

Creating and Environmental Coordinator Position Part I: A Portfolio of Case Studies

INTRODUCTION

While there are many reasons to implement the principles of sustainability on college campuses, convincing campus administrators to make a commitment to those principles in the way of time, staff and funding can be challenging. More and more campuses today, however, have implemented such programs and created staff Environmental Coordinator positions. Environmental Coordinators work from the “inside” of academia to bring environmental awareness across faculty and staff divides and provide experiential learning opportunities to students.

The goal of this project is to assist those interested in starting new Environmental Coordinator (EC) positions on their campuses. Included are case studies from colleges and universities around the country that have established EC positions. We interviewed the coordinators from those campuses in the Fall of 2000, hoping to find some insight into what makes their programs successful, and to identify the significant events in the development of their position.

Each school has a unique set of resources, staff, faculty and students, and the challenges to environmental programs may come in different forms. Readers may use this resource to identify strategies used on other campuses to develop their own. Models of established and successful campus environmental programs serve as support for the argument that such programs are not only cost-effective, but that they enhance students’ educational experience and contribute to the health of local communities.

The Role of Environmental Coordinators on Campus

There is variation from campus to campus in the specific duties of environmental coordinators. Some are responsible for managing operations of recycling and waste reduction projects, and some have more overarching management and educational responsibilities. On some campuses, the environmental coordinator is the only staff person dedicated to managing environmental programs, and in other cases, there is a group of faculty and staff responsible for different aspects of environmental programs, including education, policy, and operational applications (such as recycling coordinators, energy-efficiency experts, etc.). Some environmental coordinators supervise internships, teach classes, and become directly involved in the development of environmentally related curriculum. Some campuses are large, some small,

some private, some public, and all of these factors affect the implementation of environmental programs.

Although their position descriptions and campuses differ, there were common threads that appeared in the interviews with environmental coordinators for the following case studies. Several, including Kurt Teichert (Brown University) and Daniel Einstein (University of Wisconsin, Madison), identified the challenge and uniqueness of the environmental coordinator position in bridging the realms of campus faculty and staff. Most campus employees clearly belong in one or the other category, while environmental coordinators must have a foot in both. This can be an extremely beneficial position for building alliances in the campus community and in successfully bringing together groups that have not worked with one another in the past.

While some environmental coordinators work in the nuts-and-bolts of operations, most tend to be working toward the role of a consultant. There are many issues to work on, from recycling to green building, and many coordinators act as a research analyst or expert, assisting in the planning and development of campus projects. This role not only allows coordinators to be involved in more campus projects, it also empowers more people on campus to be involved and to garner a sense of ownership in projects, thus working toward sustainability across campus departments.

Environmental Coordinators identified a number of tools that they use to evaluate the success of the programs they manage. Some are more quantifiable than others. The financial savings from diverting materials from the landfill, the number of students that participated in an event, the number of reusable mugs sold, the amount of energy conserved, the identification of outstanding programs through awards and community recognition are quantifiable measures of success. These are tangible benefits of environmental programs appreciated by administrators. There are less-tangible measures of success as well, such as the impact of including environmental studies projects in a course curriculum, the number of students affected by an event, or other long-term goals that, while difficult to measure, make the inclusion of environmental studies invaluable.

Where do Environmental Coordinators Come From?

In most cases, environmental coordinator positions are a result of student lobby and involvement in addition to support from one or more key staff or faculty. At both the University

of Michigan and Michigan State University, interested students, staff and faculty formed committees on sustainability and one of the goals of those groups was to establish a staff position dedicated toward management of environmental programs.

On some campuses, an Environmental Coordinator position develops out of a class project. At Middlebury College, for instance, students in an environmental studies course started a campus recycling program. As the program grew, it became apparent that a full-time staff person was needed to manage the project. The college hired a Recycling Coordinator, and over time, the students, staff and faculty recognized a need to do more for the environment than just recycle. They subsequently hired an Environmental Coordinator to manage other programs.

At Tulane University, the Environmental Coordinator position was developed through the efforts of students. Aaron Allen, a student and leader of green initiatives at Tulane, wrote his honors thesis in Environmental Studies on how change happens in universities. In it, he argued for the creation of an Office of Environmental Affairs. He posted his thesis on the web and presented his findings at a number of national and international meetings. He secured two years of funding for the position at Tulane, through contributions from deans, the Provost and the Tulane/Xavier Center for Bioenvironmental Research.

Students were also responsible for founding the Environmental Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder. In 1970, the students who organized the first Earth Day wanted to create something that would institutionalize environmental responsibility on campus. In 1972, students ran the first student referendum on allocating student fees to the center, about \$1 at the time, and hired the first Director in the mid-70s. The Environmental Center has expanded today and is still driven by student funding.

At every campus included in the following case studies, students played a crucial role in the implementation of an Environmental Coordinator position. Team-building and cooperation between students, staff and faculty proved to be essential in these examples.

Making the Case

What is the best way to approach campus administrators with the idea of funding an environmental coordinator position on staff? Because each campus is unique, there may not be a “best” way. It is important, however, to develop a well-planned and researched strategy, including the following considerations.

Tailor your strategy for developing an Environmental Coordinator to fit your school. The case studies included in this resource profile a variety of campuses, from small, private schools to large public institutions. Some of the examples that work in one school might not work in another. For instance, a large school, like the University of Colorado at Boulder, was able to fund environmental programs from a contribution of \$1 from each student. On a small campus, such funding would not go very far. On any campus, however, environmental programs tend to be the most successful when students, staff, and faculty cooperate. Building coalitions of activists is essential at schools of any size.

