeowners happy with the quote will sign a contract with the installer to have solar panels installed on their home.

Enrollees will enjoy significantly lower electricity bills and the knowledge they have truly made a difference by reducing their carbon footprint. Speed matters, however. Interested homeowners must fill out the survey by October to participate.

Susie Hulet, a long-time advocate and benefactor of nature and sustainability, is the energy behind WSU's Community Solar Program. Susie was a strong force for creating a Sustainability Center at WSU. It was due to be launched when she learned her life would be cut short. The University of Utah had recently successfully completed the first-ever Community Solar Program sponsored by a university. The Hulets tested the program on their own home and said, "Why not through Weber?" Wanting to encourage the new center toward this kind of action, Susie, her family, and friends committed money, talent, and time to enable the Sustainability Center to bring the Susie Hulet Community Solar Program to our area.



Participate in this Year's WSU Faculty Sustainability Workshop and Retreat

The Sustainability Practices and Research Center (SPARC), together with the Environmental Issues Committee (EIC) and the Teaching and Learning Forum (TLF), will be hosting a two-part sustainability workshop/retreat on May 14 and 15, 2015.

Part 1: Faculty Workshop on WSU and Teaching Sustainability Across the Curriculum Thursday, May 14, 9 am – 1 pm, including a FREE lunch

This morning workshop is focused on supporting the inclusion of sustainability in the curriculum at WSU by developing or revising courses to include sustainability or environmentally related topics/issues/approaches. Faculty will learn about sustainability at WSU as well as key issues and opportunities at WSU for students to do applied projects in sustainability. They will also learn about opportunities to connect their courses to next year's Engaged Learning Series on "Waste." Faculty members from all colleges are encouraged to consider this, as sustainability can be brought into just about any subject area in some way.

Part 2: Faculty Sustainability Retreat: Work and Planning Sessions Addressing Sustainability Challenges and Goals at WSU

The overnight retreat is for faculty who are or want to be engaged with sustainability on campus and/or those who may have valuable experiences/perspectives related to sustainability from other institutional contexts that they would like to share. It will involve work and planning sessions to address entrenched sustainability challenges at WSU, the details for the university's Sustainability Plan, visioning for SPARC, and events/projects, collaborations, and goals for the year(s) ahead.

Since space is limited, interested faculty are asked to submit a paragraph or two detailing their interest and/or involvement in sustainability at WSU, whether that is in teaching, service-learning, research, applied projects, community partnerships, etc., and what she/he hopes to achieve/contribute at the retreat. Please include name, department, college, and contact information with your email to Alice Mulder, Director, SPARC, at amulder@weber.edu.

Deadline to sign up for the Alta Retreat is Wednesday, April 29th

Deadline to sign up for the Sustainability Workshop is Friday, May 8th

Space is limited for both the workshop and the retreat, so please respond early!

Recipients of the Faculty and Student Sustainability Research Awards

This year the WSU Provost's Office and the WSU Alumni Association offered a total of \$2000 in awards for exceptional Sustainability Research Projects. This year's winners were selected by the Environmental Issues Committee based on the originality of the research, the likelihood of impact, and its link to sustainability. Awards were presented to two faculty and two students during the 2015 Office of Undergraduate Research Awards Luncheon. This year's faculty awards were given to Drs. Crimmell, Bedford, Dant and Ewert for their book Desert Water and to Dr. Jeremy Bryson for his research examining ways communities can address light pollution in the Intermountain West. The two student winners were Tyson Sandoval, for his work assessing the soil conditions that favor the survival of endangered flowers, and to Gregory Peterson, for his research on conservation agriculture in Malawi.



Next Year's Engaged Learning Series to Focus on Waste

The Engaged Learning Series (ELS) at WSU is a university-wide series of events designed to engage students, faculty, staff, and the community in discussion, debate, dialogue, learning, and action around an issue of public concern. For 2015-2016, the series aims to raise awareness, improve personal behavior, and increase public engagement around the issue of "waste." The term "waste" raises abundant questions. What does "waste" mean to you? Is "waste" something you avoid or something you recognize as a necessary by-product of consumption? How do you waste resources, time, people, and other abstract things like love, freedom, truth, etc.? When is something considered waste? Why do we waste some things and not others? Who decides when something is wasteful?

Throughout 2015-2016 we will view "waste" through six prisms: cultural, economic, educational, health, political, and environmental. We ask faculty, students, and the community to consider ways in which they might incorporate this topic into their teaching, learning, and awareness next year. As in years past, interested people can expect a diverse selection of speakers, films, panels, and events to help explore the world-wide problem of waste.

