Western Sustainability Pledge

Table of Contents

Western Washington University Sustainability Pledge

A Pledge at Western

Western Washington University strives to be a national leader in campus sustainability. With the signing of the University President's Climate Commitment, WWU has established a commitment to achieving overall sustainability by reaching climate neutrality. The WWU Strategic Plan states that stewardship of the environment is a core principle of the University, not just in research and education, but also in how it manages facilities and resources. From our commitment to green energy and waste reduction to WWU's sustainability committee and sustainability-minded courses, WWU 's goal is to incorporate sustainability into all areas of campus operations and academics. (WWU Sustainability, WWU Draft 2009)

For our efforts to be successful, Western needs the help of the entire student body, faculty, and staff. It will take the active participation of the whole community to pitch in, turn off, conserve and re-evaluate daily habits for WWU to realize its vision. To rally awareness and commitment to this cause we have created a model Sustainability Pledge program for WWU. The program will help university employees and students adopt changes in environmental behaviors, with an emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions to address climate change. The aim is to empower individuals to become active leaders in the transition toward sustainability. The more people who sign the pledge, the stronger the message is sent that Western cares about the health of it's campus, community, and planet. (UBC, 2009)

We are a group of students representing two Huxley College courses, the Campus Planning Studio and Conservation Psychology. The Sustainability Pledge will operate through a webpage on the Office of Sustainability's homepage, and be accessible to all those affiliated with the university. The pledge will specifically target university employees and residential students through two peer outreach environmental programs already operating on campus through the Office of Sustainability. In this report we will cover the basics of sustainability pledges, the psychology of public pledges, some case studies, a review of Western's footprint and outreach programs, and finally, a model pledge program, along with the pledge checklist and some analysis of barriers, evaluation and future work.

Sustainability Pledges

Sustainability meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is focused on a more equitable distribution of resources among nations and citizens today and ensuring quality of life for future generations. As defined by the WWU Sustainability Committee, a sustainable WWU protects local and global ecology, upholds social equity, creates economic vitality, and protects the health of its inhabitants.

A pledge is a commitment made by a solemn promise and often to formally, publicly declare that something is or will be. By signing a pledging, committing to an intention to change, it helps if they make a clear public commitment to carrying it through. As more people do the same, we feel our individual choices affirmed and their effects multiply. A public commitment can result in a deeper sense of responsibility and resolve for behavior changes.

Beginning at University of British Columbia (UBC) in 2002, online pledges using the web to collect signatures from campus community members have become a more and more popular tool in sustainability efforts on campuses across North America. According to UBC Sustainability Pledges help to…

- Generate Awareness- Get the campus talking, thinking and sharing ideas about local and global issues concerning our natural, cultural and built environments
- Support Education- Connect students and teachers with exciting sustainability initiatives, courses, workshops and events at WWU
- Engage- Provide and support opportunities for involvement at a wide range of commitment levels
- Connect Community- Bring people together and encourage dialogue and collaborative work toward common goals
- Demonstrate Commitment- Gather momentum for institutional, curricular, and social change at WWU through our collective commitment to the well-being of the planet and its inhabitants

Sustainability pledge programs strive to make the big small and the small big. The pledge helps people meaningfully engage the overwhelming aspects of climate change with daily practices, and emphasizes how small things add up and make a big difference. Daily news of global ecological instability can lead to feeling powerless, or like it isn't "our" problem. But by making our everyday decisions in a more conscientious manner we can be part of the solution. A pledge is a tool of empowerment with purpose and hope.

Signing a pledge links you to others who are involved in the issue, practically and psychologically. One of the main barriers to sustainable action is the feeling that "I'm just one person," that our actions don't have a significant impact and aren't supported socially. Yet WWU is a community of over 15,000 people. A sustainability pledge celebrates that individual actions can contribute to the collective vision of sustainability. A pledge encourages individual commitment to a common goal. A sustainability pledge is a great way to join in the global paradigm shift to climate awareness and action. If someone is not already committed to working on climate issues in their life, this program provides a chance to examine the issue, make informed choices and take the first steps. For those seasoned conservers, signing the pledge is a collective statement about the importance of incorporating sustainability into our lives and our work, as individuals, as a university, and as a society. (Yale, Harvard, UBC)
Pledge Psychology

A sustainability pledge is one of many options that could be used at Western to help promote conservation. It is important when applying psychology to programs that the factors determining action are evaluated to determine the most appropriate approach to increase action. Each program will depend on their audience characteristics and will usually involve the coordinated use of several tools. The use of public commitment or pledging is based on several social marketing and community empowerment theories. When applied correctly, these strategies have the potential to greatly improve the success of attempted conservation initiatives (Mckenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999).