Knowing the history of environmental programs on campus and the people involved is an essential part of developing a strategy. There may be students, staff, or faculty that have important institutional knowledge that can help build the case and help advocate for a coordinator. Some key people are involved in environmental studies programs, clubs, or initiatives, and sometimes, advocates may be found in other parts of campus that one might not expect.

Identify key people, administrators, staff, and faculty that will need to support your efforts in order to create a new position. Because environmental programs reach every department on campus, think broadly. Include managers of facilities and operations, residence halls, finance, environmental studies instructors, and anyone who would work directly with an environmental coordinator. If you are new to campus, do research online and through phone interviews to determine the administrators you need to contact. As is apparent from the case studies, environmental coordinators work in different departments, some in the office of the provost or facilities. Strategize about the best location for an environmental coordinator on that particular campus.

Showing examples of successful programs from other schools is one way to convey to administrators that environmental programs are not only accepted, but they are a necessary part of campus management. The case studies included in this project are a start, and there are many other success stories from campuses around the country. Emphasize ways that successes from other campuses could be replicated on your own and suggest projects that you believe would contribute to the environmental health or greening of your campus.

There are also a number of organizations that have developed **standards and frameworks** that are useful in developing a green campus. The National Wildlife Federation Campus

Ecology Program Resource Packet, “Campus Environmental Management Systems” profiles these organizations. Referring administrators to these established organizations lends credibility to efforts to create new programs, but more importantly, they assist in developing a strategy and goals for environmental programs.

Before meeting with administrators to pitch the idea for an environmental coordinator, make sure to **be well-prepared** with a presentation or portfolio of supporting documents. Because you may have only one opportunity to meet with a particular administrator, this first impression is vital.

For more information on campus environmental programs and coordinators across the country, contact the National Wildlife Federation Campus Ecology Program at:

National Wildlife Federation
Campus Ecology Program
11100 Wildlife Center Drive
Reston, VA 20190
www.nwf.org/campusecology

CASE STUDIES

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

Middlebury College is a private, liberal arts institution enrolling approximately 2100 undergraduates and 50 graduate students. Ninety-eight percent of the students live on the 350-acre campus in the small town of Middlebury, Vermont. There are 61 buildings on campus. Amy Seif, the Environmental Coordinator, was interviewed in August, 2000 for this case study.

Development

The Environmental Coordinator position at Middlebury, as it exists today, evolved over time. It began with a class project in the 1993-1994 school year. Students in an environmental studies course started a campus recycling program. As the program grew, it became apparent that a full-time staff person was needed to manage the program and the college agreed to hire a Recycling Coordinator. The position was included as part of the Facilities Management office.

Over the next few years, students, staff and faculty recognized the need to do more for the environment than recycle. The college created a second position, an Environmental Coordinator, to manage additional environmental programs. The positions then became part of the Office of the Director of Environmental Affairs and Planning, an academic office. This move reflected the college's interest in environmental education and outreach, as well as recognition that environmental projects often have a broad scope and cross-departmental boundaries, something often difficult to support from the facilities office.

Middlebury's commitment to environmental programs clearly became a priority in June, 1995, when the president declared the environment to be one of five or six "Peaks of Excellence". These "Peaks" define the college as part of its mission statement. This commitment from the president made it possible for the Environmental Coordinator to be effective on campus.

Job Description

Amy Seif, Middlebury's Environmental Coordinator (EC), describes her position primarily as one of education and outreach. Issues vary year-to-year, but currently, she is working primarily on green building, transportation, energy conservation, alternative fuel vehicles, and composting, while the recycling program is diverting an impressive 68% of the waste stream to recycling or reuse.

According to the position description, the Environmental Coordinator is the person on campus who:

“Guides Middlebury College on the path towards national leadership in environmental management and education. Assists the Director of Environmental Affairs and Planning in the development of the Environmental Peak of Excellence. Creatively works within existing and new areas to promote innovations towards environmental sustainability and promote community-wide education.” *Position Description, April 1999*

The broad scope of this description allows the EC to be involved in projects that involve students, staff and faculty from various departments across campus. Seif explained that it is important to have support from both facility and academic programs and, when choosing an EC, people from both groups should be involved in the selection process.

Evaluation Measures

To measure the success of environmental programs, Seif keeps a list of yearly projects and successes and an environmental audit of campus is completed every year to monitor progress. While some campuses have considered funding an Environmental Coordinator position with the savings from recycling and waste reduction programs, Seif believes that this approach would put the focus in the wrong place. “There are many things EC’s can do that are not directly related to financial savings, but to education,” said Seif. She said the more important measures of success include the impact of programs for students and their learning about particular issues, the view of other community members of environmental programs, and the role of the campus as a leader in innovative environmental programs and education.

Support & Success

Seif’s list of successes in 2000 already includes:

- Creating outreach materials—new alumni newsletter, table tents for the dining halls, brochure for new students entitled “Middlebury Cares About the Environment”
- Articles in the school newspaper and staff newsletter
- Earth Day 2000 events
- Middlebury was featured in Vermont Life in an article entitled, “The Greenest Campus of All”
- Conference presentations
- Cooperative lecture series with the University of Vermont

- Environmental grant programs run on Middlebury's campus began with a \$1500 budget, but they are now able to give \$25,000 toward environmental projects.

Environmental Coordinator Justification/Rationale

Middlebury's measures of success are tangible and significant to college administrators, justifying the importance of the Environmental Coordinator on campus. Without a full-time EC on staff, such programs could not be accomplished.

For more information on environmental programs at Middlebury College, visit:

<http://www.middlebury.edu/~enviroc>

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER

The University of Colorado at Boulder campus is located at the base of the Rocky Mountains in the sprawling metro-Denver area. The public university has over 2,000 faculty, 22,660 undergraduate students, 5,700 graduate students, and 3,000 staff. Will Toor, the Director of the Environmental Center was interviewed in August, 2000 for this case study.

