Building a Sustainability Effort at a Regional Public University

A Five Year Retrospective

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Western Illinois University Overview

- Two campuses
  - Macomb, Residential Campus, ~10,500 students
  - Quad Cities, Commuter Campus, ~ 2000 students

- Students
  - Primarily first and second generation college
  - Largely employment oriented, little activism history
  - Predominantly undergraduate
  - From Chicago area, western Illinois, eastern Iowa

- Resources
  - State support essentially flat for past 5 years
  - No capital budget in last five Years
  - Deferred maintenance backlog of $174.8 Million Critical
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- **Gestation Phase**
  - Recycling, Mid 1990’s
  - Environmental Studies Minor Created, 1997
  - Several Environmentally Concerned Faculty Join WIU in Various Departments, 1998-2003+
    - Began Building A Social Network
    - One Began Attending Greening The Campus
  - Horn Field Campus Director Proposes Green Sustainability Center & Planning Begins, 2003
  - First WIU Environmental Summit Held, 2004
  - Institute of Environmental Studies Revived, New Director With Campus Sustainability Interest Hired, 2005
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**Leadership Phase**
- President Communicates Importance of Strategic Planning Initiative to the University Community in Key Addresses 2003
- Strategic Planning Sub-Committee Sustainability Recommendations Adopted by President, 2004
- President Signs Talloires Declaration, 2005
- WIU Creates Sustainability Committee and Joins AASHE, 2006
- University Pledges to Lt. Governor’s Illinois Sustainable University Compact, 2006
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- Mobilization
  - Cross-functional Sustainability Committee Created
    - Membership mostly Faculty and Staff - Student Involvement increasing in 2009 (membership open to all)
  - Indentify Key Priorities and Initiatives, 2007
    - Energy Management
    - Design Standards
    - Procurement
    - Transportation
    - Recycling, Composting, Reuse
    - Curriculum, Education & Awareness
    - Landscaping
    - Integrated Pest Management
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- **Implementation**
  - Energy Strategy Adopted By WIU Board of Trustees, 2007
  - Green Purchasing Standard Adopted by WIU, 2007
  - Changed to Sustainable Take-out Dining Utensils, 2007
  - Energy Star Vending Machines Mandated, 2007
  - Committed to LEED Silver Minimum Building Standard, 2007
  - Invested $620,000 in Sustainable Initiatives in FY08 – (FY09)
  - Last 10 WIU Vehicles Purchased or Leased are Hybrids
  - Web Site Creation, 2008 (www.wiu.edu/sustainability)
  - Established 1-1/2 Acre Thompson Prairie, 2007
  - Installed Earth Tub Composter, 2009
  - Governor’s grant for a Campus Rain Garden 4/2009
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• Implementation
  • Over $1 Million in Lighting Upgrades with 50% Grants
  • Design Grant for LEED Design at Multi Cultural Center
    • Geothermal System
    • Sedum (green roof system)
    • Grant, Second System in Design for Quad Cities Campus
  • Sustainability Declared Campus Theme for 2007 – 2008
    • Over 45 Different Events
  • Uses Low Mercury Lamps - Recycles Used Lamps
  • Initiating Programmed Lighting Maintenance (PLM)
  • LED Exit Sign Replacement Program
  • Using Sugar Beet Deicer Supplements to Salt
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• **Self Assessment**
  - Strong Response with Limited Resources
  - University Support Significant
  - Top Leadership Continues to Communicate Importance
  - State Leadership Support (very “Green” Governor)
  - Greater Resources Needed Across the Board
  - More Student Involvement Desired
  - Sustainability Coordinator Approved

• **Key Lessons**
  - Importance of Building Networks
  - Critical Significance of Being In the Strategic Plan
  - Progress Possible But Difficult Without Active Student or Sustainability Coordinator Role
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Discussion

www.wiu.edu/sustainability