



SUSTAINABILITY SPOTLIGHT

November 2012

Sustainable Scholarship

By Jeff Severin, Director of the KU Center for Sustainability

This past winter, the University of Kansas earned a STARS Bronze rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. STARS – or the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System – is a campus sustainability self-assessment that scores not only administrative and operational aspects of sustainability but academics as well. Efforts to incorporate sustainability into curriculum and research contributed greatly to that Bronze rating; KU earned almost 16 out of a possible 27 points related specifically to research.

The Center for Sustainability worked with faculty to develop a definition for sustainability research at KU for STARS:

“Sustainability research leads to a deeper understanding of the conditions that facilitate a balance of economic prosperity, social well-being, and ecological health.

Fostering sustainability-related research creates new opportunities for collaboration and advances sustainability initiatives on campus in the KU “living laboratory” and in the broader research community.

Sustainability research can focus on bringing the key principles of sustainability (environmental, economic, or social) together, address a sustainability challenge, or focus on particular principles individually, but it all seeks to understand the broader implications of our interconnected society and environmental challenges.”

Last year, 168 faculty members and 29 campus departments were engaged in research that met this definition. Those numbers are likely to increase as Bold Aspirations, KU’s strategic plan, is implemented. Sustainability underpins each of the four strategic research themes and is pervasive

throughout the plan. Along with “Sustaining the Planet, Powering the World”, sustainability is implicit in focusing on issues of physical and mental health through “Promoting Well-Being and Finding Cures,” addressing issues of social justice and inequality through “Building Communities, Expanding Opportunities,” and in discovering new ways to use technology to analyze, visualize, and share data about urgent environmental, social, and economic challenges through “Harnessing Information, Multiplying Knowledge.”

As part of this year’s Campus Sustainability Week Oct. 21-27, the Center for Sustainability held a symposium, “Sustainable Scholarship,” with presentations demonstrating the interdisciplinary nature of sustainability-related research,

as well as the importance of using sustainability as a lens in examining a range of issues and developing strategies for improving society, both today and into the future. Featured faculty at the Research Symposium were:

Belinda Sturm, Asst. Professor of Civil, Environmental, and Architectural Engineering, presented *“Understanding farmers’ land- and water-use decisions in a changing climate,”* highlighting elements of the Biofuels and Climate Change: Farmers’ Land Use Decisions (BACC: FLUD) project. Engineering faculty and others across multiple social and natural science disciplines from both KU and K-State are working on this collaborative project researching farmers’ decisions to grow biofuel crops as feedstocks for renewable energy production and their adaptation to climate change. Dr. Sturm’s focus was on irrigation demands for water and the impacts of those decisions on water quality.

Vicki Collie Akers, Asst. Research Professor at the Bureau of Child Research,

presented *“Promoting active living and healthy eating among Latinos using assets available in an urban community.”* Her research is focused on applying community-based participatory research to work with communities in order to understand how collaborative partnerships and coalitions can improve social determinants of health and equity and reduce disparities in health outcomes. Healthy eating and active living can be promoted through changing environments to allow easy opportunities to engage in those behaviors. Her presentation highlighted efforts of a community coalition to build upon the assets available in an urban, predominately Latino

community to increase available and sustainable means of improving health behaviors.

Chris Depcik, Asst. Professor of Mechanical Engineering presented *“Sustainable Energy and Transportation Research.”* His research includes work on the Feedstock to Tailpipe analysis of multiple feedstocks and different fuels to evaluate production and its resultant combustion, exhaust emissions, and energy recovery. Students in his KU EcoHawks design project research electrified vehicles, renewable energy, and their interconnection with the electrical grid.



The KU Ecohawks converted a 1974 VW Super Beetle to a plug-in series hybrid that can be recharged using a generator running on 100% used cooking oil biodiesel or from a solar energy filling station.



Richard Voyer, a pilot participant in Dr. Atchley's research, taking the Remote Associations Test on a cold morning in Grand Gulch.