A schedule of events will be posted soon. For more information, please contact Becky Jo Gesteland, coordinator of the Engaged Learning Series, at bgesteland@weber.edu or 801-626-7737.

6th Annual Sustainability Summit a Success

The 6th Annual Intermountain Sustainability Summit took place on March 5th and 6th in the Shepherd Union Building. The nearly 400 attendees included students, faculty, staff, government and city employees, interested public, non-profit organizations, and sustainability professionals.

WSU President Chuck Wight opened the summit by stressing the importance of staying focused on sustainability issues even when negative factors, such as air pollution, are not visible.

Morning speaker Dr. P Wesley Schultz, from Cal State University San Marcos, addressed an important topic new to the summit: sustainable behavior change. Improving behavior is essential to a sustainable future, but we often don't know how to start or which strategies most effectively influence people's attitudes and behaviors. What has worked better than education campaigns is social norm messaging or providing an idea of how to *behave* in a particular social group or culture. For example, a social norm message on a hotel room placard stating



that 75% of hotel guests choose to reuse their towels reduced usage 25% more than a conservation message. Dr. Schultz also noted that some barriers to sustainable behavior change include biased perceptions, such as seeing environmental problems as worse globally than locally, as well as a disconnection from nature that often accompanies technology.

It was a pleasure to have Ogden mayor Mike Caldwell note the qualities that make Ogden such a unique city as he introduced the keynote speaker, Dr. David W. Orr of Oberlin College. Dr. Orr's address covered such topics as climate change, plans for a new solar hotel, and the Oberlin Project, a collaboration among the City of Oberlin, Oberlin College, and private and institutional partners to improve the community's resilience, prosperity, and sustainability. The city of Oberlin hopes to be the first climate-positive community in the country. Regarding the future of climate change, Dr. Orr said that "hope is a verb with its sleeves rolled up." Although we live in a time of deep concern for an unknown future, it is important to stay hopeful and continue working together in order to tackle these environmental challenges head-on.

The summit featured a new sustainable food and agriculture track, which covered the topics of water conservation, healthy food choices, urban farming, and food consumption's connection to climate change. The summit's other tracks included sustainability, waste and recycling, and energy. Food was the focus of WSU's Engaged Learning Series this year; next year the university and summit will feature waste.

The student sustainability poster competition presented 23 entries from higher-ed students across Utah. Winners were Alexa Pierce, Tim Long, Youcan Feng, Adel Abdallah, and Miguel Leonardo Feliz. Next year's competition will accept entries for primary research as well as applied design and advocacy projects.



The two Friday workshops drew many students and professionals. Whitney Ward from VCBO Architecture taught a LEED Green Associates course. Opening speaker Dr. P. Wesley Schultz taught a Sustainable Social Marketing workshop for managers of environmental programs. His in-depth look at barriers to behavior change, problems with traditional marketing methods, and strategies for implementing a sustainable behavior change campaign was eye-opening.

The tentative dates for next year's summit are March 3rd and 4th.



Environmental Ambassadors Update

The Environmental Ambassadors kicked off spring semester with great energy. On Jan. 31st, they carpooled to the 2nd annual Clean Air, No Excuses rally at the Utah State Capital, joining hundreds of Utahns to challenge government to do more to clean up dirty air statewide. Protestors encouraged citizens to bike or use public transportation instead of cars.



During the week of the Intermountain Sustainability Summit, the ambassadors raised awareness of plastic bottle waste in the Shepherd Union Building. They asked students to participate in a taste test to differentiate among two types of bottled water, tap water, and water from bottle refill stations. Many, pleasantly surprised, were unable to distinguish among the four types. Participants were given reusable water bottles provided by the Energy and Sustainability Office, which they were encouraged to use instead of buying bottled water.

Two volunteer activities brought the semester's work to an end. On April 6th, ambassadors participated in a trail dig to clean up a section of Strong's Canyon that had been adopted a few years ago. Working with the Ogden Trails Network and Weber Pathways, the ambassadors are required to contribute at least 50 hours of cleanup time on the trail annually. April 13th saw the final activity – Spring Tree Planting. Campus landscaping helped the ambassadors plant several trees between the library and the engineering technology building.

As tribute to its many accomplishments, the Environmental Ambassadors club was nominated for a Crystal Crest Award as the Registered Organization of the Year 2015. The award recognizes a student organization focused on social and special interest programs and/or activities that influence positive growth in its members, enhance campus, and provide contributions to the community. Winners will know results on April 25th. Go to www.weber.edu/crystalcrest to learn more about this "Grammy of Weber State."



Thanks for everything Environmental Ambassadors! See you in the fall!