



St. Clair County Community College Port Huron, Michigan Environmental Education and Outreach

SCHOOL

St. Clair County Community College (SC4), Public, 2-year, 8,841 students, Port Huron, Michigan.

ABSTRACT

St. Clair County Community College completed a signage project with the goal of informing students, staff, and community members on campus sustainability issues. An educational sign was designed and installed in mid- June 2012 near a few of the more prominent “green” projects on campus. It includes technical data on the equipment and living laboratory, as well as information on green career pathways in sustainable technologies. Quick Response (QR) codes were included on the sign to ensure that students, faculty, staff, and community members receive the most updated and comprehensive data available. Collaborating on this project were 2 faculty members and 3 staff members. In addition to the Greenforce funds, funding was provided by the Community Foundation of St. Clair County, by a private faculty donation, and by the college.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Goals

The short-term goals of SC4’s project are the following:

- Get students involved in the “green” concepts for educational and engagement values
- Generate excitement over other sustainability projects on campus
- Raise awareness of SC4’s participation in the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment (information included on sign)

The longer-term goals of SC4’s project are the following:

- Inform students and visitors of other sustainability efforts as well as green career pathways
- Increase campus and community awareness of alternative energy and sustainable practices at SC4 as well as the associated technologies that can lead to green careers

Accomplishments and Outcomes

SC4 has accomplished the goals indicated above with the installation of the sign on June 18, 2012. While it was determined that student involvement in the design of the sign would not be feasible, students will be exposed to the sign in a variety of ways. New student orientation tours will include visiting the sign to illustrate and explain the college’s commitment to “green” concepts. Additionally, instructors have a visual representation to use as a teaching tool. They can take advantage of the sign to show students what projects are already on our campus. Finally, all campus tours will incorporate a stop at the sign.

The sign's presence on campus will continue to educate students and visitors on green concepts for many years to come.

Challenges and Responses

SC4 did not encounter any major challenges in carrying out our project. The only delay was deciding on the specifics of the sign, such as the design and materials. This is the first of a series of signs that will be placed around our campus, so consistency with the college's vision for the Master Plan signage was an important factor.

Campus Climate Action: Your School's On-Campus Sustainability Projects

This project did not draw on any on-campus sustainability project for student hands-on training nor did it help to directly reduce the footprint of the campus.

Commentary and Reflection

SC4 has been fortunate enough to have many talented individuals to help build up our green programs. With any educational green program, an institution needs to have a facilities manager who is enthusiastic about new ideas. SC4 is fortunate enough to have such a person (Tom Donovan). Tom has worked at SC4 for 35+ years and he has recently taken classes in alternative energy in order to familiarize himself with the technology. He also attends workshops and tutorials to keep up with the latest technology on energy conservation and green building design. To find this combination of experience and enthusiasm is rare. Tom has worked with faculty members at SC4 to help develop laboratory displays that are also part of the physical operation of the campus. Why should the students play around with a bunch of lab toys when they can get their hands dirty working on the real thing? It has been a tremendous benefit to the students. So the first step in building a green program is to find someone knowledgeable and enthusiastic about learning even more and then changing with new technology and focusing on student learning throughout.

If SC4 could build up their green program again from the start, we would make it a point to include the cost of educational signage into the purchase price of each item. In the last five years, we installed solar PV, a wind turbine, solar hot water, solar hot air, a geothermal system, several green roofs and a green wall without ever incorporating signage to help educate the community. The grant money received for this project is the beginning of that project. We have some catching up to do, but this sign will serve as the starting point for our self-guided green tour. We are very excited about it and the community will benefit as well.



ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT **Leaders and Supporters**

Professor Bob Hunckler and the campus “Green Team,” which Professor Hunckler chairs, were influential in the signage project. The Green Team consists of a group of faculty, staff, and students focused on energy conservation, green education, and recycling.

