

STUDENT CLUB DOESN'T WANT TO BE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY...?

So your student club thinks that Global Warming isn't so bad – they prefer hot weather anyway... think your enviro committee are just a bunch of tree hugging hippies – well convince them it's in their best interests take action to help the environment:

- Being environmentally friendly can save your Student Club money. Things like energy drives can be used to get money back to the student club – this can then be used to sponsor an event, reduce student club fees the next year, or buy more enviro orientated products.
- Reducing waste in your kitchen and bathroom can save your administration money. While you as students mightn't see the direct benefit of the college having more money – you might feel it – the new carpet they can now afford, the replacement of furniture, a new coat of paint here and there – it's your home that they're paying to maintain – so it's great for you to cost them less. It might also prevent a fee rise.
- Saving energy can be fun – there's nothing like a little inter-corridor rivalry. An energy saving competition or lights off comp can be a fun way to go green.
- Being involved in environmentally friendly events like Clean Up Australia Day (held in early March every year) will make the students, and thus the College look socially responsible – this can be a good way to win Brownie points with administration.

HOW TO GET THE SUPPORT OF YOUR ADMINISTRATION

Even if they haven't realized it, it is in the interests of your college administration to support environmentally friendly practices – and you should bring this to their attention. There are many angles you can take to sell environmental friendliness to administration.

1. It might attract more students: student residences always want to attract more potential students – so play on this! Emphasise the rise of environmental and social awareness in young people, consider how your college compares to other colleges in the area for 'environmental friendliness'.
2. More donation and bequest opportunities: with climate change and global warming big in the news these days, they are influencing people's decisions more and more. Thus they play into people's considerations when deciding whether to bequeath or donate to your college. If the college can evidence an emphasis on becoming environmentally friendly with infrastructure and new buildings, people who are focusing on providing for their children's and grandchildren's future may be more inclined to make donations. Others might be willing to donate more money, and get their name on a building which is ahead of its time and taking proactive action against climate change. Equally, if your college is ahead in environmentally friendly infrastructure and its competitors aren't, this may put it in a position to gain sponsorship.
3. It's a great way to save money. If your college is making additions or doing renovations this is a great time to spend on "enviro" infrastructure like solar panels for hot water & electricity production, insulation and double glazing, to ensure savings later. Encourage your administration to build off plans which are going to minimize energy wastage. Reduce the need for air conditioning by designing the building to face in the right direction, and not to need dramatic heating and cooling in accordance with weather conditions. Such design features will save money in the future.
4. As Will Ferrell famously said, 'Everyone's doing it!' Big educational institutions are going environmentally friendly, your college should be keeping with (and ahead of) the times – use Methodist Ladies College - one of the most elite schools in Melbourne - as an example to follow.

ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY INFRASTRUCTURE

University liaison

- Help promote conservation within the University and encourage your college to take on any initiatives that have been developed at uni
- Publicize Uni Conservation efforts around college
- Share ideas and utilize resources of the University Collective

Intercollegiate liaison

- Create an intercollegiate subcommittee with environment representatives from each college to share ideas and plan a joint event such as tree planting or conservation brunch and remember to promote walking or cycling to any event.
- Create an intercollegiate conservation link on your web-page - with information about energy conservation, upcoming events or meetings and links to informative websites.

General

- Arrange with your administration for members of the Environment Committee to have input on aspects of new planning developments within the college to ensure that new buildings are environmentally friendly and energy efficient – enlist the help of any environmental students
 - Consider the heating and design of planned buildings – glass conducts a lot of energy – it is ideal to have windows facing north.
- Raise the profile of environmental issues: conservation projects; green issues in the news; scientific developments in climate change and sustainable energy; sustainability ideas; environmental facts; ways to change and develop individual practices
- Promote environmental issues through posters, movie nights, articles in your college magazine (raising issues and debates or motivating the community to take part in conservation)
- Submit environmental awareness articles to the University magazine
- Use your college Property Advisory Board to encourage a 'green' image for your college
- Discuss with the Director of College Advancement to get advice regarding grants and sponsorship for conservation within the college
- Make your Head of College aware of conservation developments within College so that they can pass this on to fellows, possible supporters and Council
- Create a Conservation page on your college intranet: post articles and information about upcoming environment committee events
- Encourage people to turn off their computer if it is not going to be used for an extended period, particularly overnight. Set simple screen savers to activate after 5 or 10 minutes.
- Organize a group departure when National Protest days are run – e.g. 'Walk Against Warming'
- Put petitions up on general notice boards for students to sign if they are interested.

Events

- Run a 'Green Week' – with events such as an environmental trivia night and formal dinner with guest speakers on environmental issues
- Run an 'Hour of No Power' – Get students to gather in an outdoor common area and turn all lights/appliances in college off
- Get involved in Clean Up Australia Day
- Screen 'An Inconvenient Truth' or similar Environmental doco
- If you hold an event that requires a gift for a guest speaker – purchase an Oxfam unwrapped gift. You can make a gift in the name of your speaker and purchase a goat or similar investment for a community in a developing country.

