

Sustainability Signage

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Executive Summary

Our case is sustainability signage. That is, signage that displays and informs by passers of the sustainability in or around nearby buildings, parking lots, outdoor spaces, online, and more. The current problem is that Western Washington University's campus has many sustainability projects that have been completed, yet they are not widely known, properly displayed, or easily visible.

We propose to use signage around campus and online in hopes of increasing the awareness of the sustainability projects that are happening around campus. We have contacted other universities who have implemented signage for sustainability projects on their campuses. Some schools that we contacted told us that their sustainability signage has produced positive results. This allowed for us to best determine some possible methods and materials to use to go about adding and updating signage. We will discuss our findings with our stakeholders at Western to come up with ideas about which sustainability projects should be labeled and to update and implement current physical and digital signage.

We have come up with an estimate of what the required funding for this project will be. Two other schools we have contacted were the University of Washington and the University of Maine at Farmington. The University of Washington is 634 acres. The size of the University of Maine at Farmington is 55 acres. Western Washington University is 215 acres. The budget for signage projects at the University of Washington was \$43,000 and the budget for signage projects at the University of Maine at Farmington was \$2,500. We have estimated that the budget for signage projects at Western Washington University would be around \$5,000. This will include two \$450 sand blasted glass LEED certification signs and their installation, a couple of physical signs, and updating current signs.

Statement of Need

Western Washington University has completed many sustainability-related projects around their campus and it is important to be proud of accomplishments. Labeling sustainability features/projects and describing them will inform the people who read them and possibly inspire them to be more sustainable in their lives.

Currently, there are some signs up for some of the sustainability projects at Western. The problem is that some of the current signs are confusing and unclear to read, the message the signs are trying to convey is not immediate. Some of the current signs are also fading and scratched up and you cannot read what they say. There are also some signs up currently that have information that is incorrect, for example, the solar panel sign by the Viking Union says that there is more information and real-time data that can be found inside at the information kiosk, but that data is not there. Another problem is that some of the sustainability projects on Western's campus simply do not have any signage at all. There are also a few problems with the digital sustainability signage. There is a campus map online that is out of date and does not show where all the sustainability features are.

By updating old, out of date, and scratched up signage and implementing some new signage around Western, students, staff, faculty, and community members will be better informed of the sustainability projects and progress on campus.

Right now is a good time to be considering adding signage around campus to label sustainability projects because Western has completed many projects. It is also important to implement signage now because we are at a point in time where being sustainable is very important. One challenge with this is that there are always sustainability projects going on at Western.

The beneficiaries of implementing signage to Western Washington University's campus are all the people who study, work, play, and visit our campus as well as those who use the Western website to find sustainability information about Western's campus. The university itself will also benefit if the sustainability signage is increased around campus. The campus will look better and the information people are getting will be true and accurate.

Project Description

Walking through Western's campus, we have noticed that there is very little signage to show off Western's accomplishments in sustainability. Currently there is a sign located in the C-Lot across the street from the Wade King Rec Center and this sign itself is inaccurate in its information. The sign mentions that each lamp post saves \$30 a year in savings, but this is no longer accurate. This is just one example of signage on Western's campus that needs to be updated. We want to increase both the knowledge and awareness of students, staff, faculty, and community members that Western is being sustainable.

After speaking with Gene Meyers (a professor in Huxley College of the Environment), he informed us that only the major projects on campus should be labeled. We do not want to put up too much signage because this could make the campus look cluttered and we believe that people will ignore the signs if there are too many. He believed that the LEED certified buildings is a great place to start due to the fact that they should have been labeled when they were originally built. On campus we have three LEED certified buildings (Carver Gym is still under review for LEED certification): Miller Hall, Academic West, and the Wade King Rec Center. As of right now, the Wade King Rec Center is the only building with the LEED certification plaque. One of our short term goals is to install the LEED certification plaques in both Miller Hall and Academic West. Underneath these plaques, we want to put a wall mounted plastic display case to inform people what LEED is and how that building is being energy efficient.

