

CAMPUS ECOLOGY 2013 FINAL PROJECT: “GREEN DORM” EVENTS AND RESIDENT PLEDGES

ASSIGNMENT: Utilizing your “systems thinking” and “designing mind” skill sets, this Final Project will allow your unique ideas to come to life on the St. Olaf College campus for years to come. At the end of the semester, you will research and develop organized plans for a minimum of two events for future Green Dorm residents of the 2013-2014 academic year. You will also work as a class to brainstorm and finalize a set of qualifications and pledges for applicants who will be accepted to live in the Green Dorm in its first year.

ABOUT THE GREEN DORM: Though plans for the building of a sustainable housing complex are in the works, there is an exciting opportunity in the 2013-2014 academic year to designate a wing of an existing dorm as a “green” living space. The students living in this environmentally-minded corridor will be an example of how future residents of a future St. Olaf Green Housing Complex might build community, incite social change, and bring ideals to action.

Pamela McDowell has agreed to dedicate a floor or corridor of Hillboe/Kittlesby as the first Green Dorm. Together, your insight and ideas will determine what the experience of the Green Dorm’s founding year will look like.

RESOURCES: Our hope is that you will be creative with the references for your Final Projects. For example, you may begin with the observation of a “dense fact” on campus—thinking about how a Green Dorm event or individual pledge could influence an artifact of St. Olaf culture. You might then expand your idea with the help of databases like [STARS](#), [The College Sustainability Report Card](#), [St. Olaf’s *SustainAbilities* website](#), or [UMACS](#). These databases are a wonderful way to see how colleges across the country are making their campuses more sustainable.

You might also invest much of your research time in primary resources—interviewing St. Olaf Professors, *SustainAbilities* Representatives, students, or faculty members about the steps necessary to bring your idea to fruition.

Above all, be creative. Don’t be afraid to ask questions if you are unsure of the path your project is taking. Each piece of your Final Project should have 4 resources (totaling 8 for your two events.)

Your class-developed pledge will be the collaborative result of pooling all of the resources you each uncover individually.

FINAL PRODUCT: Building on the projects developed for the *SustainAbilities* Program by Campus Ecology students in 2012, your researched events and pledges will be compiled this summer and given to the residents of the Green Dorm as a handbook. As a result, you will play an important role in changing the culture of the St. Olaf College Campus.

GRADING CRITERIA: Your final project will be assessed on several levels. We will look for:

- Diverse references
- Complexity
- Clarity
- Connectedness
- Interdisciplinary thought and application
- Collaboration
- Care

GREEN DORM EVENT TEMPLATE

PROJECT TITLE:

PROJECT SUMMARY:

SKILLS AND VALUES OUTCOMES:

TIME NEEDED:

EXPLANATION/BACKGROUND:

MATERIALS:

RESOURCES:

GREEN DORM EVENT FULL EXAMPLE

PROJECT TITLE: A Trip to the Northfield Farmers' Market

PROJECT SUMMARY: The goal of this project is to show students the harmful effects of unnecessary packaging being added to the waste stream and to encourage them to choose fun and tasty alternatives to packaging-heavy foods for their snacking needs. Students will take a trip to the Northfield farmers' market and make environmentally-conscious food purchases. Note: This project can only be completed during the months of September, October, and May.

SKILLS AND VALUES OUTCOMES:

Help to create a more locally-based, sustainable food system.

- Provide residents with a tool to make healthier, tastier, and more socially-conscious food choices.
- Have fun and build community.
- Teach students how to make smart food choices once they leave St. Olaf (and Bon Appétit won't do it for them).
- Cultivate "systems thinking" mentality
- Explore the ethics of eating

TIME NEEDED: Two hours

EXPLANATION/BACKGROUND:

In 2010, the U.S. produced 249.86 million tons of municipal solid waste (MSW). About 31percent of this waste was from packaging. In other words, 1/3 of the waste we produce in the U.S. is not from the stuff we use, but from the stuff that holds the stuff we use. About 50 percent of packaging waste is from food packaging. That means that 15 percent of what we throw away in this country is food wrappers. That includes individual wrappers around slices of cheese, cereal that for some reason needs both a box and a bag, and even individually wrapped apples. Yum.