The core components of social marketing involve discovering the barriers to desired behaviors, selecting which behavior(s) to promote, and creating a program designed to work through the barriers preventing adopting of new behaviors (Mckenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999). For any program to be effective it must account for the challenges facing it. Without understanding the difficulties, then unexpected outcomes are likely to occur. One challenge is having an audience large enough to make a difference. To broaden the target audience of our pledge we have allowed for a large variety of pledge commitments. We also allow for a varying degree of commitment. By being flexible about which behaviors individuals may adopt we can hopefully broaden our target audience to include individuals that under normal circumstances would not commit to increasing pro-environmental behaviors.

Several factors help determine whether an individual will be persuaded to become actively involved in conservation. Many socio-cultural factors have been examined to measure their effect on behavior. Werder examined many of these including holding positive beliefs about community activism, emotional connections toward nature, ability to be persuaded by environmental education and/or others opinions, and having a strong sense of self-empowerment. Results from the study partially indicate that personal beliefs, social activism, emotional sensitivity towards nature, and education all impact the likelihood of adopting recycling behavior. However, results for having a strong sense of self-empowerment had a much stronger correlation to an increase in recycling (Werder, 2006). Werder (2006) also investigated socio-cultural factors affecting behavior and found that only age and gender were significantly related to recycling behaviors. On the other end of the spectrum is a sense of helplessness. Many times when an individual thinks of themselves as only one person, it can be difficult to perceive any effect from their action at all. This state can lead to one of learned helplessness. In this situation an individual has become so overwhelmed with their inability to change their external situation that they can lose their perception of having any control at all. These people may still be swayable by external factors such as social norms. However, when this occurs then most attempts to change particular behaviors will fail to motivate the individual (Young, 1996).

It is good to remind ourselves that while education and belief systems are important, there are often better approaches to getting the desired responses. Self-empowerment is a powerful force and is one of the key ideas behind a sustainability pledge. Hines et al.'s (1987) suggested that perceived self-efficacy was a stronger predictor of behavior than knowledge or attitudes. It is easy for anyone to feel helpless when confronting overwhelming odds, which can lead to apathy and non-action. By connecting individuals

in a broad community through a common goal, we provide an environment which allows students to feel that they can/are making a difference.

Not only does joining a group make individuals feel like they are making a difference, it does make a difference. In a survey that included over 3000 members of Norwegian environmental organizations and the rest of the public, group membership predicted conservation behavior even when accounting for attitudinal differences (Olli et al. 2001). Joining a group makes people feel more connected, and more accountable for their actions. By focusing a group's engagement it creates a stronger sense of group identity, which can foster even more commitment to sustainable action (Pol, 2002).

Signing a pledge or making a public commitment doesn't necessarily make someone feel like they are part of a group. Initially they are just an additional name on a piece of paper. However, signing the pledge does link individuals to a large group of people who have made similar commitments. It also puts them on a common email list, which serves to inform people on news, events, and activities, which are all part of a group dynamic. Our goal is to increase the sense of group identity associated with the pledge as it becomes larger and more capable of exciting individuals. One way of making this happen is by using feedback, which has its own benefits to perpetuating sustainable actions.

Many individuals struggle changing their behaviors unless they can see a difference because of it. Taking shorter showers and turning the lights off are starting steps for sustainable behavior, but it is not very likely that someone will continue their pursuit of sustainability if they don't feel that they have done anything. Van Vugt (2001) found that individual water meters at homes helped reduce water use by providing feedback on their consumption. Feedback also ties into self-efficacy, and helps promote a feeling of control of a situation. Many programs provide continuous feedback to participants, and can be done in an individual or collective format. It not only can provide information, but can act as a tool for providing strategies and goals to participants (Clayton, Myers, 2009). An example of this would be a monthly email describing the amount of energy saved assuming that a given participant is fulfilling their obligation. This email could also include methods for increasing the amount of energy they saved and/or new goals to set for energy reduction as a group or individual.

Many factors influencing behavior change are tricky to isolate and can have unexpected results. One of these components, which determine whether an individual will act, is whether or not they have a sense of personal responsibility. Along with a sense of control over a situation, a person must feel responsible for it in order to act. Renee Bator and Robert Cialdini (2000) examined public service announcements intended to help reduce littering in a national park by making visitors feel responsible for its protection. They found that the original message, which portrayed littering as negative but common, actually increased the amount of littering in the park. This unfortunate occurrence happened because littering was portrayed as a norm, which further diffuses the sense of responsibility instead of increasing it.

The effect of social norms, like responsibility, can promote different responses in people. When social norms are portrayed negatively they can have adverse effects. As in the above example about littering in the national parks, portraying littering as a bad thing did not stop people from doing so. Because littering was portrayed as very common it caused people to assume that others were littering and hence that it doesn't matter if they littered either. Social norms are a powerful factor determining action, and can be one of the least recognized reasons for an individual to act in certain ways. Nolan et al. (2008) found that among residents in a California town, social norms were described as the least important reason to conserve. Experiments on social norms and reusing towels in hotel rooms have shown very interesting results. The two messages were compared: "Help save resources for future generates"; "75% of guests who stayed in this room used their towels more than once." The second message increased the rate of guests who actually reused their towels from 30% to nearly 50% (Nijhuis, 2007). This illustrates the point that many times people are unaware of the external influences affecting their behavior.