SAVE POWER

Lighting

- Install sensor lights rather than constantly lighting outdoor areas
- Place timers on lights for communal areas
- Put stickers on non sensor lights to encourage people to switch them off ' – use 'empty rooms need no light' stickers
- Install energy saving light bulbs – replace incandescent lights with high efficiency fluorescent tubes
- If your administration doesn't want to replace lights – install dimmers on existing incandescent light bulbs

Washing/Drying

- Encourage students to use a cold or warm wash over a hot wash.
- Encourage Administration to only purchase Washers and Dryers with high energy efficiency (i.e. 5 stars s opposed to 1 or 2 stars)
- Put timers on dryers to prevent overuse
- Place a charge on the use of drying machines to reduce usage – use the profit made on the machine to purchase Green Energy or install solar panels. Consider installing a drying room to offer an alternative.

Heating

- Check your heating system is efficient and environmentally friendly through regular servicing & making sure air filters aren't blocked
 - Reduce the thermostat setting by one degree for heating and increase it by one degree for cooling. An extra 1 degree difference in temperature between inside and outside contributes 1.5 tonne of greenhouse gas to the atmosphere annually, and contributes 10% to electricity bills in the average home.
- Install roof and ceiling insulation - it can save up to 45% of the energy normally spent heating and cooling.
- Investigate the viability of solar hot water systems – the average electric hot water system produces up to 4 tonnes of greenhouse pollution per year and accounts for nearly half of an average home's electricity bill.
 - The Federal Government offers rebates of up to \$1,000 for upgrades to solar hot water systems (visit the 'Australian Greenhouse Office' for information). Systems not covered under the Federal Government Scheme may be eligible for solar water rebates of up to \$1,5000 from the Victorian Government.
- Reduce the water temperature on your hot water system – most have a thermostat – reducing the water temperature by 5 C can reduce energy consumption by 3-5% (but it is recommended thermostats are never set below 60 C).

Kitchen

- Electric urns which keep water constantly boiling use a lot of energy (10% of one college's power usage in a 2007 energy audit). Replace them with normal kettles.
- Make sure your fridges are operating efficiently and in optimal circumstances:
 - Keep fridges and freezers in cool, well ventilated positions (away from ovens or the sun). This can save up to 100kg greenhouse gas annually.
 - Ensure fridge coils are clean and well ventilated - this can save 150kg of greenhouse gas a year.
 - Make sure door seals aren't damaged and that fridge doors close properly – a door that doesn't seal properly can be responsible for making an extra 50kg greenhouse gas a year.

General

- Conduct an energy audit (one provider is 'Energetics' – you can find their website at <http://www.energetics.com.au>)
- Don't leave appliances on stand by! Over 10% of Australia's residential electricity use is attributable to standby power. So don't turn your TV or DVD player off with the remote control or let your computer screen go onto sleep mode – turn them off at the wall.
 - The average household pays more than \$100 a year to keep appliances on standby.
- Organise for your college to only purchase fridges or other appliances that have high energy efficiency (5 stars rather than 1 or 2 star)
- Encourage your administration to purchase 100% Green Energy – offer for your student club to bear some of the cost.
- Investigate grants for the installation of solar panels on college roof
 - The Federal Government offers rebates of up to \$8,000 for solar panels that are used to generate electricity. Information is available from 'the Australian Greenhouse Office'.
- Get your friends to use 'Blackle' – the environmentally friendly version of 'Google' – the search engine uses a black background to reduce the energy required to light up your computer screen.

Events

- Run an Earth Hour event early in the year to raise awareness of environmental issues
- Run a month long Energy Drive – encourage the student club to reduce energy consumption for a designated month – compare energy usage in that month with energy usage in the same month from the year before – agree with Administration for the money saved (or 50% of it) to be re-invested in the Student Club. Queen's College saved \$620 in one month.
- 6 month Energy Drive – reduce consumption of water and electricity with money saved going back to Student Club funds
- Run an inter-corridor energy or water saving competition – during formal dinner send members of the Environment Committee to count bedroom lights/bathroom lights left on in every corridor, tally corridor averages and create a prize for best corridor.

REDUCE YOUR RESOURCE CONSUMPTION

In the kitchen:

- Encourage people to reduce their consumption of meat and dairy options (even eating vegetarian meals once a week helps!). Meat and dairy are the most resource intensive foods to produce. The average Australian diet is 13% meat and 24% dairy – so there's lots of room to reduce our consumption.
 - Australians eat about 110kg of meat per person every year (not counting canned meats or seafood). Research have found that producing a 150g serve of meat (1 small steak) can take over 200 litres of water and create 5kg greenhouse pollution.
 - One person reducing their dairy intake by 2 cups of milk (or the equivalent) per week would save 13,000 litres of water and 250 kg greenhouse pollution per year.
- Encourage students to purchase locally produced food - Australian produce has traveled a shorter distance and thus has lower associated emissions. Similarly, focus on buying produce which is in season (this can also save the college money)

REDUCE WASTE

Kitchen

- Purchase ceramic mugs to reduce use of polystyrene and plastic cups – or better still, encourage students to bring their own mugs for coffee.
- In catered colleges, introduce a system where students can sign out of meals
- Ask volunteers from One Umbrella to pick up left over food from dinners
- Have a communal honey jar to reduce waste from packaging
- Encourage your kitchen and catering department to buy products which are not individually packaged.
- Ask your kitchen not to use plastic plates or cutlery
- Separate your food scraps from general waste in the kitchen – and put food scraps into a compost system or worm farm.
 - Recycling or composting food and garden waste can reduce waste by 50% and keep 560kg of waste out of landfill PER PERSON each year.

