

“Educating PLU Students for Lifelong Composting” 2010/2011 Charter

The Project

Some off-campus students have expressed an interest in building compost bins at their homes but feel that this is a challenge due to a lack of knowledge and supplies. We would like to help students make a start by creating a kit to be made available with building supplies and helpful instructions. Students will provide their own inputs into the compost piles (leftover fruits and vegetables, grass clippings, newspaper, etc) and will be expected to care for their compost pile. The pile needs to be about one-cubic yard in size. Enough mesh fencing to make a 3 ft. x 3 ft. x 3ft. container will be purchased. The mesh fencing will be stored in SurPLUs. Students will be able to contact the PLU Sustainability Office via phone or email if they are interested in starting a pile. Then they will be able to come to surPLUs and pick up the wire and instructions based on the availability of Sustainability Office members. The Sustainability Office will also serve as a resource if students have trouble with their piles. In addition to offering education, there may be a possibility of physical assistance, depending on available personnel with significant composting knowledge each year.

Involvement

Educating PLU Students for Lifelong Composting is student led. The spending of this fund is to be monitored by the PLU Sustainability Committee, which consists of students, faculty, and staff. For the 2010-2011 school year the committee is chaired by Kevin O’Brien.

The following student leaders decided that Educating PLU Students for Lifelong Composting would be a positive way to spend money from Take Back the Tap sales. Student’s names are listed with their positions:

- ASPLU Sustainability Director: Kenny Stancil
- GREAN President: Marta Behling
- RHA Sustainability Director: Olesya Palosh

In coming years, this set of positions will continue to be involved in the decision making process for sustainability funds.

Priorities

Our priorities for choosing the project are:

- 1) Waste reduction
- 2) Student involvement/education in sustainable practices
- 3) Potential for short term implementation

We feel that the Educating PLU Students for Lifelong Composting project fits into all three of these priorities.

Waste Reduction: Composting can turn yard waste and food scraps into valuable organic matter to be used in gardens and on lawns. This reduces the amount of waste that would otherwise be sent to landfills.

Student Involvement: Given that the money from Take Back the Tap sales comes from student

sources, we were looking for a project that relates to students directly, including off-campus students who are sometimes neglected in other projects. PLU strives to educate students to be stewards of the earth, and Educating PLU Students for Lifelong Composting educates for a sustainable lifestyle practice. It also provides a great opportunity for educational programming surrounding composting.

Potential for Short term implementation: With the constantly changing student population, it is preferable that student led projects be implemented within the school year that the student leaders are present. Also, because the fund was student generated, we felt it important for the outgoing seniors to be able to see that the fund was being used. Educating PLU Students for Lifelong Composting has the capability of being implemented within the fall semester of 2010, but also has substantial opportunity to be a campaign that is carried out for years to come.

The project will include:

- **Mesh Wire**
 - To be purchased by PLU Sustainability Resource Coordinator, Chrissy Cooley, and stored in SurPLUs

- **Education**
 - Students who check out a kit will be emailed the PDF of “Backyard Composting” by Craig G. Cogger and Dan M. Sullivan. We believe that students may appreciate to understand the science behind composting, instead of being given a set of directions without any explanation about how it works.
 - Students will also have access to an instructional video on the PLU Sustainability web page. This will prove to be especially helpful for students who live on campus and/or have a meal plan, since composting is done for them in residence halls and in dining. They can learn what happens to their food after it is put in the dish room or in the compost bin. The educational component of this project allows it to have a campus-wide focus that can continue after students graduate.
 - Directions for how to access the composting information on the web page will be taped to the compost bins in the residence halls.
 - Since the composting bin is meant to be relatively temporary (9-12 months), we have to be sure to let students know that it is not intended for meat or cheese (that would attract animals).
 - Posters in the UC offering information about the campaign

- **Communication**
 - In order to ensure that the campaign is well circulated, we will be using a variety of marketing techniques, including:
 - Word of mouth – Many interested students may be ones who are already involved with sustainability at PLU, such as members of GREAN
 - Sustainability web page, Sustainability blog, Sustainability newsletter
 - Posters in the UC
 - Made by Impact and/or Sustainability Outreach Coordinators, Siri Johnson and Brett Rousseau
 - Involving the Community Garden

Funding

Educating PLU Students for Lifelong Composting is funded with the money made from selling the 2010-2011 Take Back the Tap water bottles.

Assessment

Our goal with this project is to increase the number of students who know how to compost. Off-campus students will be able to learn and practice, while on-campus students still have the chance to learn. The project is teaching students a sustainable practice that will hopefully become a lifelong habit. The success of this program will be determined by whether or not we see an interest from students.

By signing this project charter I understand and agree to my role in the Educating PLU Students for Lifelong Composting Project.

Kenny Stancil - ASPLU Sustainability Director

Marta Behling - G.R.E.A.N. President

Olesya Palosh - RHA Sustainability Director

Chrissy Cooley - PLU Sustainability Coordinator

Kevin O'Brien - 2010/2011 Chair, PLU Sustainability Committee