



Macquarie University Sustainability has a plan for ramping up staff engagement in 2010. The University's vision for sustainability is to be "ecologically sound, socially just, and economically viable in all of its activities". With its goals for achieving this vision divided into the domains of People, Planet, and Participation, it's clear that engaging staff in sustainability is crucial to propelling each of the interconnected domains.

Traditionally, considerations of sustainability within universities have been limited to inclusion in operational aspects and resource efficiency. Macquarie University however, is taking a far more systemic approach to embed sustainability into its culture. In an effort to make substantial changes towards sustainability, it is necessary to consider how best to interact and engage with staff members. Macquarie University's four-point plan for staff engagement in 2010 is doing just that:

1. Online Induction Modules

Interaction with all new staff joining the University community about the sustainability vision, goals and objectives is essential yet difficult to do. As such, Macquarie has introduced a new requirement as part of its induction processes. Starting this year, all new staff will be required to undertake two online sustainability modules as part of their induction to the University. Similar to an Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) training, staff will run through a module and answer a quiz at the end. The two modules are:

- Sustainability Awareness – this module introduces the concept of sustainability, how it affects you and the University, what it means at Macquarie University, how to embrace your role in helping improve sustainability, and provides resources for finding out more information.
- Resource Efficiency – this module outlines what sustainable resource management is and helps the staff member develop skills in the efficient use of water, waste, emissions and energy specifically at Macquarie University.



The modules are designed to be fun and engaging and provide the staff member with opportunities and resources to learn more about sustainability.

2. Sustainability Representative Network



Trying to communicate a clear message to over 6,000 staff on a continual basis is one of our greatest challenges. In an attempt to bridge the communication gap, Macquarie is establishing a Sustainability Representative Network (SRN.) The SRN comprises of sustainability champions from all departments and faculties across campus, and provides an avenue of communications between the sustainability team and University staff. Representatives will provide education and awareness concerning sustainability to their colleagues within the various faculties and departments the University.

The SRN is supported by the Vice - Chancellor and the Director of Human Resources at Macquarie. This ultimately means that staff who take on the role of a Representative within the SRN have the position recognised on their HR

documentation and receive support from their Department Heads to undertake the role and attend relevant meetings and training sessions.

3. Department Sustainability Challenge

In mid 2009, discussions began about introducing competition to the Departments as a fun and easy way to get staff involved and excited about making changes towards sustainability. From these discussions was born the Department Sustainability Challenge. Initially run at the end of last year as a pilot, departments competed for prizes (such as Fair Trade coffee, organic wine, native office plants and experience vouchers) by completing sustainable actions and subsequently achieving a number of stars. Feedback from competing departments was positive.



“The scorecard in the Department Sustainability Challenge pack provided guidelines and suggestions that led to measurable achievements, which have been relatively easy to maintain and can be built upon.” - Carlene Kirvan, Executive Assistant to the Dean in Faculty of Arts (2009 Winners).

Overall, 481 stars were collected by departments completing a broad range of activities, from installing a plug in timer to save energy on boilers overnight, to joining the Macquarie University Bushcare group. The best performing category overall was Governance, whereby departments reviewed and discussed the University’s Sustainability Strategy, made sustainability an agenda item at department meetings, and sent out Seasons Greetings e-cards rather than paper cards.

The Department Sustainability Challenge has the goal of inspiring and engaging staff at all levels of sustainability awareness and building the capacity of staff to create a best practice sustainable workplace. Feedback and suggestions from the 2009 Challenge round will be incorporated and rolled out in a broader reaching Challenge in 2010.

4. Faculty Governance Structures

In 2009, the Director of Sustainability met with the Executive Deans from each of Macquarie University’s four faculties to discuss how to move forward with staff engagement and communication about sustainability. Whilst the Executive Deans had differing views on how to progress forward, two distinct strategies emerged that will work within the current governance structures and support systems of the faculties:



- Committees: Two faculties will be progressing the staff engagement and sustainability agenda by establishing Sustainability Committees. The members will comprise staff from various departments within the faculty, and will have a direct relationship with the University Sustainability team and the SRN
- Agenda Inclusion: The other two faculties chose a different, yet no less effective approach, agreeing to include sustainability as a standing agenda item at all major committee meetings. This will mean a diversity of staff will gain exposure to discussions about sustainability.

The goals of the staff engagement plan are to increase understanding and awareness of sustainability throughout the University, embed sustainability into governance, and to create a culture in which staff are proud of their environment.

For more information about Macquarie University Sustainability, please visit:

www.mq.edu.au/sustainability