Social conformity's power is not just in an individual's perception. Humans tend to encourage conformity; we are positively inclined towards those who act like us, and negatively inclined towards those who deviate (Clayton, Myers, 2009). We tend to prescribe social behaviors through our own individual and collective actions. The more common these behaviors become, the faster the rest of the populace adopts them. Even people who are opposed to an idea will behaviorally conform to powerful social norms.

Another way to increase pro-environment actions is through the use of commitment. Pledge systems should increase a sense of responsibility and can also increase the likelihood of action (Dwyer et. al 1993). Other research has come to show that commitments are more effective when written rather than verbally given, and when they are public rather than private pledges (Clayton, Myers, 2009). Public commitment is a critical factor in determining the effects of a pledge. DeLeon and Fuqua (1995) examined the effects of community interventions, which depended on socially mediated consequences. They found that when groups committed publicly and received feedback on their success, they increased their weight of recyclable material by 40% compared to baseline. In contrast, the private commitment only group did not increase their recycling significantly. In another experiment, public vs. private commitment was compared to energy conservation in the household. They found that the public commitment group showed a lower consumption of energy in the following months than in the private commitment condition (Pallak, Cummings). Their results indicated that a public commitment can increase attention to the amount of energy being consumed.

The effects of public commitment will vary between individuals depending on many things. Individuals vary in attitude assurance, how important they see the issue, preference for consistency, and resistance to attitude change (Gopinath, Nyer, 2009). Other differences include sources of information and the amount of counter influence they experience from various parties. On top of this some people may already be over committed and the addition of another can become a burden instead of a motivator (Gopinath, Nyer, 2009). In order to lessen these effects the benefits of pledging should

be highlighted to individuals so that the commitment is perceived as a mutual exchange rather than just additional effort.

When used correctly, public commitment can enhance the effect of several psychological principles. By allowing for a variety of different levels and types of commitments we can provide the opportunity for more people to pledge. It gives more freedom to the individual who may feel forced or under pressure to pledge. A public commitment can increase a sense of self-empowerment by connecting an individual to many. It also helps overcome the feeling of just being one person, and of having no impact. This sense of connectivity also promotes a group identity. When a group can focus their relationship around a central theme it acts as an additional motivator towards pro-environmental behavior. Public commitments that provide regular feedback to participants give them the necessary information about their own progress to continue the action. Being part of a group also increases a sense of personal responsibility for a problem, which in turn is a key part of inspiring someone to change. As discussed earlier, social norms are another powerful set of tools for garnering change. However, a public commitment in itself does not generate a social norm.

A public commitment can easily involve only a small percentage of a given population. If the majority of the population is not involved or does not care, then little peer pressure will be placed on other individuals to conform. This will doubtlessly be the case at the beginning of any pledge program simply because the group begins at zero. But in the right environment pledge communities can grow rapidly.

When a large body, influential group, or a respected individual of a population has committed to the pledge, then social norm pressure will become very powerful. As the system grows this effect will only increase and help encourage even more people to participate. If a pledge is able to convince individuals to commit behaviorally before they have internalized the attitude associated with the behavior then they will hold two inconsistent states. This imbalance between behavior and attitude can create feelings of cognitive dissonance. Decreasing the imbalance in attitude and behavior can reduce dissonance. One may simply stop the new behavior and retain their current attitude. Another option is to change the attitude in question to conform more to their new behavior. In this instance, cognitive dissonance can increase sustainable behavior. Another option is that people may adopt the behavior or pledge simply out of compliance or to please others. This will probably lead to little behavior change or internalization about their adopted behavior. These types of commitment are less likely to happen if the social norms supporting the behavior change are very strong.

One pitfall to the use of social norms, especially when using the support of an institution or influential individual to encourage adoption of behaviors is that they may weaken the appearance of the pledge if they are not also committing to as much or greater change. A great example of this is Al Gore. After his initial promotion of the importance of climate change he was attacked for not adhering to the principles he encouraged. He drives a large car, owns a highly energy consumptive home, etc. When this happens people can feel deceived and the integrity of the entire movement may be weakened because the

hypocrisy associated with the individual carries over to the programs they support (Kollmuss, Agyeman, 2002).

At WWU we have the luxury of having a student body already committed to sustainable action. We also have an institution that is already publicly committed to climate neutrality and headed by a President who supports those goals. Many students hold pro-environmental beliefs and make daily decisions to reduce their impact. With this strong support within our population, a sustainability pledge should garner momentum quickly and encourage the adoption of more sustainable habits along the way.