Development & Job Descriptions

The University of Colorado at Boulder has three positions that could be considered Environmental Coordinators, the Environmental Center Director, the Environmental Operations Supervisor, and the Transportation Modes Coordinator.

The Environmental Center Director was the first of the three to be created. It originated in the late 1970's, and was entirely funded by student fees. The student environmental board and student government made the decision that a permanent director was required in order to effectively manage student environmental projects.

Since the 1970's, Will Toor has served as the Director. The Environmental Center serves as the major advocate for improving campus environmental performance, and as an entity to facilitate the development of environmental citizenship by the campus community. It directly runs the campus recycling program (in a partnership with Facilities Management), the student bus pass program, and the green energy program. The Center also organizes the annual Campus Earth Summit—a conference focusing on campus greening. Toor wrote the environmental sections for the campus master plan, and he and his staff have been working on projects that include campus pesticide use reduction, green building, and energy efficiency. There are four permanent staff in the office—a Recycling Director, two Assistant Directors, and an Administrative Assistant.

The Environmental Operations Supervisor position was created in 1998 after many years of advocacy by the Environmental Center for more focus by the Facilities Management department on environmental issues. There were two primary factors that enabled the position to be created. First, a new physical plant director who really believed in environmental protection started at CU. Secondly, the retirement of a senior staff person freed money in the budget to create a new position. Those factors, combined with the realization from higher level campus administrators that environmental issues were becoming more and more significant on campus, made it possible

to hire a full-time environmental manager in Facilities. The Environmental Operations Supervisor oversees the Facilities-side of the recycling and Integrated Pest Management programs, and works on various other opportunities to "green" operations within Facilities.

Also in 1998, the Transportation Modes Coordinator position was created. This position, and an accompanying administrative assistant, was created as part of the new faculty/staff bus pass program and was written into the budget from the start. It took 6 years of advocacy by the Environmental Center, one key administrator, and city officials before this was finally implemented. The Transportation Modes Coordinator, works from the Police and Parking Services department to coordinate the Faculty/Staff Bus Pass program, as well as to develop other programs designed to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips to campus.

Support and Success

Toor explained that CU's environmental program has been driven by strong support from the student body, "Over the years, students have repeatedly voted to fund new environmental programs—often by very large margins. In addition, there has been an explosion of student interest in environmental majors during the last decade. This has convinced the university administration that there is real value to the school in positioning CU as an environmental leader."

In addition, Toor said that there is a very strong core of environmental faculty on campus—with a major research emphasis on environmental science, and a somewhat smaller research focus on environmental policy. "Many of these faculty members are very supportive of our efforts", he explained. For example, the CU Boulder faculty assembly endorsed the "Blueprint For A Green Campus", the comprehensive platform for improving campus environmental performance that we developed last year.

Historically, the local community has been very supportive of efforts to green the campus. The City of Boulder has strongly encouraged the campus to adopt innovative programs to reduce driving, and has provided substantial funding in the early years of the student bus pass and faculty/staff bus pass programs. Boulder County is in the process of making major investments in new recycling and composting facilities, which will help all recycling efforts in the county.

Toor said that the most important elements for making environmental programs successful at CU are "strong student support for our (CU Environmental Center) efforts, combined with

careful, technical work by our staff to make sure that our proposals really make sense. We have also gone out of our way to seek solutions to problems, rather than pointing fingers, and to share credit with other department”.

Another very important element to success has been the use of pragmatic arguments, similar to those in the NWF publication "Green Investment, Green return". Toor said that he tries to quantify cost savings, and to make the argument that many environmental improvements are, in the long term, also in the fiscal interest of the university. He said, “We also always make sure to point out the public relations value of these improvements, and the value for student recruitment and retention”.

Toor listed examples of the major successes of the CU Environmental Center programs: **CU Recycling**—creation of a student-administrative partnership that runs one of the nation's largest and most successful campus recycling programs.

Smart Transportation—creation of the Student Bus Pass Program in 1992 has led to dramatic improvements in transit service, and a 6 fold increase in student transit use, as well as leading to the Faculty/Staff Bus Pass Program.

Green Energy—last Spring, students voted by a 6 to 1 margin to increase student fees in order to buy an annual 2 million kilowatt hours of wind generated electricity, making CU the largest university green power purchaser in the country. The Environmental Center now working with the administration to expand this.

Cooperative Housing—students voted to increase student fees in order to purchase homes to be used for student cooperative housing. This housing environment can nurture student environmental involvement and serve as an example and laboratory for green practices.

Environmental Studies—the Environmental Center successfully led an effort to obtain funding and faculty for an Environmental Studies program. As a result, the program received approval for many new faculty positions and a dramatically improved program for the 600 Environmental Studies majors.

Integrated Pest Management—the Environmental Operations Supervisor has made great progress in the last 2 years in reducing campus pesticide use by cobbling together a budget to

hire an “IPM genius”, to solve pest problems for departments that have been unsuccessfully spraying for years.

Evaluation Measures

While the biggest measure of success of CU’s environmental programs may be the support shown by students, staff and faculty for increased funding for and participation in the programs, Toor uses a number of quantifiable measures as well. These include:

Recycling: Diversion rate calculations. CU currently recycles approximately 37% of campus trash, but administrators have approved a plan to increase the rate to 60% by 2005, through expanded recycling and composting programs.

Transportation: The Environmental Center tracks student transit use, and surveys students and staff/faculty to track the use of other transportation modes (biking, walking, driving), and tracks parking occupancy at lots on campus.

Energy: The Environmental Center keeps figures tracking total campus energy use. Starting this year, they will also have campus green energy use to track (through purchase of wind generated electricity).

