



Indiana University South Bend South Bend, Indiana Garden

SCHOOL

Indiana University South Bend, Public 4-year, 7250 students, South Bend, Indiana.

Abstract

The mission of the IU South Bend Campus Community Garden is to provide students and faculty with a space on campus to grow and nurture their own produce while providing education and outreach to the entire campus as well as the community. In its first summer of activity the project, led by a group of environmentally conscious and socially active students and faculty, has sought to increase awareness of growing food locally and increase student involvement on campus during the summer months (a time when few groups are active on campus). It is just entering its fourth month of operation but its successes are already being recognized around the campus as well as the community.



GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Goals

- Provide a place on campus to grow produce and increase student involvement on campus
- Maintain a strong multidisciplinary base of students and faculty
- Use resources wisely
- Offer students and faculty important new teaching and learning opportunities
- Work hand in hand with other community gardens and local food providers as well as the university's Center for a Sustainable Future
- Promote the use of local ingredients in the schools Dining Services
- Educate students about the ease of growing your own food
- Donate produce to deserving bodies

Goals for next 2-3 years

- Provide at least one campus grown item to the schools Dining Services
- Do seed saving in order to close the loop and truly become sustainable
- Increase total production area
- Increase total production output
- Integrate campus garden into local public school education
- Increase amount of produce donated to deserving bodies

Accomplishments and Outcomes

The first accomplishment was the overwhelming support the garden project obtained from faculty and students from all disciplines of the university. A proposal was written and presented to the university's Facilities Management Committee by student Myles Robertson. Through this presentation the Facilities Management Committee was convinced the project was worthwhile and feasible.

The initial plan was to construct five three-foot by six-foot raised beds on a site at the university's River Crossing Campus Housing establishment out of wood salvaged from a nearby construction site. This initial raised garden system was so successful the Director of Student Housing gave the group the go ahead on expansion. The second phase added an additional four raised beds to the existing five, all of which were created out of salvaged lumber and constructed by students and faculty.



While in the beginning the project had support from many faculty and students, over the course of the summer the garden also gained the support of many individuals as well as departments that were at most neutral. One such department is that of Facilities Management. In the beginning of the project they were reluctant to aid in the advancement of the project, however, as the project progressed many of the department's staff have become pivotal in its evolution. Many members of the department visit the garden and help with its maintenance, something they said they would not do.

Other accomplishments include:

- Made multiple donations to the Center for the Homeless of South Bend during the summer (six donations as of Aug. 3rd)
- Featured story on IUSB website (http://www.iusb.edu/~sbocm/news/index.php/site/article_view/community-garden-blooming-on-campus/)
- Hosted Sustainable Communities class and spoke about the benefits of eating locally
- Founder Myles Robertson interviewed by Center For a Sustainable Future to be used for web applications
- Established Sustainability and Wellness Club on campus with a Campus Gardening Committee
- Networked with Unity Gardens (<http://theunitygardens.blogspot.com/p/locations.html>)
- Obtained rain barrels and commissioned art students to paint them
- Provided education and hands on experience revolving around gardening to students and faculty working on the project

Challenges and Responses

The greatest challenge of this project was getting the support of the schools Facilities Management. While during the fall and spring semesters this arm of the university takes on a roll of support, in the summer it takes on a much more front and center position. Because of this, they were reluctant to not only take on a new project but also to support any development. In order to overcome this obstacle Myles Robertson obtained an internship from the Center for a Sustainable Future that gave the

university some piece of mind that the project would move along with minimal necessity for aid from Grounds and Facilities Management.

The second biggest challenge in getting this project off and running was obtaining student involvement during a time when few students are active on campus. As IU South Bend is comprised of many non-traditional students and commuters it is often hard to organize events that cater to everyone's schedule. This difficulty is multiplied in the summer when few students take classes. However, by networking with students who are both socially active and environmentally conscious the project was able to move forward with more support than originally expected. Further adding to student involvement was the integration of the garden into a summer class; Sustainable Communities.

Campus Climate Action: Your Schools Carbon Footprint

Although the Garden has no ability to directly alter the way business is run on campus, it has raised awareness on campus and in the community specifically pertaining to local food regimes. In addition to this, the success of the garden thus far has given us the ability to influence major decision makers on campus and shift the campus to a more conscious state in regards to sustainability.

Commentary and Reflection

In just over three months this project has evolved from a simple idea on paper to a successful garden on a university campus. It has grown quickly and gained support faster than any of us working on it could have imagined. This project has shown how easy it truly is to grow your own food on a small amount of land and how with a little organization and a vision how it can turn into much more than growing food. The relationships that are being built and the connection we have created to the community far surpasses the amount of food we grow and we wouldn't have it any other way. There is no reason why universities around the world should not be growing their own food and using it to feed their students.



ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Leaders and Supporters

During the infancy of this project one student, Myles Robertson, picked up the gauntlet and sought the advising of Krista Bailey and Mike Keen, both of whom work with the Center for a Sustainable Future and are strong supporters of the garden. On April 28th a proposal was presented to the university, by this time the group consisted of a strong base of students and faculty who would work on the project during the summer. Very early on Paul Krikau, the Director of Student Housing, positioned himself as a strong supporter and advocate for the project. Once the first set of raised beds were constructed and planted, Housing was completely on board and gave Myles Robertson the opportunity to move the project forward using his own discretion. While in the beginning of the project Facilities Management seemed to be, at the very most, neutral on the project, by the end of the summer many of its members have become strong allies and have aided the project in numerous ways.

Funding and Resources

The project was funded for up to \$250 by the Center for a Sustainable Future. However, due to the nature of the project, with most materials being salvaged and student/faculty volunteers doing the majority of the work, only a portion of the money was needed. The site the raised beds were built on

was given to us by the university and their equipment was used on multiple occasions. A storage closet was also given to the group to store garden tools and equipment. Plants and seeds were donated by Unity Gardens and Blue Star Produce. Rain barrels were purchased by Housing from a City of South Bend initiative.

Education and Community Outreach

As few students working on the project had any gardening background, the majority of our activities revolved around education. Our ability to educate has been enhanced by faculty members who are eager to add the garden to their curriculum. Community outreach is a big part of our efforts as well. We have made multiple food donations to local organizations in need. Students have also volunteered at other community gardens where they sowed seeds and plants with a master gardener and hauled compost and mulch to be used throughout the area.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Myles Robertson, Student

574-596-3419

myrobert@iusb.edu

Anticipated Graduation: Summer 2012

Case Study Submitted by: Myles Robertson

MORE ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

Beginning in the 1970's some faculty and staff did their own recycling, but in the 1990's the university established a formal campus-wide recycling program and Recycling Committee. Today this committee still stands, however, it is accompanied by a far greater awareness for sustainability on campus, primarily due to the university's Center for a Sustainable Future. The Center was created in 2008 with a mission of having "Campus and community working together to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The Center is charged with developing a new sustainability curriculum at the graduate and undergraduate levels, facilitating research in sustainability, and fostering civic engagement to help develop sustainability awareness and initiatives in cooperation with the community.

Image credit: IU South Bend Campus Community Garden