Case Studies

University of British Columbia

Started in 2002, the UBC pledge is a student-run program that was the first of it's kind in North America. It is modeled after the Graduation Pledge in the United States developed at Humboldt State. UBC Student Development and the Sustainability Office support the program. When you sign the Pledge, you can choose to receive a monthly newsletter with info about upcoming events and opportunities, both on-campus and off. Their website provides extensive resources, including tips on making sustainable lifestyle choices. They pledge that they will strive to provide inspiring ways to continue the pledge commitment. Their motto is if it's not fun, it's not sustainable! (UBC)

Harvard University

The annual energy saving Thanksgiving pledge campaign "Go Cold Turkey," was expanded in 2005 to the Harvard Sustainability Pledge. The goal is to raise awareness about sustainability on campus, and to encourage each student, staff and faculty member at Harvard to take simple steps to reduce their environmental impact. Harvard Sustainability Pledge operates through the Office of Sustainability with the generous support of nine sponsor schools from within the university. In the first year, 4,300 people signed the pledge, resulting in a purchase of 4 million kWh of Renewable Energy Certificates (RECS) through an incentive program.

In 2006 over 7,000 people from across campus signed the pledged, while 31 buildings met the 50% pledge rate challenge. The resulting incentive program purchase of 6 million kWh of wind power offset 56 million pounds of greenhouse gases. In 2007, over 8,200 students, staff and faculty from across the campus signed the pledge, with a different incentive: for each pledge participant, Harvard put $1.50 toward renewable energy. The money was used for an on-site renewable project, 2 solar thermal panels. In 2008, more than 8,600 campus members signed the pledge, with incentive money going to install solar photovoltaic panels on Gutman Library. The 2009 goal is to reach 10,000 people at Harvard. (Harvard)

Emory University

The sustainability pledge at Emory runs on a tracking system that was built into the computer system. The demographics they follow are location on campus, and role, staff/student/alumni. They measure success by number of participants and, whether we have energy and water savings, etc. The process for development involved a staff team and an outside vendor who built the pledge. A student intern built the content for the carbon calculator associated with the pledge. Participants receive emailed confirmation of the pledge, a summary of their commitments, information about the environmental/social/economic impacts of their pledged commitments, and a summary of the carbon savings that will result if they keep their pledge (translated into carbon savings equivalents like number of cars taken off the road, acres of forest preserved, etc.). (Emory)

UW and other peer institutions

This fall, the University of Washington launched a Sustainability Pledge out of their Office of Sustainability, and has had a good response so far. They modeled their pledge and received inspiration and support Emory University's pledge. At this point in time they are only tracking which questions people pledge as well as their affiliation with UW (student, faculty, staff). In general, they have had a much greater response from students (69%) than from faculty (9%) and staff (22%). When someone signs up they will receive an email letting them know what they have committed to. The office also receives an email letting us know that there has been a pledge completed. Since the program is in the developmental stages they do not have a method for tracking the effectiveness at this point in time, but they are working from a broader perspective as they begin implementation of their Climate Action Plan. (UW)

Evergreen State College operates the first Sustainability Pledge in the Washington State College and University system. Four of WWU's peer institutions operate Sustainability Pledge programs: Cal-Poly Pomona, University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point, University of North Carolina—Wilmington, and Humboldt State University, the creator of the graduate sustainability pledges.

Pledge Program Components

From these examples and countless others, a set of most and least common, most apparently effective, and least useful principles and components of sustainability pledges can be gathered. Harvard's pledge program evolved from a campaign that focused on energy use in buildings during breaks. Most programs recognize the need to target specific populations, such as faculty, while students are reached through traditional university programming. Initially, many pledges recognize of current positive behavior, and ask participants to check off the things on the list they already do. Yale University maintains a separate webpage to publish the list of participant's names and which building they are affiliated with. At WWU, The Go Green Challenge posts signed pledges outside participant's doors, another common feature of many public pledges. Nearly all pledge programs follow up with new participants via an e-mail containing a breakdown of the commitments signed up for. The e-mail also comes with a form letter

inviting colleagues to take the pledge that can be forwarded to promote the pledge, one of the requirements of nearly every pledge we surveyed.

Many programs translate individual and collective pledge commitments into carbon emissions saved, and compelling symbols like trees planted and cars taken off the road. This information can be communicated in the follow-up e-mail, on the pledge website, and in follow-up e-mails and newsletters throughout the year. Virtually every pledge program also operates through a competition-based incentive program. Here at WWU, both of the peer outreach programs our pledge with be implemented through offer incentives to the building or hall that saves the most. Our incentives go into prizes, parties and saved funds cycled back into departments, but in most programs the incentive goes to fund the development of renewable energy on campus.