Northfield has a very active (and tasty!) local farming community, and they put on a farmer's market to sell their delicious wares. These include things like seasonal vegetables, homemade jams and preserves, and fresh baked goods lovingly crafted by farmers who will sell them with a smile. Getting food from its sources is a great way to reduce packaging and other harmful environmental impacts like the fuel cost of transporting food over long distances. Locally-grown produce is also healthier and tastier!

- 1.) Walk down to the market with residents and get some conversation going! Talk about the environmental impacts of food choices. Discuss some of the facts about MSW and packaging listed above and the importance of making more conscious choices when purchasing snacks.
- 2.) When you get to the market, disperse and buy what looks good! Take the opportunity to talk to a farmer--they love talking about what they grow and what they make. Walk back together or let people hang out downtown longer if they want. Maybe add a trip to Just-Food Coop to pick up a few extra ingredients someone might need to round out his or her recipes.
- 3.) Together, cook the ingredients you've found. Use a few of the recipes listed in the "resources" section below, or create one of your own! There's nothing that's quite as much fun as cooking together and eating what you've cooked. Enjoy!

MATERIALS NEEDED: You and your residents will need to bring money to purchase food from the farmers' market. Remember to wear comfortable shoes!

The schedule for the two farmers' markets in Northfield is as follows (check website for updates):

- The market at West 7th St. in Riverside Park runs May-October, Saturdays from 9:00-11:00 a.m. or Tuesdays and Fridays from 11:45-1:00
- The Riverside Market Fair located on Bridge Square on Division St. between Water St. and 5th St. runs 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays from June 2 until Oct. 27.

RESOURCES:

Info on the Northfield Farmers' Market:

<http://www.localharvest.org/northfield-minnesota-farmers-market-M14032>

Info on MN farmers' markets in general:

<http://www.mfma.org/>

Fun seasonal recipes based on what you're likely to find in MN:

<http://www.mfma.org/pages/RecipeCorner/>

More recipes:

<http://minnesota.publicradio.org/features/2010/07/16-farmers-market/index.shtml>

<http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/top-lists/best-farmers-market-foods-recipes-minnesota-twin-cities/>

Chart detailing what's in season in MN:

<http://www.mfma.org/files/405.pdf>

Fact sheet on Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) in the U.S:

http://www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/municipal/pubs/msw_2010_rev_factsheet.pdf

Article on the environmental impacts of food packaging:

<http://www.ift.org/knowledge-center/read-ift-publications/science-reports/scientific-statussummaries/>

[editorial/food-packaging-and-its-environmental-impact.aspx](http://www.ift.org/knowledge-center/read-ift-publications/scientific-statussummaries/editorial/food-packaging-and-its-environmental-impact.aspx)

A scientific study looking at the impacts of packaging on the food cycle:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1750-3841.2007.00301.x/pdf>

GREEN DORM PLEDGE: CREATED BY CAMPUS ECOLOGY 2013

Because you are developing this pledge as a class, the format and template will be unique. We would like you to work together—identifying the overarching skills and values highlighted by your Green Dorm Events.

The pledge you develop as a group will ultimately become the document that new Green Dorm residents sign in recognition of their commitment to live more sustainable college lives.

As you collaborate, combine your resources. The *SustainAbilities* website and *SustainAbilities* Representative Handbook are useful supplements if you're looking for a place to begin.

Check out the [St. Olaf Green Room Application](#) as starting point. The personal pledge included in the application is only one potential source of inspiration. You might also look back at the survey you each completed before beginning Campus Ecology!

Background on Green Rooms:

Green Rooms

The Green Room program is an integral part of SustainAbilities. In achieving dorm room certification, students are recognized by their peers for their commitment to sustainability shown through their intentional changes in everyday habits active participation in sustainability events, organizations, and classes available on campus.

What is on the application?

The application consists of a series of categories related to sustainability (water use, transportation, etc). Each of these categories has a number of behaviors, and each category has a certain number of behaviors required that must be met. For example, in the electricity category, students must meet 5 out of 7 criteria. We recommend skimming through the application below to get the best idea of the requirements!

What happens when I submit my application

After you submit your application, your respective sustainability representative will receive an e-mail with your responses. After receiving the e-mail they will make sure all the proper criteria have been met and get back to within 3-4 days. After validating your application your sustainability rep will bring you your certificate to put on your door!