Environmental Coordinator Justification/Rationale

When asked what advice he would have for those interested in creating an Environmental Coordinator position on campus, Toor replied, “I would emphasize that a forward looking college or university needs to go far beyond environmental compliance - even if individual administrators do not particularly care about environmental issues.”

He then referred to the Introduction to the CU Environmental Center document, "Blueprint For A Green Campus":

"In the last decade, many institutions have made crucial changes in their approach to environmental management. These changes are motivated by the realization that it is not enough to comply with environmental regulations, but that a forward looking commitment to dramatically reducing environmental impacts in a range of areas will pay off in the long run, both for the individual institution and for society as a whole.

This is increasingly the domain not just of environmental visionaries, but of some of the largest companies and most respected universities in the world. The Dupont Corporation has set a goal of reducing its emissions of greenhouse gases by 45% below 1990 levels by 2010, and has set a long term goal of moving towards zero waste and

zero emissions. British Petroleum has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 10% below 1990 levels by 2010. Stanford University and the University of Washington have both adopted policies that the campus will grow without increasing the number of automobile trips generated by the campus.

It is worth considering the words of a senior Dupont executive, "A sustainable growth company builds value for shareholders and society while decreasing its environmental footprint. It sees the marketplace and civil society as integral to business decisions, not as external entities that we simply interact with. And it fulfills the needs of a growing world population using the best and most advanced forms of modern technology while minimizing risk and environmental impact."

For more information on the University of Colorado at Boulder's environmental programs, visit:

<http://www.Colorado.EDU/cuenvironmentalcenter>

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN AT ANN ARBOR

The University of Michigan is a public institution with over 51,000 students and 5,600 faculty at three campuses. The school has several employees who manage environmental programs. A group of faculty, staff and students are currently working with university administrators to create an oversight position to coordinate the school's various environmental programs and projects. One of those staff members, Peter Reppe, was interviewed for this case study in August, 2000.

Development and Job Description

Reppe is one of the environmental managers at the University. For two years, as a graduate student, he was in charge of the "greening" aspects of the School of Natural Resources Building renovation. (For more information on that project, see: www.snre.umich.edu/greendana) His work with architects and engineers during the project increased their awareness of green building strategies and implementations of green building techniques on campuses around the country. At the same time, college administrators recognized the need to meet demand from students, as well as staff and faculty, for green buildings.

As a result of that project, the college created a temporary, one-year Sustainability Coordinator position. Reppe served as the Coordinator for that year (May 1999—May 2000) in the Facilities Planning and Design Department. The position was to be evaluated at the end of the first year. University of Michigan administrators, as of Fall 2000, have not yet renewed the position. Reppe is currently working as a Research Associate in the Center for Sustainable Systems in the UofM School of Natural Resources and Environment.

Support & Success

Currently, a group of students and faculty are actively working to create and fund a full-time Environmental Coordinator position, as well as to implement sustainable practices in campus management, education and research. At this point, while top level administrators have approved short-term projects, they have yet to make a commitment to campus-wide sustainable management practices. What is needed, Reppe said, is a top-level commitment to sustainability combined with stronger demand from environmentally responsible practices from academic departments, staff and students.

Environmental Coordinator Justification/Rationale

"There are several key factors to communicate to university administrators in making a case for a full-time Environmental Coordinator," Reppe said. He suggests presenting examples of other schools that have been successful at saving money through environmental practices, and that have received recognition from the local and national community by becoming a leader in sustainability. Reppe also noted that it is important to communicate to administrators that there is a deep pool of knowledge and experience to draw upon from other universities that have implemented successful sustainability practices.

For more information on the University of Michigan's environmental programs, visit: The Center for Sustainable Systems, at <http://www.umich.edu/~nppcpub> . The group of students and faculty working on sustainability issues at UofM also have a web site available at: <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~steyaert/sustainUMhome.htm> .

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

Seattle University, founded in 1891, is one of the nation's 28 Jesuit colleges and universities. It is one of the largest independent institutions in the Northwest. Approximately 5,500 students are enrolled at SU. The campus is located in downtown Seattle. The Environmental Coordinator, Jennifer Jessen, and the Environmental Safety Manager, Joseph Romain, were interviewed in August and October, 2000 for this case study.

Development and Job Description

The Environmental Services Office (ESO) opened on campus in 1993, formalizing environmental management on campus. Before the ESO, in the early 1980's, the Plant Services Department conducted asbestos removal and managed air quality systems in campus buildings. The Environmental Safety Technician position developed from the responsibilities in 1987 and grew with the implementation of the 1986 Resource Conservation and Recover Act (RCRA).

The Environmental Safety Technician was responsible for meeting RCRA standards, and additional aspects of workplace safety and hazardous material management were added to the role of the ESO. By the early 1990's, Seattle University emerged as a leader in regulatory compliance and safety. The campus showed a growing emphasis on environmental stewardship, driving the development of a wider range of environmental programs as well.

Recycling was one of those new programs. What started as an informal movement in some campus offices and with some students became institutionalized on campus with the addition of a Recycling Coordinator. In order to manage the intensive labor of recycling, the ESO created Work-Study employment positions for students. These students, called Recycling Assistants, handle the day-to-day recycling pick-ups and container maintenance.

Once recycling was well-established on campus, the Recycling Coordinator began emphasizing waste reduction and encouraging offices to purchase recycled materials. A grant made possible the development of the infamous SURplus Store, where office furniture and supplies no longer needed on campus are sold to the public.

In 1997, the Recycling Coordinator became the Environmental Coordinator (EC). This change in title reflected the expansion of environmental programs. The EC coordinated new environmental education projects and events, and worked closely with the growing Environmental Studies major program. The expanded scope of the EC position was driven by

demand from students, increasing utility and solid waste costs, interest and support from the City of Seattle and the local community, as well as efforts by the university to serve as a leader in campus management and academic practices.