WWU's Footprint & Sustainability Programs

The Western Washington University Green House Gas (GHG) emissions inventory includes three notable items that are the largest greenhouse gas emissions sources. The preponderance of our emissions are the result of burning natural gas in our steam plant at 36%, followed by air travel and commuters, making transportation responsibility for 18%, even with changes due to the student bus pass increase in use of mass transit. This stresses the importance of increased building efficiency and use of transportation alternatives. Our 2009 MTCO2 e (metric ton carbon dioxide emissions) projects to be around 35,000 and will rise steadily to over 50,000 by 2020, unless we do something now. (WWU Draft)

As single young adults, students have a great deal of flexibility with their schedules and lifestyles. A large majority of students live either on or near campus and walk or bus to school. The use of single occupancy vehicles decreased by 55 percent from 1992-2003. The implementation of the Viking bus pass instigated another 25% increase in bus ridership. Through peer coordinator pledge campaigns, residential halls have been able to decrease their energy use by 20%. The programs now target water and heat use as well. (WWU Sustainability)

Very real and perceived barriers that employees, as busy professionals with families, are much more bound by their daily schedules and have a harder time adjusting their behavior patterns. Employees live further from campus than students, and single occupancy vehicle travel forms a steady majority of their transportation choices. Programs targeting staff and faculty are necessary to encourage and facilitate changes in transportation and energy use. Until recently, environmental programming only focused on students, but in departments across campus a new peer environmental coordinator program among staff and faculty focuses on energy and heat use. We hope to use the successful pledge model of the residence halls along with the campus wide pledge concept of many universities to effect change in the environmental behaviors of more difficult to address employee population.

10 x 10 Campaign & Departmental Sustainability Coordinators

The "10 x10 Campaign" is a university-wide, department-focused effort to reduce utility use across campus through sustainability education, utility monitoring, improved building performance and monetary incentives. The 10x10 pilot program will begin Fall Quarter 2009 and include the College of Business and Economics, the College of Humanities, and the College of Science and Technology. Monetary incentives will come in the form of a "kickback" to participating departments. They will receive a portion of the quarterly "avoided cost" for each utility, and three quarters of the savings will return to the university budget.

The 10x10 campaign will implement conservation measures to help the university realize a 10% reduction in utility consumption in participating buildings by the end of 2010. A 10% cutback in utility use in participating buildings will have a dramatic effect on electricity, natural gas, solid waste and water use. Sustainability Education will take place through a proposed "Departmental Sustainability Coordinator Program." Participating departments will appoint a "Departmental Sustainability Coordinator" (DSC) who will learn conservation practices from the DSC Program Coordinator, an Office of Sustainability staff member. DSC's will become the sustainability representative for their department, focusing on behavior change and creating support for sustainability initiatives through education, utilities monitoring and feedback. (10 x 10)

Go for the Green and Eco-reps

The Office of Sustainability's Resident Resource Awareness Program (ResRAP) and "Go for the Green": Total Waste Reduction Challenge aim to educate students about their environmental impact. The ResRAP Coordinator works in every hall with a hall council representative called an Eco-Rep, a liaison who fosters and promotes more sustainable living. Throughout the year, the Eco-Reps and the ResRAP Coordinator put on educational workshops and programs. "Go for the Green" takes place throughout Winter Quarter. The challenge was expanded in 2009 to include not just electricity reduction, but water waste, natural gas, and landfill waste reduction and better recycling practices.

The Eco-Reps go door-to-door gathering pledges. More than 1200 residents signed both the water and waste reduction pledges. Five halls had more than 30% participation and two had more than 50%. The participating halls reduced their electricity consumption by 20.4% for three months, a decrease of over 265,000 kWh, more than $17,500 in savings and 275,728 lbs of CO_2. They accomplished a decrease of 1.7% in natural gas consumption, more than 9,000 BTUs per square foot. Water consumption was also reduced by 9%, roughly 1.2 million gallons. (Go for the Green)

Western Washington University Pledge

The Website

A skeleton version of the pledge website is currently available. It will appear as a link on the Office of Sustainability website. Hopefully, by the end of the quarter it will include the opportunity to sign up and the database to collect participant information. Shortly to follow will be a page with a public listing of all the pledge participants, by role and building or residence hall affiliation. In the more distant future, each checklist activity will also have an Internet link to more information on the topic.

Check here for updates on the development of the pledge website and to sign up when it comes online: http://www.wwu.edu/sustain/pledge/

The Western Sustainability Pledge

Help Western go green!

Sign the pledge below and declare our support for Western's vision of a sustainable future.

We encourage you to check off the great things you are already doing, and commit to at least three new things that you feel are within your capacity. We also ask you to promote the pledge to your fellow colleagues—the more people who join, the bigger our collective impact will be!

I pledge to do my part in Western Washington University's greenhouse gas reduction and sustainability efforts. I will consider the environmental, social and economic impact of my daily decisions and commit to new ways to reduce my ecological footprint impact while on campus and at home.

I also pledge to share my individual sustainability efforts with others at Western and promote the pledge to at least three fellow students/colleagues.