Paul Atchley, Professor in the Dept. of Psychology presented "*Sustaining good cognition in a technological environment.*" He explained that our brains are not designed for the heavily technological environment we are in today, and this created environment may be costing us optimal cognition. His recent work suggests connections between time spent outdoors, away from technology, and increased creativity. In a world full of digital distractions that disconnect us from the natural world, and where time outdoors is prescribed to help combat what has been termed "Nature Deficit Disorder", Dr. Atchley's work is especially relevant.

Derek Reed, Asst. Professor of Applied Behavioral Science, presented "*Of Donkeys and Elephants: Reminders of Political Identity Modulate Concern Ratings for Environmental Events.*" This project used a political priming task to attempt to alter concern for hypothetical environmental events. Differential effects were observed in liberals and conservatives, but were consistent with stereotypes and party platforms. His Laboratory in Applied Behavioral Economics is investigating ways to understand sustainable behaviors through economic principles, as well as applying these principles in campus and community based research related to recycling and energy conservation.

Dennis Domer, Project Director for the New Cities Initiative presented "*Intergenerational Community: Aging in Place for People of All Ages.*" The New Cities Initiative is an interdisciplinary research and teaching enterprise advocating inter-generational living, barrier-free, sustainable,

technologically advanced architecture, walkable communities, and landscapes incorporating nature. Domer explained how emphasis on the nuclear family in an age-segregated society disconnects the young and old and how a proposed intergenerational community could improve the lives of people of all ages.

Stephen Goddard, Associate Director & Senior Curator at Spencer Museum of Art and Professor of History of Art presenting "*Incorporating the Arts in Sustainability Research.*" A goal of the Spencer Museum of Art is to expand efforts to explore the challenges of sustainability, biodiversity and climate change through art. Goddard shared collaborations with researchers in other fields at KU and introduced a future project concerning botany and humanity.

The Center for Sustainability plans to hold similar events in the future, including a student research symposium in the spring.

Gifts that Give Back

By Meredith Walrafen, Lawrence Fair Trade Member

For the past 21 years, for a week starting just after Thanksgiving, the upstairs of the Ecumenical Campus Ministries is transformed from a large empty room into a crowded marketplace full of fair trade gifts from around the world.

Lawrence Fair Trade, a student and community group dedicated to raising awareness of global economic injustice and promoting fair trade, hosts the Fair Trade Holiday Market every year. The group works with vendors that source products including jewelry, clothing, pottery, home accents, toys, holiday decorations, coffee, chocolate, and other edibles from all over the world. The market provides an opportunity to purchase unique gifts for the holidays that give back to the people that produce them.

Fair trade uses a triple bottom line approach, valuing people, the planet, and profit. Fair trade aims to provide opportunity to disadvantaged producers, giving them fair wages and encouraging community development and environmental preservation.

This year the market starts Friday, November 23, and will run through Saturday, December 1. The hours are 8am-6pm Fridays and weekends and 11am-6pm Monday-Thursday.

To find out more information about the group or the event, search Lawrence Fair Trade on Facebook. If you are interested in volunteering to work the checkout table, you can sign up at: <http://vols.pt/1WZ8hA>

FAIR TRADE
holiday market

GIVE A GIFT
that
GIVES BACK!

FRIDAY NOV 23
through
SATURDAY DEC 01

MONDAY - THURSDAY 11AM-6PM
FRIDAYS & WEEKENDS 8AM-6PM

ECUMENICAL CAMPUS MINISTRIES
1204 HOLEY, LAWRENCE, KANSAS (OPENTOURS)

WANT TO VOLUNTEER AT THE MARKET?
Sign up at the ECM or contact Meredith at mwalrafen@ku.edu.
Sponsored by Lawrence Fair Trade and the ECM.

LIKE AN ANTI-FEELING? Lawrence Fair Trade.