In addition to the projects managed by Jennifer Jessen, the Environmental Coordinator since 1998, the Grounds Department significantly contributed to the health and sustainability of campus. (See the chapter on Seattle University in *Ecodemia* [[link to Ecodemia](#)]) SU manages its renowned landscape using an Integrated Pest Management system, thanks to Cisco Morris, the Grounds Department Manager. Cooperation between the Plant Services and Grounds Departments has resulted in water conservation, campus planning, and environmental education projects.

Support and Success

Support for environmental programs on campus developed, and is continuing to develop, through the efforts of a strong group of students, staff, and faculty who advocate for environmental programs to be integrated into the lifestyle and educational environment of the campus community. Campus administrators show increasing support for programs as the programs have proven to be more than cost-effective—environmental programs are now a significant contributor to learning on campus and SU is known in the local community for its efforts.

Jessen noted several successes in the year 2000, including:

- The US Environmental Protection Agency named Seattle University a Waste Wi\$e Partner of the Year.
- SU diverted 70 tons of material for reuse when the University moved its new law school from another campus.
- Jessen is consulting on new campus construction projects as a Sustainability Building Advisor.

Evaluation Measures

Jessen tracks solid waste and utility bills, presenting a report to campus administrators of the cost savings associated with environmental programs. In addition, attendance at environmental education events has been excellent.

Environmental Coordinator Justification/Rationale

Jessen's advice for those interested in starting new environmental coordinator positions and programs on campus is to develop clearly defined goals and assessment methods, encourage support from administrators, and define the Environmental Coordinator position, as well as the responsibilities of all parties involved in environmental programs. Her experience has been that successful environmental programs require lots of hard work from staff, faculty and students, and it takes time to develop support from administrators.

To learn more about environmental programs at Seattle University, visit the Plant Services web site at: <http://www.seattleu.edu/services/plant/> .

TULANE UNIVERSITY

Tulane University is a private university situated on 110 acres within the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. On a daily basis, the University serves over 10,000 students attending the undergraduate colleges and graduate schools of law, business, and social sciences located on campus; approximately 2,500 of these students reside on campus. In addition, Tulane also operates a medical school several miles away, in center-city New Orleans. The Environmental Coordinator, Liz Davey, was interviewed in August, 2000 for this case study.

Development and Job Description

A Tulane student, Aaron Allen, researched and wrote an honor's thesis proposing the creation of an Environmental Coordinator position on campus, then circulated it widely for review, and eventually published a condensed version of it. His thesis was that "the inability for Tulane to make the campus environmentally sustainable in terms of operations and education is due to the lack of an institutionalized internal lobbyist and leader dedicated to environmental issues." (Allen, 1999) He supported the argument with a model for institutional change, historical analysis of non-environmental and environmental change initiatives at Tulane, a review of campus greening programs in institutions of higher education in the US, and a series of interviews with Tulane students and employees.

In Allen's final year at Tulane, he lobbied extensively for the position, persuaded a number of campus organizations to endorse his proposal, and received funding commitments from the Provost, several Deans and vice-presidents. The Director of the Center for Bioenvironmental Research, a research center within the university, was very supportive of the position and provided an administrative "home" and budget. In the Summer of 1999, the Tulane Office of Environmental Affairs was created, and Allen graduated from Tulane and went on to pursue a Ph.D. at Harvard in music history. Tulane hired Elizabeth Davey to fill the newly created Environmental Coordinator position. Davey came to Tulane from Michigan State University, where she had spent the last two years working on an initiative to assess university environmental impacts and make policy recommendations.

Davey says one of her first priorities has been to identify student research projects that allow students to gain valuable educational experience while working to improve the university's environmental performance. "That was our whole message at Michigan State," Davey said.

“When we work together to look at our environmental impacts, we save money and create better learning opportunities for students. We can model sustainable practices for the rest of the community.” (*From the article, “Environmental Affairs Office is Students’ Legacy” by Mark Miester, Inside Tulane, September, 1999.*)

Support and Success

Davey attributes current and future success of the Tulane Environmental Affairs Office (EAO) programs to years of groundwork before she arrived, staff, faculty and students educating the campus about sustainability and environmental concerns, and establishing strong environmental studies, environmental research, and recycling programs.

In order to be effective, Davey said she works equally with faculty, staff and students and serves as an “extra pair of hands” available to work with anyone who needs help developing new environmental programs. “I work with anyone on campus who wants to incorporate environmental concerns into their job or program, and I receive great support in the form of enthusiastic collaboration and lots of suggestions from staff, faculty, students and local community members,” said Davey.

Evaluation Measures

Future success, according to Davey, will be measured in terms of the number of people involved or touched by EAO projects, and the number of projects begun and growing. One of her most recent projects, was the development of a new student pre-orientation program that focused on the environment and environmental issues of the area around Tulane. “It was a good example of working with an existing program to create a new environmental program, and a good example of how a person who works across the staff/faculty divide can make a difference,” said Davey.

Environmental Coordinator Justification/Rationale

The creation of Tulane’s Office of Environmental Affairs serves as a model for other universities around the country. Aaron Allen’s work may be especially useful to people interested in working to establish environmental coordinator positions on their campuses. In addition, when working to start a new campus environmental program, Davey recommends that

people keep in mind that, “Campus environmental programs need the experience of the staff, the critical thinking of the faculty, and the enthusiasm and idealism of students to be successful. The structure of a university makes it hard for people from these parallel worlds to work together. An environmental coordinator gets people working together.”