Energy
- ❑ Set sleep mode on my computer and turn off my PC, monitor, printer and copier at the end of the day. If unable to switch off the entire computer, turn off the monitor and my desktop printer.
- ❑ Adjust thermostats; lower blinds in the summer and raise blinds in the winter, and shut them when leaving for the day.
- ❑ Turn off the lights when you leave any room, bathrooms, and meeting rooms for more than five minutes.
- ❑ Unplug equipment that uses standby energy such as computers, coffee makers, refrigerators, alarm clocks, chargers, and stereos, when planning to be away for extended periods, such as vacations and breaks.
- ❑ Use compact fluorescent bulbs, and choose ENERGY STAR rated lamps and other fixtures.

- Disable your screen saver, which prevents the computer from entering sleep mode.
- Wash clothes in cold or warm water.
- Take the stairs.

Waste
- Reduce first, reuse second, and recycle everything that is recyclable.
- Consume less.
- Buy items in bulk/with minimal packaging and avoid products with excessive packaging,
- Sign up for paperless billing.
- Use reusable bags while shopping.
- Buy recycled paper.
- Print less and use double-side all copies and print jobs.
- Remove yourself from junk mail and catalog lists.
- Use reusable coffee mug or water bottle and dishes, when not possible, purchase food in compostable to-go containers.
- Drink tap water, not bottled water.
- Don't litter.

Food
- Reduce food waste and utilize composting services by composting any organic or compostable material.
- Buy local, seasonal produce and products.
- Buy organic.
- Eat less meat.
- Reduce food waste in the dining hall.

Water
- Don't leave tap water running when doing dishes, brushing teeth, washing hands, etc.
- Take shorter showers.

Transportation
- Walk, bike, take the bus, or carpool at least one day a week.
- Avoid unnecessary driving during the day by packing a lunch, walking to a restaurant, and grouping errands.
- Make meetings more sustainable by reducing travel and paper use and where possible, utilize a conference call line, or Skype, or schedule meetings back-to-back.
- Reduce air travel whenever possible

Labs
- Close fume hood sashes.
- Share our information on resource efficient lab supplies with your lab manager or supply purchaser.

- ❑ Turn off non-essential lab equipment when not in use (confirm with lab manager if necessary).
- ❑ Recycle plastic pipette tip boxes.
- ❑ Donate unwanted lab equipment to Seeding Labs.
- ❑ Find less toxic chemical alternatives for your research.

Education
- ❑ Calculate my carbon footprint and work to reduce it.
- ❑ Visit WWU's Office of Sustainability website.
- ❑ I will take an active role in WWU's sustainability goals by getting involved in a sustainability-focused group on campus.
- ❑ Learn as much as I can about sustainability and teach others.
- ❑ Encourage at least three friends/colleagues to take this pledge.

The Program

At Western, we will pair the traditional web based pledge approach with person-to-person peer organizing to collect pledges. The program will work with both the faculty and student peer environmental counseling programs already developed on campus. The Eco-reps and the Departmental Sustainability Coordinators are charged with organizing residence halls and academic buildings to lower their ecological footprint. The eco-rep program already utilizes three separate pledges for heat, water and electricity use. The Sustainability Pledge could provide a comprehensive public commitment for these campaigns and all of campus to rally support and momentum for our sustainability efforts at Western. At the beginning of the fall, all eco-reps and DSC's would engage their buildings in signing the pledge, and provide information about signing up in the future.

For participants of the pledge the first step is to sign up, either on the pledge website or through the departmental coordinators or eco-reps. They check off what sustainable activities they already do, and then commit to at least three more things with in their capacity to do over the next year. Once the pledge is finished and the sign up button is pressed, the next page will display a printable copy of the pledge they are instructed to post outside their door. For participants signing up in person, they keep the pledge and post it outside of their office or residence hall room door. Many pledge programs e-mail back a summary of what the participant signed up for. We feel the complete list is important to illustrate and remind the participant and those that might see it outside their door that there is always more one can do.

Participant information will automatically enter a database for tracking information about the pledge. The program will track a number of demographics about the participants and the details of the pledge. The database compiles names, email addresses, college of affiliation and department or residence hall of affiliation. The database also accumulates statistics on the number of people who sign up for each checklist activity. This can provide feedback on the outcomes we should look for and

what things need to be targeted further to attract more interest. The tallies can also be reported back to pledge participants in the follow up email or in quarterly email update

Those who sign up for the pledge in person will have to have their information entered manually by a student worker from the office of sustainability. Next, they will receive an e-mail response from the pledge program with a thank you for signing up to do their part, a reminder to print and post their pledge outside their door, and a promote the pledge message they can forward to at least three fellow students/colleagues.

Both the 10 x 10 and Go for the Green campaigns feature incentives built into the program to reward the department or residence hall that produces the greatest reduction in resource use from their efforts.

Follow up E-mail

Thank you for pledging to do your part in Western's efforts toward sustainability! Please be sure to print off your pledge and post it outside your office or dorm room where it can serve as a reminder and be seen by others.