Paper

- Encourage double sided printing – ask people to leave their one sided paper for other people to print on
- Use 100% recycled paper
- Put recycle bins in every student room, printing room and at the end of every corridor
- Collect paper which has only been used on one side – get environment committee members to purchase binders and make them into notebooks – sell them for 50c to cover the cost of binding. Very popular in exam time.
- Encourage your Office to get Visy Bins – focus on using them to recycle the paper which they shred for privacy reasons.

Recycling

- Get white paper, newspaper, cardboard, glass and plastic recycling bins
- Separate paper, glass, plastic and tin recycling for both kitchen and students
- Increase awareness and raise interest by publishing interesting recycling facts in your college magazine
- Get a Planet Ark print cartridge recycling box
- Contract the cleaners to dispose of recycling
- In common areas – get recycle bins installed next to general rubbish bins.
- Get a college aluminum can recycle program – get a bin in a common area and then collect monthly – you can get money for scrap metal.

Other

- Introduce compost bins to your garden
- International student generally throw out a lot of toiletries and basic supplies for college rooms when they prepare to fly back home – provide a box in your common room for them to leave their half used shampoo/toothpaste/sun block etc. for other students to take rather than just put in the rubbish.
- Do an old clothes collection at the end of semester when people are packing their rooms up – either leave them for other students to take or donate to a local Op Shop.

SAVE WATER

Showers

- Install low flow shower heads
- Get 4 minute timers in showers – put signs up and promote short showers in O'Week
- If you have college traditions which waste water – like water bagging or water fights – try to compensate – one student group had students who elected not to shower for 3 days to compensate for water use.

Bathrooms

- Install aerating taps
 - Washing your hands uses up to 20 litres a time. Tap aerators reduce flow without losing water pressure, and can cut the water used by 50%. Aerators are easy to fit and can be purchased from hardware/plumbing shops for just a few dollars.
- Put plugs in all sinks and bathrooms
- Convert toilets to dual flush – these use up to 67% less water than single flush toilets.
 - If you have single flush toilets you can get them to run on reduced water by installing a 'flush regulator' – a cheap device which can be inserted in the cistern which limits flush to as long as you press the button. Alternatively, place a plastic bottle filled with water to displace the water and reduce the amount used in each flush.
- Recommend students turn off taps while they brush their teeth
- Hook up a rainwater tank to your toilet and use that water to flush. This can save up to 35% of drinkable mains water.
- Install a system on your sink that provides instant hot water to prevent wasting water while waiting for water to heat.
 - See http://www.savewater.com.au/products/Hot_water_on_demand for product information

Kitchen

- Get kitchen dishwasher to use recycled water (& have an “Eco” option).

Garden

- Introduce a mulching system – mulching a garden can reduce the amount of water wasted through evaporation by around 70%.
- Install water tanks to collect rain water off the roof and use it to water gardens.
- Collect grey water from washes and washing machines and use it to water gardens. This may require gardens to be dug up so that grey water can be pumped in underneath (in order to comply with health regulations). Encourage or provide detergents which are low in phosphorus and sodium to make this possible – an acceptable brand is 'Aware Laundry Powder' from Planet Ark

Other

- Replace top loading washing machines with front loaders – these can save up to 50% of the water consumed.
- Investigate the viability of grey water for gardens and toilets, and the use of tank water for washing machines and showers.

GET EDUCATED

Want to let your local politician know you care about environmental issues? Have a letter created instantly:

- <http://www.whoonearthcares.com/woec/home.action>

Show you care by pledging your support to climate change initiatives at:

- <http://www.thebigswitch.org.au>

Find more ideas at:

- http://www.acfonline.org.au/default.asp?section_id=86
- <http://www.treehugger.com/gogreen.php>

Find out about upcoming Greenpeace Australia protests, events or get resources from

- <http://greenpeace.org.australia>

Check out the Wilderness Society – a community based environmental advocacy organization that protect, promote and restore wilderness across Australia

- <http://www.wilderness.org.au/>

Interested in the economic repercussions about climate change – check out the Executive Summary of the British Government's 'Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change':

- http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/4/3/Executive_Summary.pdf

Find out about the World Wildlife Fund for nature:

- <http://www.wwf.org>

Author:
Renee Carr
secretary@naauc.edu.au

For general information: info@naauc.edu.au

Website: www.naauc.edu.au

