

Environmental Affairs 2014-2015 School Year

Chair: Adrian Wheeler

Members: Christopher Hornsey, Molly Turner and Wyatt Mansell

Goals: Beautification(stone walkways), Bear creek, battery recycling, earth week, continue glass recycling/expand, environmental fee,

What we've done: Earth Week - collaboration with groups; Environmental Sustainability Fee - drafted and passed resolution, operating procedures. Also visited groups to raise awareness for the Fee; Battery Recycling- Chris contacting researcher, drafting resolution, and contacting/researching schools; Bear Creek - support for 10 years 10,000 trees; Glass Recycling - continued and stockpiled for when Kirksville gets it up and running.

Problems: beautification (stone path) – was shut down quickly; research was not very forthcoming with information in regards to ES fee or battery recycling (not many examples);

Hopes and American Dreams

As is crucial to any successful operation, a plan of what the committee hoped to accomplish was decided upon for the Environmental Affairs Committee this year. The most pressing matter was unanimously decided to be the ongoing effort to create an Environmental Sustainability Fee for Truman. Also making the list was the continuation of glass recycling, beautification efforts on campus, and the organization and execution of a truly memorable Earth Week celebration.

The Environmental Affairs Committee hoped to achieve many things this year. First and foremost, the committee was hoping to continue the efforts of past Environmental Affairs Committees to bring an Environmental Sustainability Fee to the campus of Truman. The hope is that Truman will reduce waste, reduce its carbon footprint on our beautiful planet, and also to possibly save money in the long run with energy and material reductions. The Environmental Sustainability Fee was the major priority of the committee this year, however it was not the committee's only concern.

The committee wanted to continue the ongoing work of the former committees with regards to campus beautification, glass recycling, and the annual Earth Week festivities on campus. Noticing that several pathways through the grass have formed around campus simply from heavy foot traffic, the committee hoped to possibly turn these into flat-stone paths in order to improve the overall look of our campus. In light of glass recycling being a new program on campus just a year ago, the committee wanted to keep it going strong in order to assure its continuation. Earth Week is something else that was very important for this year's committee from the very start. The goal of this week is to make students more aware of issues facing the environment and what they can do to be more environmentally friendly.

In addition to the ongoing projects of the committee from year to year and the Environmental Sustainability Fee, the committee also wanted to implement a program for Truman to have easy access battery recycling for students. Since batteries are used in many devices by college students, the committee wanted to start a program to make these power cells less harmful to the environment. This would include a bi-annual drive to collect them in safe, leak-proof containers and a place to take them for proper recycling.

What The Committee Accomplished

With the committee taking on so many projects, it is happy to announce that this year was a huge success. Not only did the committee pass the resolution and Operating Procedures for the Environmental Sustainability Fee, as well as passing a resolution to create a semi-annual battery recycling drive, the committee also coordinated the joint efforts of several organizations for an Earth Week with variety and panache, continued glass recycling (which served as an example for the city, which later received a grant to initiate glass recycling city wide), and even picked up an opportunity to support the good work of BBB in regards to their Bear Creek initiative.

All in all, the name of the game this semester was collaboration.

Obstacles Encountered

While the committee worked on addressing a number of issues on campus, the committee faced a number of obstacles. Beautification efforts faced issues working with administrators and staff, stalling the project. The Environmental Sustainability Fee and battery recycling faced researching difficulties, lengthening the process. Additionally, battery recycling will deal with limitations of collection period due to the capacities of the Kirksville Public Works. While the committee was able to overcome some of these obstacles and address the issues; however, some obstacles completely inhibited the committee's ability to tackle these problems.

As mentioned earlier, one of the goals of the committee was to address beautification issues on campus, namely worn away grass paths created by students taking shortcuts around buildings and between certain pathways. While brainstorming ways to address the issues, the committee decided large, flat rocks to minimize the impact of short-cutting. The chair began discussing the issue with administrators and campus facilities manager, seeking to make progress, and the dialogue seemed optimistic. However, administrators decided to shut-down the idea, or at least keep it from the jurisdiction of the committee. Due to this veto, the committee was not able to address the issue as planned, and had to refocus time and energy

into other projects. Among these projects were the Environmental Sustainability Fee and establishing battery recycling, both with a common hurdle to jump.

The most important project the committee wanted to achieve from the start, the Environmental Sustainability Fee, and a project gaining focus later in the school year, battery recycling, both faced a stumbling block: difficulty of finding relevant data from research of other universities and colleges with similar programs in place. In order to ensure that an Environmental Sustainability Fee and battery recycling program would be successful if implemented at Truman, the committee needed to find data on other schools with similar programs and the vital factors of their success. The committee decided to research this data by searching through the websites of every public and private higher education institution in Missouri, looking for whether or not the school operates these programs. However, this method took considerable amounts of time, especially when the websites were unclear on the extent of the projects and were lacking in data, requiring contacting university personnel. The response time from university personnel varied from less than a day to not all. While the committee felt it had enough research to continue pursuing the projects, the ambiguity of university websites lengthened the research process. However, battery recycling faced a significant setback regarding how long the program may run.

As the year progressed, the committee decided to address battery recycling opportunities on campus, however, due to the limitations of the capabilities of the Kirksville Public Works Department, the program must be restricted to certain time periods, limiting the impact the program. As discussed earlier, battery recycling drives have been successfully operated on campus, with this point being key to the interest in establishing a permanent program. The batteries were collected by the Household Hazardous Waste Program operated by the Kirksville Public Works Department. However, the program only collects hazardous materials such as batteries, light bulbs, car fluids, etc., on certain days during the year. There is no feasible place to safely store batteries long-term on campus in between drives, forcing the program to be a drive in the weeks leading up to the collection date. With the limitation of the dates available for collection, the program will not have as large of an impact on campus if it were able to be held year-round.

The committee hoped to achieve a number of goals in the 2014-2015 school; however, the committee faced a number of issues. As the committee attempted to improve the beautification efforts on campus, administrators blocked the committee from addressing the issue. The Environmental Sustainability Fee and battery recycling both dealt with ambiguous and unclear websites from universities and colleges with regards to the existence of such programs and their extent. Battery recycling appeared to be a great, impactful program; however, due to facilities and limitations from local agencies, the program is to be conducted in certain time periods. Despite these limitations and roadblocks, the committee is proud of all the accomplishments over the past school year.

