

Gettysburg College is getting greener

Apple cores, lemon rinds and spinach leaves fertilize the produce at Gettysburg College's student-run Painted Turtle organic farm instead of going into the garbage. These and many other campus initiatives are turning the unofficial colors of Gettysburg to an eco-friendly green. The College is reducing the garbage and pollution it produces and simultaneously cutting back on the amount of energy it uses.

Energy-conservation efforts with roots in the 1980s have grown into a broad-based sustainability effort at Gettysburg College. In the fall of 2007, Gettysburg College joined 405 other colleges and universities in a pledge to achieve a wide range of environment goals by becoming a charter signatory of the national Presidents Climate Commitment. As a result of this initiative and an ongoing commitment to energy conservation and efficiency, the campus is becoming a community leader in its efforts to reduce its ecological footprint.

Gettysburg College has been aggressive about saving energy for decades, and although we have been adding new buildings, we have reduced our energy usage per square foot of building space, which currently ranks fourth lowest in a sampling of 20 of peer residential liberal arts colleges.

From the most straightforward changes such as switching to compact fluorescent bulbs, biodegradable cleaners, low-flow toilets, more efficient refrigerators, and other appliances to extending our high-efficiency centralized cooling system to more buildings, we have reduced our reliance on fossil fuels from 61 percent in 1996 to 53 percent in 2006. In 2008, we con-



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tracted to obtain 20 percent of our energy from biomass and increase our use of wind power. Efforts to reduce water usage have resulted in a 36.4 percent drop in campus water use since 1996.

The College's Center for Athletics, Recreation, and Fitness, scheduled to open in fall 2009, is the first Gettysburg College building to be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified, a label restricted to buildings that have been constructed following a set of standards for environmental sustainability developed by the United States Green Building Council.

The new 55,000-square-foot Center for Athletics, Recreation and Fitness will connect to the west side of the College's Bream/Wright/Hauser Athletic facility. It will include a natatorium with eight competition lanes, a four-lane warm-up pool and 350-seat spectator gallery; a 10,000-square-foot weight and fitness room; multipurpose spaces for aerobics, yoga, Pilates, spinning and martial arts classes; a renovated athletic training room with a Hydroworx therapy pool; and expanded facilities for campus recreation and experiential education programs.

The Center is the first major piece of the

College's new campus master plan, which provides a blueprint for renovation and new construction over the next few decades. As elements of the plan are implemented, Gettysburg will become greener, both figuratively—as the College incorporates more energy efficiency and ecological sensitivity into renovations and new construction—and literally as parking areas move to the campus perimeter and are replaced with pedestrian greenways.

The Center is the first LEED-certified building on campus, but several elements in the master plan also contribute significantly to sustainability. New equipment that produces and distributes chilled water to air-condition our buildings more efficiently is saving significantly on electricity costs. Also one of the more significant ecological benefits will be a result of a new storm drainage system that was installed under parking construction. The system collects, cools and filters storm water runoff and releases it gradually, recharging local aquifers while minimizing the erosion and damage that fast-flowing drainage can cause.

As parking areas are moved to the perimeter of campus, the College is gradually becoming more pedestrian friendly. In 2008 the College began a shuttle service to the major retail areas of Gettysburg to encourage students to contribute to the College's goal of producing fewer carbon emissions and using less fossil fuel. This local shuttle is in addition to the van service the College operates to airports and train stations. In 2008, we also began using a three-wheeled electric vehicle, which helps reduce the impact of mov-



PHOTO COURTESY, GETTYSBURG COLLEGE

GIVING IT UP - Student and community volunteers sort items for the annual Give It Up for Good Sale,

which has raised \$60,000 for the United Way of Adams County and redirected 100 tons from landfills.

ing workers and materials around campus.