For more information on environmental programs at Tulane, visit the web page at: <http://www.tulane.edu/~eaffairs> . Aaron Allen’s article, “Institutional Change and Leadership in Greening the Campus”, is available on the web page as well.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN AT MADISON

UW-Madison is a public four-year land grant institution with extensive academic, research, and hospital facilities. The campus serves over 40,000 students and employs 18,000 staff and faculty. The Environmental Management Coordinator, Daniel Einstein, was interviewed in September, 2000 for this case study.

Development

The first recycling effort at UW-Madison began in 1987, with a limited collection of newspaper. Recycling efforts grew, and an Administrative Committee on Recycling coordinated the program. In May 1992, the responsibility for recycling contract management and revenue accounting were placed in the new office of Environmental Management at Physical Plant in order to consolidate recycling administrative and operational functions within the same division.

In addition to recycling, interest from students included other aspects of environmental management. The Environmental Management Coordinator position at the University of Wisconsin at Madison developed through the efforts and advocacy of those students. In particular, Daniel Einstein, then a Teaching Assistant for an Environmental Studies course, led a campus-wide environmental audit. Einstein and the twenty students in the course evaluated campus systems from water and food service to air quality and transportation. At the time, Einstein was completing his Master's in Transportation and, upon graduation, he took a position on the University's staff managing a new transportation program.

Through these events, Einstein developed a strong working relationship with the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Facilities Planning and Management, Duane Hickling. With a new mandate for responsible environmental management from Donna Shalala, Chancellor of the University from 1988-1993 (now Secretary of Health and Human Services), the timing to establish environmental programs on campus was excellent. Einstein's job expanded to incorporate more than just the transportation project he had been hired to manage. With the support of Hickling, Einstein created a new position, the Environmental Management Coordinator, to be funded half by the facilities department and half with a grant.

Einstein explains that timing, financing, and visionary administrators are critical in establishing environmental coordinator positions. Financing is not an issue, he found, once the position was established and successful. More information on the development of Madison's

Environmental Management Coordinator position may be found at:

<http://www.fpm.wisc.edu/campusecology/pioneers/pioneers.htm> .

Job Description

Einstein said that his position's evolution at the University reflects his personal environmental interests. His projects include:

- *Recycling administration* – managing contracts, finances, and program education
- *Landscape issues* – completion of a GIS-based tree inventory, consulting on construction projects for landscape preservation, and creation of a tree guide to campus
- *Pesticide/herbicide and salt use reduction* – consulting and researching alternatives
- *Historic preservation* – preservation of unique thousand year-old burial mounds that are found throughout campus
- *Green building* – consulting on best construction and management practices
- *Many more* — may be found on Einstein's web site listed below.

Support and Success

The Environmental Management Coordinator position has evolved over time. Some campus administrators are more supportive than others are and “no one unit is entirely supportive,” explains Einstein. Political challenges are significant on campuses and building trust between the different groups on campus is essential. According to Einstein, “Any program trying to promote institutional change will be more or less successful based on the relationships a person can make.”

Environmental coordinators work in both the academic and operations realms of the university, making for a very unique position on campus. While straddling the two realms is difficult, Einstein explains that this is a very important role. Einstein attributes much of his success on campus to his role as an “expediter”, that is, he is able to get things done on campus that people working solely in either the academic or operations side of campus are not able to accomplish. Because of this, Einstein has been able to make allegiances in both realms.

For these reasons, Einstein said that the most effective environmental coordinators have experience in both academia and the trades. Experience and practical knowledge, not just theoretical knowledge, are essential to success of environmental programs. “So much of environmental management is about moving resources—understanding energy, water, plumbing, etc.” explained Einstein.

Overall, Einstein makes the case for seeing the entire campus as a classroom, thus evaluating best building management practices, landscaping, and overall environmental practices, for their educational value. “Students are the priority”, yet, as Einstein described, working with them on environmental projects is time consuming, since they often need to acquire skills through training and by the time they do, the semester ends, or they are moving on to another project. However, excellent educational opportunities exist for students, and they tend to be most successful when they work on tangible projects, such as physical restoration work or waste audits.

Evaluation Measures

Over the last few years, Einstein said that he has done less data collection, waste characterization, metering, and other quantitative studies. His approach has been to work for change incrementally, simply because of the political environment in which he operates. Although the data may support an action, he explained that he would often run into resistance from campus staff or faculty, reluctant to change well-established campus practices. “Change comes very slowly and more often than not, the reason things don’t happen is that someone just didn’t want to do it,” said Einstein.

Overcoming the territorial boundaries and changing historical practices cannot always be done through presenting empirical evidence. Einstein’s philosophy of creating change by solving problems and bridging the realms of academia and operations is apparent in his approach to projects.

Environmental Coordinator Justification/Rationale

Einstein says that the “bottom line” is that environmental coordinators must have “good practical skills and must be seen as someone with a long-term interest in programs.” He says that in order to be effective, coordinators must be mature, experienced, patient, and persistent.

More information on those projects and the University of Wisconsin at Madison environmental programs may be found at: <http://www.fpm.wisc.edu/campusecology>.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Located in East Lansing, Michigan State University is a public school that enrolls 43,000 students, the largest single campus student body of any Michigan university. The Director of Campus Sustainability, Terry Link, was interviewed in September, 2000 for this case study.

Development and Job Description

In 1998, a committee of students, staff and faculty created a proposal for an Office of Campus Sustainability. In the proposal to the Academic Council for implementation of a campus environmental assessment, the group recommended that a University Committee for a Sustainable Campus be created to assist in meeting goals to green the MSU campus. They suggested that these goals were in keeping with MSU's role as a land grant university and that the mission of the committee would

“foster a collaborative learning culture that will lead the Michigan State University community to a heightened awareness of its environmental impact; to conserve natural resources for future generations; and to establish MSU as working for creating a sustainable community. We envision a sustainable community as one that provides for the social and economic needs of all its members for many generations to come, without compromising the health of our Biosphere.” From *Assessing Our Ecological Footprints: A Proposal for an Environmental Assessment of Michigan State University*, see the entire document at <http://www.ecofoot.msu.edu/docs/mission.htm> .