Current members include the following:

Paul Bedard, professor, Math and Science Department
Dale Bernard, instructor, Math and Science Department
Jim Berry, professor, Communications Department
Heidi Browne, instructor, Social Science Department
Suzanne Doherty, instructor, Math and Science Department
Tom Donovan, director of physical plant
Ethan Flick, instructor, Social Science Department
Dr. Janice Fritz, professor, Math and Science Department
Joe Gibbons, professor, Math and Science Department
Kathy Gibson, media graphics technician
Eric Heinemann, instructor, Engineering Technology Department
Jackie Jablonski, professor, Communications Department
Cliff Johnson, professor, Communications Department
Donna Karsen, Campus Patrol clerk/officer
Ken Kepler, instructor, Social Science Department
Laurie Lamont, professor, Nursing Department
Jane Lewandoski, information and education services librarian
Patty Macey, secretary, Social Science Department
Larry Mavis, professor, Math and Science Department
Anne McPherson, secretary, Achievement Center
Brenan Murphey, adjunct reference librarian
Ann Purdy-Nielsen, instructor, Math and Science Department
Don Reuba, professor and department chair, Engineering Technology Department
Kathy Ruby, professor and department chair, Social Science Department
Chris Sebastian, communications specialist
H.C. Snyder, professor and department chair, Math and Science Department
Barry Trippett, professor, Math and Science Department
Anne Vought, technician, Engineering Technology Department
Dave Webb, professor, Math and Science Department
Maryann Deanda-Duffy, SC4 student
John Stenman, Katie Simmons, Natalie Rossiter, Kevin LePiors, Heidi King, Briana Hyde, Erin Howard, Charles Brenske, Michael Aparisio, Pat Zewatski, David Grier, Mark Waters, April Parr, Joe Nebel, SC4 students.

Additionally, Shawn Starkey, Executive Director of Public Relations, Marketing and Legislative Affairs, and Tom Donovan, Director of Physical Plant, worked very closely with the Vice President for Administrative Services, architects, and the Purchasing Department to design and select the signage details.

Funding and Resources

In addition to the Greenforce grant, funds were received from the Community Foundation of St. Clair County (\$250) and from a private donation by a faculty member (\$178). College funds were also used.

Employer and Other School Partnerships

SC4 did not engage with employers, community professionals, or other campuses while completing the signage project.

Education and Community Outreach

An announcement was made when the grant was originally received in June 2011. The news release resulted in articles being included in three local newspapers and in the employee and student newsletters. In addition, photos from the June 2012 signage installation were posted to the college's Facebook page and included in the internal daily e-mail to college employees. The sign itself is educational in that it directs individuals to other areas on the campus to highlight the college's "green" efforts.



CONTACT INFORMATION

Contacts

Robert Hunckler, Discipline Coordinator, Geography, Natural Resources & Professor of Geography
(810) 989-5750
rhunckler@sc4.edu

Tom Donovan, Director of Physical Plant
(810) 989-5756
tdonovan@sc4.edu

DOCUMENTATION

Shawn Starkey, Executive Director of Public Relations, Marketing and Legislative Affairs
(810) 989-5767
sstarkey@sc4.edu

MORE ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

Campus Sustainability History

SC4 offers Associate degrees in Alternative Energy, Architectural Design/Green Building and Facility and Energy Management and a certificate in Alternative Energy Technology. In addition, the college is making environmentally friendly changes to its Port Huron campus.

Sustainable technologies on campus include green roofs on five of the ten buildings on campus, a green wall, a wind turbine, solar photovoltaics, solar hot water, solar hot air, geothermal for 1.5 buildings and student-built recycle bins for the entire campus. Our facilities manager has been working closely with faculty, administration and Siemens Corporation to establish a living laboratory for students to get hands-on experience with the various sustainable technologies. In addition, SC4 recently rebuilt a parking lot for students and we not only installed the new geothermal system below the parking lot, but

we incorporated sustainable designs on the surface including bioswales and rain gardens with native vegetation to help reduce the pollutants leaving the parking lot in stormwater runoff. SC4 faculty also successfully lobbied to save a large area of grass and mature trees by persuading the college to seek partnerships with other downtown parking facilities. The newly accessible parking areas downtown were big enough that we were able to incorporate new green space into the campus design despite our increasing enrollment. Therefore, SC4 saved green space on campus, created even more green space and saved money as well.

Image Credit: St Clair County Community College