CASTING A BROADER NET

2018-19 Chancellor’s Sustainability Committee Annual Report

This is a time for community. During the 2018-19 academic year, UNCW came together like never before after Hurricane Florence directly hit Wilmington. Partnerships and support for recovery and resiliency have become more important than ever. UNCW Sustainability has celebrated successes in projects and initiatives that create genuine relationships and build a stronger community.

Values
- Environmental Stewardship
- Economic Vitality
- Social Equity

Great Partnerships
- NC Coastal Federation
  The NC Coastal Federation, UNCW and the City of Wilmington’s Heal Our Waterways initiative have collaborated to create rain gardens and other projects on UNCW’s campus to help mitigate stormwater runoff. This project is a part of a grant to the Coastal Federation to implement stormwater mitigation projects in the Bradley Creek Watershed. UNCW is the largest landowner in this watershed and will be a part of the solution to lessen pollution by redirecting rainwater away from storm drains.
- SGA Day of Service
  The Student Government Association, Landscaping, and other members of campus worked to clean Bluethenthal Wildflower Preserve after the damage from Hurricane Florence. Volunteers spread mulch along the trails to make a more accessible path and several trees and flytraps were planted, purchased with The Green Initiative Fund (TGIF) student fee.
- Native Plantings
  A TGIF mini-grant awarded to the Biology and Marine Biology Department purchased more than 1,500 native plants after Hurricane Florence. Over 300 were planted by the men’s and women’s swim and dive teams, and the remaining by students, faculty and staff during volunteer Friday events.
- Solar-Powered Umbrellas
  SGA and Randall Library were awarded a Green Initiative Fund mini-grant for a solar-powered umbrella to be utilized by students and the community for outdoor electronic enjoyment. The grant was matched by UNCW Sustainability in order to bring the first two umbrellas to campus.
• Healthy Hawks

The eight dimensions of well-being (emotional, engagement, intellectual, financial, occupational, physical, spiritual and sustainability) act and interact in a way that contributes to our quality of life. Our vision is to create a Healthy Hawk community by providing opportunities for learning and engagement, which focus on the eight aspects of well-being.

Great Accolades

• STARS Silver – global sustainability standard created by and for higher education
• Princeton Review Green Colleges – list of environmentally responsible schools
• Sierra Club “Cool Schools” – jumped 37 spots on the list of 200 schools featured
• Silver Bicycle Friendly University
• Wilmington’s First Certified Green Restaurant – Dub’s Café

Great Programs

• Inaugural Sustainability Poster Competition

Based on the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals, the first-ever UNCW Sustainability Poster Competition invited students from all disciplines to put their research on display. The theme was guided by the 17 goals outlined by the UN, from “no poverty” to “life below water.” Students were encouraged to create a walking poster, one that someone passing by could absorb the information in about 20 seconds. The winner was awarded a trip to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education’s yearly conference to present their poster.

• Eleven Gold Talon Events

The Gold Talon checklist and rating system is a way for departments and organizations to gain support, ideas and recognition for implementing sustainable practices in the planning and execution of events. The UNC System has a goal of carbon neutrality by the year 2050, and UNCW is a leader in this objective. Reducing your impact, or “talon print,” by holding a Blue, Teal or Gold Talon event is a fun, easy and affordable way to become part of this initiative.

• Weekly Volunteer Opportunities
  ▶ Vintage Values
  ▶ The Ability Garden
  ▶ UNCW Recycling
  ▶ Bluenthal Wildflower Preserve
  ▶ Keep New Hanover Beautiful
  ▶ Heal Our Waterways
  ▶ Good Shepherd Center
  ▶ UNCW Basketball Games
  ▶ Native Plantings
• Closet Clean-Out
Closet Clean-Out is a partnership between Sustainability, Catholic Campus Ministries, Housing and Residence Life, and various other organizations to help students conveniently donate items when moving out at the end of the academic year. In spring 2019 there were nearly 5,000 pounds of clothing, three full truckloads of furniture and household items, as well as school supplies and non-perishable food items donated.

• Don’t Clip Their Wings – Let Them Soar
UNCW Environmental Science senior Audrey Alderman has masterminded an art gallery that peers into the future of how local children see the environment 40 years from now through drawings and sketches from New Hanover County School students. The project, “Don’t Clip Their Wings – Let Them SOAR,” is funded through The Green Initiative Fund (TGIF) Grant.

Great Achievements
• Awarded $10,372.03 in TGIF mini-grants to six students
• Nearly double the number of Sustainability Pledges (from 242 to 463) from the previous year
• First in the area to collect Styrofoam to be densified and sent to a recycling facility
• Nearly all of UNCW’s irrigation is sourced from reclaimed water

Sustainable Seahawks
• **Jake Inabnit**: Faculty/Staff Sustainability Award Winner 2019
“Sustainability is important to me for my children. We live in a time that it will be hard to leave the world better than we entered it. I strive to teach my children sustainable practices that they can share with their peers and eventually their children. Paul Spear stated, ‘As one person I cannot change the world, but I can change the world of one person.’ If everyone attempted to apply this thought process, sustainable practices are achievable.”

• **Abby Weinshenker**: Student Sustainability Award Winner 2019
“Sustainability to me is about living in coexistence with our earth and treating it with respect. This means that changing small things in our routine that benefit both the earth and us, like a reusable water bottle or recycling. Every little bit counts. We can all make an impact this way if everyone decides to try.”

UNCW has taken great strides in areas of energy conservation, alternative transportation, recycling, stewardship in natural areas as well as academic involvement in areas of sustainability.
Where are they now? Sustainability Peer Educators who have graduated.

Alex Marstall: I’m a recent graduate in environmental science with a minor in sustainability. I worked as a sustainability peer educator for three years and loved every second of it. It was rewarding to help start the first-ever sustainability peer educator program at UNCW and see the progress we made in three years. I now work at a UGA 4-H Center at Camp Jekyll in Jekyll Island, GA, as an environmental educator. I work with K-12 school groups, teaching them about all kinds of barrier island ecology including salt marshes, maritime forests and beaches.

Hannah Pursley: I’m currently working in vegetation management as a consulting utility forester for ECI Environmental Consultants. I started working with them last year on a temp job in Indiana verifying ash trees that had been killed by the emerald ash borer, hiking around 50 hours a week in rural areas. After that I started a job in Wilmington, where I work with the tree trimming crews who work around the power lines. I inspect their work in case they left something that could touch the lines and cause an outage or a fire. I also spend time going around town looking for damaged, diseased, dying or dead trees that could fall on the utility lines.

Although UNCW Sustainability is housed in Business Services, the success of the program is supported by the Chancellor’s Sustainability Council and various other committees focused on sustainable initiatives. Up-to-date information about programs and projects can be found at uncw.edu/sustainability.

To find out more and how you can get involved, please contact sustainability@uncw.edu.