



NEW YORK STATE ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARD CASE STUDY

University of Rochester (U of R) - Honored for a wide variety of activities to better educate and involve the campus community in energy-efficient and sustainable practices

SUMMARY

The University of Rochester (U of R) received an award in 2011 for the “Go Green! Conserve and Save” Program. This program includes a wide variety of activities to better educate and involve the campus community in energy-efficient and sustainable practices. In 2008, U of R’s president formed the Council on Sustainability to spearhead new initiatives and achieve tangible results. U of R is the first college or university to join the “Pride of NY” Program because approximately 20% of the food purchased by dining services is produced or processed in New York State. Each year, residence halls compete in the “UR Unplugged” Program to see which one can achieve the greatest energy reductions. The university partners with local charities during the “Move Out & Clean Out” Program to collect and donate clothing, shoes, furniture and food at the end of the academic year.



BENEFITS

This diverse program has resulted in a savings of 6.5 million kWh in electrical consumption and nearly \$900,000 in electric costs. U of R has saved nearly 8 million gallons of water and diverted 5,500 tons of waste from landfills. U of R hired a recycling coordinator and recycling was calculated at 38.2%, which was almost a 10% increase from 2009. University students were encouraged to start their own green projects. This resulted in a biodiesel plant that converts excess fryer oil from campus dining into biodiesel to fuel a campus shuttle bus. This has prevented nearly 95 metric tons of CO₂ emissions annually. Students also planted and continue to manage an organic vegetable and herb garden. The produce is used by campus dining.

KEY METRICS

- 95 metric tons of CO₂ emissions reduced
- 6.5 million kWh reduced
- 8 million gallons of water saved
- 5,500 tons of waste diverted
- \$1.2 million in electric savings, tipping fees and rebates

ABOUT UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

- Established in 1850
- Private university located in the City of Rochester
- 10,200 students

NYS Environmental Excellence Award: Annual recognition of outstanding innovative and sustainable projects or programs and unique partnerships that are improving and protecting New York State's environmental resources and contributing to a stronger economy

A MODEL OF EXCELLENCE

- 17 energy-reduction projects, including installation of variable-speed drives, retro-commissioning of buildings, lighting retrofits, motion detectors and giving out florescent light bulbs for desk lamps
- Hired a recycling coordinator to improve recycling education and awareness and address cross-contamination of recycling containers
- Created an environmentally based preferred purchasing policy
- Set LEED standards, sustainable guidelines for design and construction and added smart-growth principles to the university's master plan
- Incentives for use of mass transit, carpooling and alternative transportation
- With minimal pesticides and chemicals, grew produce for use in dining services
- Converted fry oil to biodiesel fuel and used it to power shuttle buses
- Implemented a reusable mug program, removing Styrofoam, going "tray-less" to reduce waste, and offering refillable to-go containers
- Separated compostable waste for composting

HIGHLIGHTS

The university completed 17 energy projects, including installing variable-speed drives for the hot water system, retro-commissioning buildings, retrofitting lighting, installing motion detectors and giving out florescent light bulbs for desk lamps.

The university participates in "RecycleMania" which is an annual competition and benchmarking tool for college and university recycling programs to promote waste reduction activities to their campus.



On Earth Day, U of R holds a festival, with live entertainment and vendors, to promote its sustainability messages.

The "UR Unplugged" event is a competition among the residence halls to see which hall can save the most energy.

In addition to a website, an employee newsletter, and a Facebook page, there is a blog "The Green Dandelion," to promote sustainability. It includes tips, articles and comments that cover green topics, sustainable changes at UR and information about changes occurring across the globe.

Students are empowered by being encouraged to suggest new innovative green projects such as those described above. University employees take the "Go Green Pledge," committing to living sustainably by, among other things, using refillable water bottles, turning off lights when not in use, seeking alternative transportation and educating others about sustainable practices.

FUNDING

Energy projects are funded through departmental reserves, utility rebates, assistance from the NYS Energy Research and Development Authority and operation budgets. Overall savings from the various sustainability projects was estimated to be \$1.2 million.