The College's commitment to recycling has grown far beyond its initial goals of separating cans and glass from other refuse when it began more than a decade ago. Now the College's award-winning, campus-wide recycling program collects everything from paper and plastic to printer cartridges and motor oil. Recycling bins are placed in every residential room on campus, and a special-interest student residence has been created that is dedicated to sustainable living.

Both campus residences and fraternities participate in an on-campus competition to produce the highest recycling weight per capita. The College also competes in a national RecycleMania contest. In 2007 Gettysburg placed second in Pennsylvania and 53rd nationally; in 2008, the College placed 75th out of 400 institutions nationally and eighth in the state.

Since its inception in

2005, the College's annual Give it up for Good sale has raised nearly \$60,000 for the United Way and redirected approximately 100 tons from landfills. At the end of each academic year, students donate reusable items as they move out of our residence halls. Gettysburg College Facilities Services and the United Way of Adams County collect and organize the items, and everything is sold for below-thrift-store prices in a massive reuse campaign. All proceeds benefit the United Way.

The Give It Up for Good sale received the 2005, 2006 and 2007 Waste Watcher Award for Outstanding Recycling and Special Collection Efforts from the Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association, and Keystone Chapter of the Solid Waste Association of North America. The organizations recognize outstanding recycling, waste edu-

cation, reuse, and composting programs from across the state. The College's program was selected for its commitment to reuse.

Students have been the major drivers of many of the College's most innovative sustainability projects, including Campus Kitchens and the Painted Turtle organic farm.

Spearheaded by a student who had worked with the D.C. Central Kitchen, Gettysburg College's own Campus Kitchen project, the first in Pennsylvania, opened in 2007. Campus Kitchens volunteers recycle prepared, but unserved food, from Dining Services at the College as well as from local hotels, restaurants, caterers and from picking leftover produce from local fields after harvest. The food is then repackaged and combined with additional foods procured through food drives, local farmers, and the food bank. Students deliver the newly assembled meals. (See GREEN on Page 9)

(Continued from page 8) working closely with local community agencies.

In its first year of operation, Campus Kitchens student volunteers logged more than 750 hours, recovered 3,500 pounds of food, and served 1,385 meals to community groups with the Adams County Office for Aging, YWCA Single Mother's Support Group, and Adams County Circles Initiative, which helps families move out of poverty.

One of the sources of the Central Kitchens' food supply is the Painted Turtle Farm, Gettysburg College's 4,000-square-foot organic garden, which yields a wide variety of vegetables and herbs, including corn, peas, and tomatoes, garlic, and flowers. Produce is delivered weekly to the local food bank, Campus Kitchens, and to the campus Dining Center, much of it ending up on the latter's salad bar. In turn, waste from the Dining Center becomes compost for the garden.

The garden and Dining Services work closely together. Dining Services uses local produce, including the crop from the Painted Turtle Farm, and also provides seeds, which are planted in the College's greenhouses, and transplanted to the Painted Turtle Farm, and harvested for meals on campus or delivered to local food banks.

In addition to fresh produce, the Painted Turtle Farm provides hands-on research opportunities for Gettysburg students on topics such as sustainable agriculture, environmental

education, and community development.

Perhaps the most dramatic impact of the greening of Gettysburg College is the knowledge and skills our students learn as they participate in sustainability initiatives. The College's

Environmental Studies Department, among the largest among its peer liberal arts colleges, helps students learn how to analyze complex environmental issues—both theoretically, in the classroom, and first-hand in the field. Students travel to local terrestrial, freshwater, and marine habitats as well as

abroad to experience environmental problems facing countries around the globe. Closer to home, students meet with actual decision makers in Washington, D.C., to discuss environmental policy. Many alumni go on to careers in the field, including recent graduates now working in alternative energy, marine conservation, and environmental law.

The combined efforts to make Gettysburg College's environmentally sustainable are strengthening the campus culture and deepening the connections among students,

faculty, staff, and alumni. The sustainability efforts are a win-win opportunity

for everyone in the community to learn to live with more awareness of

our potential to use our resources more wisely.

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