And we now ask you to promote the Pledge!

Forward this Message to at least three fellow students/colleagues

Hey!

I just committed to taking a few simple actions in the coming year that will make my day-to-day activities at Western Washington University more sustainable.

Have you taken the WWU Sustainability Pledge yet?

The more people from the Western Community to join, the more we'll be able to reduce the impact of our collective actions. Together, we can make a difference. Check out the pledge website: http://www.wwu.edu/sustain/pledge/

Thanks!

Barriers

Success of a sustainability pledge program here at WWU hinges on three main barriers to personal and institutional adoption, individual barriers to action, logistical barriers, and evaluation barriers. Traditional social marketing barriers are internal issues that stop certain community members from adopting a specific behavior, or other new interventions. The pledge itself is a devise used to reduce motivational and self-concept obstacles, and has secondary impacts on social norms, building momentum to support and encourage participants, new and old. The pledge declaration, checklist and program

components are tailored to minimize internal barriers and harness them for the better. Participants are encouraged to register for just three new things, register the work they are already doing, and make relative changes instead of meeting hard and fast goals.

All pledge programs operate an annual fall pledge drive to renew the commitment to reducing the campus footprint; a certain level of "maintenance" work is required. Other barriers obviously exist too, for various groups and behaviors, straightforward things like employees living further from campus, to more complex issues like family obligations. Finding out what are the least-pledged items and which have the highest potential gain could help the overall program identify what behaviors/barriers are priorities to be investigated next.

The coordination of implementing the pledge online and on the ground by peer sustainability coordinators present problems. One of the main pulls of a web-based pledge program is the low overhead involved in hours and dollars. Incentives for the program pay for themselves. Putting the pledge into use in the field, in person-to-person interaction creates a logistical problem that will slow and could stop the university from adopting it. To bridge the gap between the virtual and the actual, the help of student work study hours to enter data on participants who sign up in person is a requirement.

Lastly, the difficulty in tracking the direct effect of a pledge program on its intended outcomes, or simply providing proof that it works. Pledge systems present problems in tracking the success of in an imperfect world. There is no way to track many of the variables except self-reporting, and versus other programs and other variables on behavior. That said, both student and faculty sustainability programs at WWU keep baseline statistics and run comparisons from previous years without the influence of the campaign. Many schools track the difference in energy use from year to year and department to department. All pledge systems track the number of participants in the program as a whole and of particular checklist items as indicator of success without feedback.

Evaluation

Evaluating the program is a complex task. Good social marketing campaigns are inherently a multifaceted-beast, and only with all features of a campaign in concert can real effects be seen. Environmental behaviors also have myriad other external and internal influences. The Go for the Green campaign uses baseline data of utility use from previous years to compare energy or water use. The 10 x 10 campaign is also based on comparisons to past year's energy usage. They aim to reduce energy use by 10% from the previous year. Attempts can be made to track the effectiveness of specific programs, such as the "Go for the Green" campaign in dormitories versus previous years without the program.

A few sustainability pledge programs make attempts to connect actual electricity and heat use, transportation and waste statistics with the program. Most simply track the rate of participation of various dorms and buildings. The demographics we collect with

the pledge allows us to track participation per residence hall and academic building. Over time we can track success in the various programs for a correlation to the percentage of people per building who participate in the program. Ideally, numbers would come up to support the effect of participation in the program on resource use and other environmental behaviors.

The success of the Go for the Green Challenge can be seen as a temporal and highly dependent thing. It lasts for a quarter, is well publicized, and has a competitive nature between the dorms working for an immediate payoff in the incentive program. Tracking the effects of a yearlong program, such as the 10 x 10 program will prove interesting.

Potential

Much of the potential for the sustainability pledge program lies in its success in reducing resource use and greenhouse gas emissions on campus. That depends on a critical mass of employees and students signing up and truly engaging in their commitments to behavior change, and that number growing each year. The programs long-term success can be seen qualitatively in the development of the program itself. The programs success in increasing our sustainability will go a long way in its further development.

If it is successful, the program can expand and add resources and features that make it more comprehensive. If it does what it can, we will see the pledge become an integral part of sustainability efforts at Western. A long-term goal of the pledge should be to make it more and more visible. If the pledge were to become a commonly known and popular program, it might make it on the homepage of the university to show our commitment to sustainability. If we can reach this kind of prominence, the pledge will be taken up by off campus students as well, and the effects will spread through the community.

Future Work

- The database for collecting participant information, the printable copy of the pledge, the follow-up e-mail, and the webpage listing participants are all still in the works.
- Links and resources accompanying each pledge checklist item that direct participants to more information about each topic.
- A Facebook page for the Sustainability Pledge Program. This social networking website has built in features for sharing the pledge with others.
- A quarterly e-mail reminder and check-in at the beginning of Winter and Spring quarter to keep participants engaged throughout the year. We can report inspirational information about how the program is going; how many people have signed up, how much carbon saved.
- More comprehensive programming with a newsletter about sustainability related activities on campus and in the community, along with strategies and tips for continuing to reduce their footprint. Through events and workshops,

participants can network with students, faculty, and staff who share interests and are involved with sustainability initiatives.