The university governance sanctioned the Office and committee members began working long volunteer hours on a variety of projects. The need for a full-time office director to coordinate projects and incorporate sustainability into campus-wide practices became evident.

The committee applied and received a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to fund the development of sustainable practices on campus and to hire a full-time Director of Campus Sustainability. The committee selected one of its members, Terry Link, the university Reference Librarian, to fill the position. The Director is charged with working toward sustainable practices in all university departments and activities. As the grant will fund the office for only three years, the Director is also responsible for some project fundraising, as well as proving to university administrators the educational value and cost-efficiency that results from a commitment to sustainable practices throughout campus.

Support and Success

Since its inauguration, the Office of Campus Sustainability has shown signs of success from campus administrators and students, staff and faculty. In 1999, three university vice presidents provided funding to the Office for the creation of a web site, speaker series, and energy assessments. Evidence that interest is growing on campus includes the excellent attendance at the speaker series and participation of 225 people on the active sustainability list-serve.

Terry Link attributes the success to the committee's original approach, "The committee began by building trust among its diverse membership, seeing to build a common mission and goals. We don't allow arrogance. We listen, and we have fun."

Environmental Coordinator Justification/Rationale

Link is optimistic about the potential of the Office of Campus Sustainability at Michigan State. Based on his experience, he suggests that people lobbying for similar programs on their campuses communicate with administrators about the many benefits of making a commitment to sustainability. These programs, he said, provide learning opportunities, save money, (especially over the long-term), strengthen communities, and broaden the understanding and development of systemic thinking skills.

For more information on Michigan State University's Office of Campus Sustainability, visit their web site at: <http://www.ecofoot.msu.edu>

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

The University of Oregon is a public school, comprised of 16,500 students and 4,500 staff and faculty. The campus encompasses 60 buildings, 9 food service locations, and residence hall accommodations for 3,000 students and extensive family housing units. The Environmental Resource Manager, Karyn Kaplan, was interviewed in September, 2000 for this case study.

Development and Job Description

Recycling on the campus began with a student initiative during the 1989-1990 school year. The Survival Center, a student environmental education and action group, created a student recycling coordinator position to stimulate recycling on campus. During the first term, 10 students from the Introduction to Environmental Studies class created a campus recycling work group. It was successful and the group continued well beyond the class project, meeting weekly for one year. During that time the group made substantial progress toward recycling and waste reduction goals. (For more information on the development of recycling at the University of Oregon, see the campus' entry in the NWF Campus Ecology "Campus Environmental Yearbook Outline" at: <http://www.nwf.org/nwf/campus/yearbooks/yb00/yrbkoregon.htm> .)

In 1991, as the State of Oregon passed a law mandating recycling in all state agencies, the Campus Recycling Program was officially established. That same year, the Campus Recycling Program was institutionalized on the U of Oregon campus. Three groups, the UO Administration and Housing Departments, and the student government committed to funding the program through an organizational agreement. This agreement continues to be reviewed annually in support of environmental programs and staff. Currently, funding comes from Student Incidental Fees, the Housing Department, and the Facilities Services Department.

The Environmental Resource Manager (ERM) position was created in the Facilities Services Department, to manage recycling and other environmental programs. The ERM job description includes: supervising classified and student employees in operational and educational activities, managing recycling contracts, environmental education and public relations, and establishing environmental goals focused on sustainability and implementation of cost-effective campus waste management/resource conservation procedures.

Support and Success

There is strong support for environmental programs from students, staff and faculty on campus. Karyn Kaplan, the Environmental Resource Manager, explained that “The entire campus is involved...The funding is a cooperative agreement between Administration, Facilities Services, Housing and the Student Government.” Campus recycling involvement is not limited to campus employees and students. Representatives from the program serve on the UO Environmental Issues Committee, as well as the Lane County Resource Recovery Board, the State of Oregon Resource Team, the Facilities Resource Conservation Team, National Recycling Coalition's College, and the University Recycling Council. Kaplan said that participation in these committees has been important for sharing ideas, learning from others, and providing an opportunity to work with the local community.

When asked what makes her program successful, Kaplan emphasized campus cooperation,

“The creation, implementation and expansion of the Campus Recycling Program has been a work in team building and forming partnerships. Working with individuals and building alliances has been the key to getting things done. Working with the campus community and empowering them to make a difference also has been essential...We learned to do our homework. We don't propose problems. We present professional facts and recommend solutions...Creating the Campus Environmental Issues Committee was really a great thing as well as developing the Campus Environmental Coordinators Department List-serve. Involving everyone, not forcing folks to do more than they are willing to, is also a strength. We are very organized and highly professional. We have an outstanding customer service record.”

Kaplan said that programs, such as refillable mug sales and discounts, have garnered support across campus. Programs that encourage people to think about waste reduction and recycling and the Campus Recycling Program is open to input and regularly implements new suggestions from people on campus. According to Kaplan, “all of the campus is involved and recycling is not at the helm because it has become part of sustainability.”

There are a number of events that draw attention to environmental programs on campus, such as Recycling Awareness Week, Earth Week, food waste audits, and residence hall yard sales. These events are publicized in the school newspaper and in the local community.

Awards are another excellent means of project publicity and participant recognition, as well as another successful means of gaining support from university administrators. Kaplan said that she and other members of the recycling and environmental program staff watch for opportunities to apply for awards, “people like to support award-winning programs”.

