

TITLE:

Developing a Sustainability Policy at Sparsholt College

DATE:

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SUMMARY

Sparsholt College has integrated sustainability across the institution, using its estate as an example of good practise, including the environment and sustainability in the large majority of curriculum areas and making savings on its energy bills through improved efficiency and management.

An Environmental Sustainability Development (ESD) Group anchors the work and is responsible for the writing and review of the college's sustainability policy.

INSTITUTION PROFILE

FE (and 2.2million of direct HEFCE funding)
circa 6,500 FTE students, 870 staff
Urban & Rural
25+ buildings on 2 sites &
400 Residential Places

EAUC COMMENT

Sparsholt College provides an excellent example of how implementing an Environmental Sustainability programme can engage staff and students whilst still saving the college money

THE PROBLEM

Sparsholt College wanted to tackle the subject of environmental and sustainable development and integrate it not only into the way the college was run, but into the curriculum it delivered for its students. This raised awareness amongst students so that they could see how their actions impacted on the ESD agenda. A key driver for this was the opportunity to reduce energy costs, especially in some of the college's older buildings.

The college needed to develop a way of doing this that would be embedded across the whole college, not just certain buildings or departments. Recently merged with Andover College, any new policy must be relevant to and provide savings for the whole institution.

THE APPROACH

A group to tackle environmental issues was formed in 2004. This is now called the Environmental Sustainability Development (ESD) Group. It is chaired by the Vice Principal, giving vital senior management support to its recommendations, and comprises champions from all functional areas of the college.

The group's focuses on efficient use of resources, ensuring energy-efficiency and promoting all this to the wider community. Having consulted senior management, the group wrote an environmental policy which was then endorsed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Board.

To deliver the policy, the group devised an action plan which includes:

- Communicating to all occupants and staff
- Publishing energy consumption and cost data in all major buildings and student halls
- Installing integrated plant controls to enable the Premises Management Team to more accurately manage heating, lighting and temperature in the main campus buildings – meaning more efficient use of energy and reduced energy consumption

The Carbon Trust conducted an audit of all the college's buildings and made recommendations for improving their efficiency.

GOALS

- To develop a consistent approach to sustainability across the whole college and monitor the effectiveness and benefits of the changes
- To save money by becoming more energy efficient
- For staff and students to feel part of the change and to participate in the process
- To review the environmental policy annually to ensure it is still appropriate, and to incorporate any relevant new practises
- To include sustainability in the curriculum

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

Obstacles

- Reluctance of staff, students and other stakeholders to take individual responsibility for ESD
- Inefficient thermal insulation of older building stock (range of buildings 1926 – 2008)
- Staff leaving electrical appliances and lights on
- Ignorance and misunderstanding from staff
- Lack of finance

Solutions

- Commitment from the Board and Senior Management - ESD features in the strategic objectives of the college, which translate into annual operating objectives with managers and staff responsible for delivering them. Progress is monitored regularly by the Board.
- Raising awareness of ESD issues across the college through regular newsletters, staff development, embedding in curriculum and teaching schemes.
- Practising what we preach - use of the college estate to demonstrate highest standards of environmental management including improving biodiversity, developing an estate management plan and embedding this into the curriculum delivery. The college estate is a part of the Government's Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme, recognising its commitment to improving the biodiversity of its estate and the environment.
- Use of the Carbon Trust to raise staff awareness. The Carbon Trust came in and gave a presentation to all managers about energy awareness and how to be more efficient in making savings (see link below).
- Fitting of double-glazed windows and improved wall and loft insulation to the majority of older buildings.
- Use of Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRV's) on all radiators and better heating management control.
- The college secured a maximum grant of £150,000 from SALIX finance (see link below), which was secured by completing a bid against the prescribed criteria. As part of this, the College is installing more thermally efficient boilers in the halls of residence and teaching areas.
- Regular promotion of good housekeeping, introduction of energy efficient computers Thin Film Transistor (TFT) display screens, energy saving settings, introduction of Passive Infrared Sensors (PIR) lighting and timed lighting, use of energy efficient lighting, use of green energy.
- Pro-active awareness campaign across the college. Improved use of energy data usage, which is published in buildings and circulated to budget holders.
- Senior management commitment to financing measures, identified by the Carbon Trust to improve energy efficiency. Use of SALIX finance grant to fund boiler improvements and energy efficiency measures across the college. Use of green energy - the college pays a higher price but there is no climate levy charge.

PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

- A sustainability policy which links directly to the college's strategic objectives, making all staff responsible for its delivery
- Improved energy efficiency. A saving of 3 per cent was made for the first time in 2006/07, despite energy costs rising by nearly 50 per cent
- Better promotion of ESD in the curriculum of the college e.g. in fisheries management, the first diploma learners consider sustainability in fish farming, inland recreational and marine capture fisheries
- Strong commitment from staff and students to promote ESD
- Recognition by Ofsted and the Learning and Skills Network/ Learning and Skills Council as good practice in the FE Sector
- Creation of an energy policy
- Monthly monitoring of energy use and publication of annual report in key areas of the college

LESSONS LEARNT

- Attitudes towards sustainability do not change overnight. A consistent approach is needed to effect change across a whole institution
- Constant involvement and awareness-raising is the key to embedding the importance of green issues in people's lives
- Encouraging learners to understand their roles and responsibilities in their communities and how their actions affect their community locally and globally
- Visits allow students to see the practical application of sustainability and stimulate discussion in classroom sessions
- It seems that most staff and students wish to contribute to sustainability, but need to know how they can do so and what the impact would be

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Carbon Trust www.carbontrust.co.uk
World Development Movement www.wdm.org.uk



The Environmental and Sustainability
Champion within Further and Higher
Education in the United Kingdom.

The EAUC provides training, advice and
support to our members as well as providing
a forum for best practice in the sector.

To join phone 01242 714321