- A running meter totally the real world affect of the pledge program. The total of carbon saved from all program participants can illustrate the cumulative effect of individual actions and increase the sense of group membership. This total could be published in real time on the printable pledge to publicize to participants and passersby. The follow up email can come furnished with a tabulation of what their pledge means in carbon footprint numbers, i.e. number of trees planted or number of cars off the road, for the activities they have signed up for. The quarterly newsletter could also come furnished with tallies of campaign effects.
- Incentives for signing up for the pledge regardless of affiliation with or success of a particular department or dormitory affiliation, like the Harvard pledge to donate money to renewable energy development on campus for every participant. This incentive, based purely on numbers that sign up, will also function to advertise to and encourage students off campus, a long-term goal of the program.
- A strong and visible web presence, say on the university homepage, which also helps to target off-campus students.
- Campaigns that specifically target off campus students.
- A connection with the faculty union. And support of the university administration. There is some feeling that without seal of approval and support of the president's office buy in from faculty will be difficult to come by.

References

Emory Sustainability Pledge. Retrieved October 25, 2009, Emory University Sustainable Initiatives website, http://sustainability.emory.edu/

Harvard Sustainability Pledge. Retrieved October 25, 2009, Harvard Office for Sustainability website, http://green.harvard.edu/

Yale Sustainability Pledge. Retrieved October 25, 2009, Yale Office of Sustainability website, http://www.yale.edu/sustainability/

UW Sustainability Pledge. Retrieved October 25, 2009, University of Washington Office of Stewardship and Sustainability website, http://f2.washington.edu/oess/

UBC Sustainability Pledge. Retrieved October 25, 2009, University of British Columbia Sustainability Pledge website, http://www.sustain.ubc.ca/sustainable_u/

10 x 10 Initiative. Retrieved October 25, 2009, WWU Office of Sustainability website, http://www.wwu.edu/sustain/initiatives/climate-neutrality/10x10.shtml

Go For the Green. Retrieved October 25, 2009, WWU Office of Sustainability website, http://www.wwu.edu/sustain/goforthegreen/index.html

WWU Draft Climate Action Plan. Retrieved October 25, 2009, WWU Office of Sustainability website, http://www.wwu.edu/sustain/climateneutralwestern/WWU%20Climate%20Action%20Plan%20DRAFT%2010-26-2009.pdf

WWU Sustainability Report. Retrieved October 25, 2009, WWU Office of Sustainability website, http://www.wwu.edu/sustain/sust-report/SustainabilityReport2008.pdf

Gopinath, M. & Nyer, P. U. (2009). The effect of public commitment on resistance to persuasion: The influence of attitude certainty, issue importance, susceptibility to normative influence, preference for consistency and source proximity. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, 26*(1), 60-68. doi:10.1016/j.ijresmar.2008.08.003

De Young, R. (1996). Some psychological aspects of a reduced consumption lifestyle: The role of intrinsic satisfaction and competence. Environment and Behavior, 28, 358-409. Retrieved from: http://eab.sagepub.com/archive/

Ebreo, A., & Vining, J. (2002). Emerging theoretical and methodological perspectives on conservation behavior. In R. Bechtel & A. Churchman (Eds.), Handbook of environmental psychology (pp. numbers). New York, NY: Wiley. Retrieved from: http://www.chesapeakebay.net/pubs/subcommittee/ces

Engel, J.R. (1988). Ecology and social justice: The search for a public environmental ethic. In W. Copeland & R. Hatch (Eds.), Issues of justice: Social sources and religious meanings (pp. 243-266). Macon, Ga.: Mercer Press.

Guagnano, G. A., Stern, P. C., & Dietz, T. (1995). Influences on attitude-behavior relationships: A natural experiment with curbside recycling. Environment and Behavior, 27, 699-718. Retrieved from: http://eab.sagepub.com/

Kollmuss, A., & Agyeman, J. (2002). Mind the gap: Why do people act environmentally and what are barriers to pro-environmental behaviors? Environmental Education Research, 8(3), 239-260. Retrieved from: http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713416156~db=all

McKenzie-Mohr, D. (2000b). Promoting sustainable behavior: An introduction to community-based social marketing. Journal of Social Issues, 56(3), 543-554. Retrieved from: http://www.spssi.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewpage&pageid=950

Bator, R. J., & Cialdini, R. B. (2000). The application of persuasion theory to the development of effective proenvironmental public service announcements. Journal of Social Issues, 56(3), 527 - 541. Retrieved from: http://www.spssi.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewpage&pageid=950