

Environmental Affairs 2015-2016 School Year

Chair: Christopher Hornsey

Members: Jacob Breese, Skyler Cope, Wyatt Mansell, and Natalie Wronkiewicz

Goals: Implement battery recycling, clarify recycling label on bins, collect and reuse bins from the dorms, expand and improve glass recycling, expand Earth Week, investigate printer cartridge recycling, and promote recycling and sustainable behavior.

What we've done: Battery Recycling - Found company for batteries and started drives; Labels - Labels designed and added to bins; Collect bins - Worked with ResLife to recover bins; Expanded glass - Expanded glass to West and removed much glass from bunker; Earth Week - Collaboration with groups; Printer - Mail Services accepts them

Problems: Batteries - Kirksville Public Works wouldn't accept batteries as a whole, a bit of failure from poster campaign to clearly communicate locations of bins and types of batteries to be recycled; Promote sustainable behavior - Not much progress made in program.

Goals

Glass... Batteries... Earth Week... Recycling Bins... Long ago, these four elements of sustainability existed in harmony. Then everything changed when the chair became chair of the Fee Committee. Only the next chair, master of these four elements could bring them back together again. But when the world needed him most, he received a concussion.

There were many hopes and dreams for the Environmental Affairs Committee for the 2015-2016 school year. One of the biggest goals included implementation of more programming on Truman's campus to increase our sustainability. In particular, the Committee decided to tackle battery and ink cartridge recycling, as well as further glass recycling. Also, the chair of the Committee this year, Chris Hornsey, had a goal to make Earth Week bigger than it has ever been before. The Chair also wanted to redesign the dorm hall recycling bins label, in order to educate people about what they could recycle at Truman. Furthermore, the Committee also had the goal of furthering and promoting recycling and sustainable behavior through the use of a poster campaign. Finally, the Committee wanted to try to collect and reuse as many of the dorm recycling bins as possible.

In particular with battery, glass, and ink cartridge recycling, the Committee had many hopes. Glass recycling, while already established, had some grey areas that the Committee was hoping to address. Specifically, Truman students were not properly using glass recycling as it was desired to be. There was quite a bit of ambiguity with what types of glass was able to be recycled, and where that glass was designated to be. Because of these glaring issues, the Committee hoped to redesign the glass recycling logos. With this, it would be more clearly communicated about what grade and what types of glass were acceptable to dispose of in the bins.

In regards to battery recycling, the Committee hoped to develop a sustainable and long-term program to accept lithium ion, alkaline ion, and nickel-metal hydride batteries. The Committee also had the goal to not only build and craft these containers and allow these batteries to be disposed of and recycled in a safe environment not subjected to hazard, but to also enact a poster campaign to advertise the locations of these capsules and to elaborate on what batteries were acceptable to be recycled.

As far as ink cartridge recycling was concerned, the goal of the Committee was to investigate and see if a program already existed and if so, to further promote that program so others could be more knowledgeable; or to create, implement, and organize one if it hadn't already existed. The Committee planned to perform extensive research on the benefits of ink cartridge recycling, and look into programs at other colleges and universities to see how these recycling programs are ran.

One of the biggest responsibilities that falls upon the shoulders of the Environmental Affairs Committee is none other than Earth Week. Earth Week itself has the goal of not only creating programming to encourage more sustainable behavior of the student body, but to also educate them on the dangers our planet faces, and ways that we can take the steps to prevent this. Earth Week in the past has been a week-long collaboration of about 5-10 organizations, groups, and other clusters of people. The goal of the Committee for the 2015-2016 school year was to further the inclusion of more organizations and groups and to involve as many people as possible. In particular, with Greek Life accounting for nearly 20-25% of Truman State University's student population, a large goal for the Committee during Earth Week was to try and "tap in" so to speak to this large group of people and get them involved in Earth Week as well. To do this, the Committee had high hope of the 1st Annual, An Environmental Friendly: ABC (Anything But Clothes) Fashion Show.

Accomplishments

Despite difficulties that will be expanded upon later, the Committee was able to accomplish much over the school. Among these successes include battery recycling, new recycling labels, glass recycling expansion and glass removal from the bunker, the largest and most inclusive Earth Week program ever, and investigation into printer cartridge recycling.

In order to continue the battery recycling program, the Committee highly recommends that future members contact the following individuals well in advance to secure permissions for the event: Karl Schneider (Head of Physical Plant), Lana Bogeart (Violette Hall), Stachia Vorhees (Magruder), and Laura Bates (SUB). Battery recycling was finally implemented in mid April (and was ongoing at the time this report was written). Bins were set out on the first floor of the SUB, in the Cyber Cafe in Magruder, and by the west entrance to Violette. At the time of this report was written, it was estimated that the drive had collected 15 pounds of batteries. New recycling labels that clearly outline what Truman does and does not recycle were designed, printed, and applied to recycling bins to educate students. Glass recycling was expanded into West Campus for the first time ever.

