



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Higher Education Institutions

02/10/2012

In these tough economic times we know that there are many challenges, and the increasing cost for energy is among these. We know that many universities have already invested in intelligent programmes to improve the energy performance of your buildings and equipment, and we continue to support the Carbon Trust to work with those of you who would like further help in this area.

However, about 28% of the energy used within the sector is consumed within halls of residence and students also have an impact on energy use within much of the rest of the estate. It will take a combination of investment and a change in the way that people behave within the buildings to reap the maximum benefit in efficient energy use.

We have recently been updated on the success of the National Union of Students (NUS) in getting students and staff involved in reducing energy use. We would therefore like to bring these programmes to your attention, if you are not already aware of their potential.

Green Impact

This is a departmental environmental accreditation scheme with an awards element. This year NUS has delivered the scheme to 978 teams and departments at 46 UK universities and colleges, including one, Swansea, in Wales. This has resulted in over 20,000 actions being completed as a result of the scheme, and has involved training 758 student auditors, helping with their employability. www.nus.org.uk/greenimpact is the national website providing more information.

Student Switch Off

This is an inter-hall energy competition that engages students in saving energy through social media and friendly rivalry between dormitories on saving energy. This year it has been delivered at 43 universities and colleges, including one Welsh participant, Cardiff. This has engaged 21,000 students, and delivered average energy savings of 7.1%, totalling 609 tCO₂. The programme won an Ashden award earlier this summer, and the campaign site is at www.studentswitchoff.org.uk.

Both programmes are delivered through funding from the involved universities, and generally save more money than they cost to run. For Student Switch Off, typical savings can be £4 in energy costs for every £1 spent on the programme, and this return has meant that the programme is growing rapidly.

Now that ESDGC has been mainstreamed through the curriculum, it is important to students to know that their university is taking sustainable development seriously and is recognising

that efficient use of energy is an excellent way to tackle climate change, the most urgent consequence of unsustainable living. Your involvement in programmes such as these can both increase student confidence in the organisation, and help to educate them in energy use for the long term in their own homes and professional lives.

We therefore commend these and other similar programmes to you, and hope that you find them a useful addition to your development plans for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leighton Andrews". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

Leighton Andrews
Minister for Education and Skills

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

John Griffiths
Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development