Evaluation Measures

Kaplan tracks waste and recycling numbers and conducts cost-benefit analyses that she reports annually. She said, “the numbers cannot be ignored.” Even skeptics of environmental programs see that recycling is cost-effective. In the 1998-1999 school year, the university recycled 1281 tons of material, diverting 43% of its waste from the landfill.

Environmental Coordinator Justification/Rationale

For those interested in starting environmental projects or an environmental coordinator position on campus, Kaplan recommends offering professional proposals and working solutions that include quantitative cost-benefit analyses and incorporate staff, faculty, and particularly students. She attributes the success of UO environmental projects to student involvement and said, “recycling is higher education.”

For more information on environmental programs at the University of Oregon, see the program web site at: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~recycle/> .

BROWN UNIVERSITY

Brown University, a private school enrolls approximately 7,700 students on its 140-acre campus overlooking Providence, Rhode Island. The Environmental Coordinator, Kurt Teichert was interviewed in September 2000 for this case study.

Development

In 1990, Brown University established an environmental education and advocacy program called "Brown Is Green" (BIG). A committee of students, faculty and administrators provide guidance for the program, aimed at reducing the environmental impact of operations at Brown. Brown's Environmental Coordinator, Kurt Teichert, serves as the BIG program manager, coordinating and supporting campus projects. His position is housed in the Provost's office and he reports to the Director of the Center for Environmental Studies.

Job Description

Teichert acts as an advocate for the implementation of impact-reducing policies and as technical consultant and liaison to bridge academic activities and operations of the University. He is directly involved in student education projects in a number of ways, including orienting new students, advising individuals and student groups, and coordinating student campus environmental stewardship research projects. Implementation of programs at the administrative level is accomplished by coordinating student projects with staff, providing research and technical information to academic and administrative units, and working directly with managers and staff to develop specifications and environmentally responsible practices on building projects. An integral part of these combined efforts for the Environmental Coordinator is to establish measurement and analytical methods to insure the cost-effectiveness of environmental measures. The BIG program serves to publicize the environmental efforts of the University and exchange information with peer organizations.

Support and Success

Brown Is Green is an INITIATIVE rather than a program. This is key because a PROGRAM suggests ownership by a director or manager, while an initiative has ownership by all members of the community. Brown's Center for Environmental Studies provides the primary

academic link to students. In his eight years at Brown, Teichert has learned not only the campus operations, but also the campus politics and its key players, gaining support for BIG projects along the way.

All members of the campus community participate in the BIG initiative. Primary administrative support comes through the Center for Environmental Studies and student interns. Colleagues in Facilities Management, Food Services, and Purchasing are all key cooperators.

Evaluation Measures

Participation in the BIG Initiative is a significant measure of success. Teichert uses quantifiable measures of success as well. He tracks all utilities. "At this point," he said, "the results are that energy use, total MSW tonnages, etc. have remained relatively constant over ten years, despite growth. We follow up on individual projects for recycling diversion and energy conservation to do as much actual measurement as possible to prove that the initial analyses were valid."

Environmental Coordinator Justification/Rationale

Most campuses attempt to initiate environmental programs by tacking the responsibility on to the existing duties of faculty and staff. This approach is rarely successful. On many campuses, students initiate conservation or recycling projects and, in doing so, learn the ins-and-outs of campus operations. Teichert said that such institutional knowledge and experience makes those students well qualified for recycling or environmental coordinator staff positions. Some environmental programs and staff positions have developed as a result of class projects that expand and last beyond the class, such as recycling, energy-efficiency, and water conservation projects.

Regardless of whether a person comes from within the campus community or not, Teichert believes that the process of creating, posting and hiring a staff person to fill a coordinating position lends credibility to the projects they manage. Then the challenge for that staff person, he explained, is to establish strong relationships with both the campus faculty and staff. Environmental Coordinators are in a unique position on campus because they work in bridge positions, on projects that entail both educational and operational components. When Teichert began organizing projects at Brown, he called meetings of people from different departments

involved in particular aspects of campus operations. He said that he was surprised to learn that “the people in the room hadn’t met each other before, but they had been working together for years!”

Teichert said that his approach is to work as a behind-the-scenes facilitator. He emphasized that Brown environmental projects are part of a campus-wide initiative, not just a program on campus. This, he says, “gives a sense of ownership throughout campus. If one person champions the cause, that person becomes a personification of the project. It is important to be a facilitator and give credit to participants and move things along when needed.” Teichert’s ultimate goal is to work himself out of a job by implementing and facilitating projects that are then incorporated into existing lines of management. Then, rather than managing the day-to-day operations of each project, he works as a consultant on many different projects.

Being a good facilitator for environmental initiatives, Teichert said, requires diplomacy, marketing skills, and an understanding of the political and internal workings of the campus, as well as technical expertise. Environmental Coordinators need “a familiarity with the academic side of the house as well as maintenance/construction experience, or at least experience in one major area of operations, such as purchasing, recycling, or construction,” Teichert explained.

In working to establish a new Environmental Coordinator position, it is important not to get too consumed with funding. In the beginning, the funding may seem hard to rationalize, and once it exists, it may be difficult to show direct benefits. Funding these positions from outside sources (grants, etc.) may seem attractive at first, but it is important that the University commit base funding. If the right individual is given adequate support and resources, the position can easily pay for itself in multiples.

Most importantly, Teichert stressed the importance of tapping into the knowledge of other recycling and environmental coordinators who have been working on projects for years. There are opportunities to meet other people working on similar projects on colleges and universities around the country through organizations such as the College and University Recycling Council, the National Wildlife Federation Campus Ecology Program, and list-serves (such as the one hosted on the Brown Is Green web site) which allow opportunities to exchange ideas and information.

For more information on the Brown Is Green initiative, go to:

http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Brown_Is_Green