Working with administration officials, the Committee designed and purchased one hundred recycling label stickers. These stickers featured information about what Truman and Kirksville recycles, as well as featuring the Student Government logo. These labels have helped educate students, especially new students what they can and cannot recycle at Truman. As the Committee works to recover bins from ResLife at the end of the Spring 2016 semester, the Committee is hopeful that the next Chair will follow through with these labels and work to purchase more.

In Fall 2016, junior Biology major and Environmental Studies minor Natalie Wronkiewicz was looking for a Capstone project for her Environmental Studies minor. She decided on assisting with the glass recycling program. With her assistance, the glass recycling program, which was in disarray, got a much needed energy boost, as she helped make sure organizations were collecting from dorms. With her help, were able to expand glass recycling into West Campus Suites, with the Beta Chapter of Phi Sigma Pi making weekly collections. Additionally, Natalie helped with outreach to organizations to volunteer to take glass home over Thanksgiving and Winter breaks. Thanks to her efforts, the glass recycling program was improved, and removal of glass from the bunker was accelerated. At the time this report was written, the bunker was more than half empty from the original amount glass that was present at the beginning of the Fall semester. It is believed that the Committee will be able to gather enough volunteers to completely empty out the bunker before summer, allowing the bunker to air out for the first time in years. For her hard work and dedication, Natalie was appointed an Associate Senator on Student Government so that she can share the recognition as being an official member of the Committee.

As was the goal of the Chair from the beginning, Earth Week 2016 was the largest and most inclusive Earth Week festivities in Truman's history. The Chair wanted to find as many ways to get as many student involved and engaged in Earth Week as possible. Over fifteen organizations participated, throwing over twenty events. Many organizations that have helped with pervious Earth Weeks including Beta Beta Beta, ECO, and Wildlife Association helped, but many organizations were invited and helped for the first time. Among these organizations include College Democrats, College Republicans, Art of Living Club, and the Take Root . The Take Root is a non-profit, pay-what-you-can local foods cafe planning on opening in Kirksville in Fall 2016. Earth Week focused their main fundraising events (ENVS 380's Dance-A-Thon and ECO's Local Foods Dinner) on raising money for Take Root. Noting the need for funds for these events, the Committee offered to cover food costs and other costs for these events, but ended up only funding the Local Foods Dinner. Both events were very successfully, raising a combined \$2,000. At the Local Foods Dinner, impressed by the mission of Take Root and the great tasting local foods, an anonymous donor gave \$10,000, combined with a \$30,000 grant from the US Department of Agriculture, will allow the cafe to open in Fall 2016. The Committee is extremely proud to have been part of bringing a great business to Kirksville.

The Committee is proud to be the first Student Government committee to order and use a Snapchat filter. Designed by Communication Direct Alyssa Assungbaugh, the Committee ordered hyper-localized Snapchat filters for Earth Week events, including the Dance-A-Thon, the Local Foods Dinner, PLARN Workshop, and the Earth Week Bash. These filters helped promote Earth Week and are a new and exciting way to broaden appeal of Earth Week.

The struggles

With battery recycling, the committee initially struggled with finding a convenient venue to take the batteries to once they were collected. This is due to an issue Kirksville Public Works has with “Commercial Battery Recycling”. After several inquiries and dead ends, the Committee eventually found out that Victory Metals here in Kirksville has battery recycling and can accept as many as the Committee can rustle up from the student body. Also, when the Committee first implemented the drive, two battery recycling containers placed near the West entrance of Violette Hall mysteriously went missing within 48 hours of being placed there. After extensive communications with both Lana Bogeart and Karl Schneider about what may have happened to them, the Committee still has not discovered their whereabouts or what lapse in communication occurred and resulted in their removal. During the second half of the drive (after the Committee had all but given up on the bins returning), the Committee placed one of the containers intended for intermediary collection into Violette. It is not decorated as the others were, but it will still serve its purpose.

As mentioned above, there were difficulties with glass recycling. Failure of leadership and communication by the Committee Chair with ResLife and two organizations mean that glass was not collected from West Campus Suites or BNB Halls during the Fall. But after Natalie began to help the Committee with the glass recycling program, these issues were addressed and fixed in time for the Spring semester.

With Earth Week, the ABC Fashion Show was cancelled due to a failure of leadership by the Committee and due to low interest for such a large event on short notice. However, it is hopeful that with proper planning and leadership, the event can be thrown next year on a larger scale than was planned.