FAIR TRADE
FEDERATION
fair for life
CORPORATE OFFICE

Greening the Crimson and Blue

KU Hunger Initiative

By Collin Edwards, Center for Sustainability Intern

The KU Hunger Initiative was formed in the wake of the Kansas Hunger Dialogue held at Johnson County Community College last spring, a two-day conference gathering stakeholders from higher education institutions in Kansas to discuss how universities and colleges can address hunger issues both locally and globally. Representatives from [Numana](#), [Universities Fighting World Hunger](#), [Harvesters](#), and [Stop Hunger Now](#) were speakers at the conference.

There were also brainstorming sessions and workgroups that challenged attendees to think about how their campuses are addressing hunger issues. One of the opportunities identified for the KU attendees was to create a campus group to discuss how KU can make a difference in a hungry world.

The KU Hunger Initiative, comprised of students, faculty, staff, and members of the community, has been meeting

since the Dialog and is looking into areas such as access to healthy food options on campus and the prevalence of hunger on campus and in the community.

This semester, the KU Hunger Initiative is partnering with the Urban Planning Professional Practice graduate class to schedule a public meeting about access (or lack of access) to healthy foods on campus to gain information about campus food issues. The meeting - open to the campus community - will be held in late November to provide an opportunity for students, staff, and faculty to discuss the opportunities and barriers they see on campus related to accessing healthy food.

Topics for discussion include:

- Healthy food options available in dining facilities and in vending machines
- Availability of fresh food vs. prepackaged options
- Campus dining options available on evenings.

Urban Planning students hope to gather information to share with the KU Hunger Initiative and KU Dining Services. With this input and with additional exploration of hunger issues, the KU Hunger Initiative hopes to expand its knowledge base and create an action plan for addressing hunger here and across the globe.

For more information about this project, contact the KU Center for Sustainability.



Students have the option to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables and locally made snacks at the Marketplace in the Kansas Union.

Live Sustainably

Upcoming Campus and Community Events

- 11/9**
"Yakumama and Other Mythical Beings: Poems Inspired by the Amazonian Environmental Imagination"- *Juan Carlos Galeano*
3:30-5:00 PM
Hall Center, Seminar Room 1001
- 11/10**
Kansas Environmental Forum
9:00 AM-3:00 PM
Fiedler Auditorium, Kansas State University,
17 St. & College Heights Road
- 11/11**
Potter Lake Project, 12:00 PM-5:00 PM
Potter Lake Dance Pavillion
- 11/12**
Chester Nez Diploma Ceremony
11 AM-Noon
Lied Center Pavilion
- "And Justice For All? Why Equal Pay for Women Matters to Everyone" Lilly Ledbetter
7:30 PM
Woodruff Auditorium
- 11/14**
Hope for the planet: Addressing climate change through carbon fee and dividend legislation
12:00 PM-1:00 PM
ECM Center
- Night of the Lanterns: "Exploring Native Leaders"
6:00 PM-8:00 PM
Haskell Indian Nations University 155 Indian Avenue
- KU Environs: Free screening of "Fresh," 7:30 PM
Hashinger Hall
- 11/19**
"Bad Sugar" Film with post-film discussion on Native American health disparities. 5:00 PM-8:00 PM
Haskell Indian Nations University, 155 Indian Avenue
- 11/23-12/1**
Fair Trade Holiday Market
8:00 AM-6:00 PM
ECM Center, Second Floor
- 11/27**
Indigenous Peoples and the Law of the Land
12:00 PM-1:00 PM
Sabatini Multicultural Resource Center
- 11/28**
America's National Parks: Through the Artist's Lens
7:30 PM
Lied Center Pavilion
- 11/29**
"Honoring Cultural Heritage and the Environment: the Wakarusa Wetlands and Environmental Justice"
5:00 PM-8:00 PM
Sabatini Multicultural Resource Center, Classroom

Join Us

For more information about sustainability at KU, visit www.sustainability.ku.edu like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/KUSustainability, or follow us on Twitter [@SustainKU](https://twitter.com/SustainKU).

Contribute

Is your department or organization contributing to a more sustainable KU? We'd love to hear about it and include your efforts in our next issue of the Spotlight! Send submissions to sustainability@ku.edu.