To get this project up and running we will work with facilities management here on campus before any signs are to be updated and put up. We will work with Gail Kuromiya (employee of facilities management who primarily handles signage) to examine current signage across campus to find signs that need to be updated. After speaking with her, we were informed that there is a design team here on campus who we will also work with to make sure that accurate information is portrayed on the signs. We also spoke with another facilities management employee Wyatt Catron (Wyatt is also a student in the Institute for Energy Studies here at Western), and we learned that he is working towards installing interactive computer screens in high traffic areas here on campus to inform students, staff/faculty, and the public about Western's Energy Dashboard. We want to work with Wyatt to incorporate our ideas of how Western is being sustainable on these interactive computer screens.

Within this project we will work with Susanna Hamilton in updating the Sustainability Map on Western's website. As of right now, much of the information on that map is incorrect. For example, the map shows that there are only four water bottle refill stations on campus when in reality there are twelve. The map also shows several bike racks across campus and many of those bike racks have been moved to different locations around campus. We need to make sure that the information we are giving out is accurate in its description.

With any project there will always be risks involved. After speaking with Johnathan Riopelle of the Sustainable Action Fund, he acknowledged that signs all over campus need to be updated and that it's a project he's wanted to be completed for quite some time. We hope to overcome this risk by working with all of our stakeholders to have implement signage all across Western's Campus.

Our long term goal for this project is to acknowledge the sustainability projects that have been completed on Western's campus via signage and other forms of interpretation. As long as Western Washington University continues to complete sustainability projects, some form of signage/interpretation will need to be considered with that project. There are many projects across campus that have been completed and need to be given the recognition they deserve through signage and other forms of interpretation.

Budget

While this project is an ongoing one with no real end date, the budget is difficult to determine. Western Washington University will continue to complete sustainable projects and with this comes some form of signage to show those projects off. We believe that a budget of \$5,000 would be a great place to start to update our existing signs, obtain some new signs, and get the LEED certification plaques for the LEED certified buildings. As of right now, the only building here on campus that has a LEED certified sign is Wade King, while the other two buildings; Miller Hall and Academic West are not labeled. When doing our research for this project, we learned that a LEED certification sign costs \$450 a piece and we are wanting Western to purchase two signs (one for Miller Hall and the other for Academic West). Installation costs will vary, but we believe that for the two signs and installation, it will cost roughly \$1,600. The remaining \$3,400 would be used to update signs all across campus.

Purchasing and installing the LEED certification plaques along with updating current signage are the most important factors of this budget. Updating current signs is also an important factor to consider within this budget. The sustainability map on Western's website along with physical signage around campus needs to be updated because much of the signage is inaccurate and no longer relevant. One of our next steps for this project would be contacting the Sustainable Action Fund to obtain funding to install new signs and update existing ones.

This project does not have a fixed budget but one that always fluctuates. Sustainable projects will always be occurring on Western's Campus. LEED certified buildings will be built throughout the campus and those buildings will need to include the LEED certified plaques within its budget.

Sustainability

Over the years, Western has done several projects to make this campus more sustainable and Western will continue to do so for years to come. Our project of wanting to add more signage throughout campus will be an ongoing project as long as Western Washington University continues to participate in sustainable projects. When a new sustainability project is introduced, signage should also be considered within the budget of the project. Students who work with the university will want to show off how their project is making a difference on campus, and with the help of signage, everyone who walks on campus will see how students are making a difference. We want everyone who comes on campus to see how Western is being sustainable. We hope that classes in the future will find our information helpful in updating the existing signs along with installing some new ones. For the installation of the LEED certification plaques and updating the existing signage, we hope that the future classes will contact the Sustainable Action Fund to get this project up and running.

Monitoring and Evaluation

To monitor this project, we plan to work with facilities management (especially Gail Kuromiya) to confirm that the installation of the LEED certification signs for Miller Hall and Academic West are on track. We will also be checking in with Wyatt Catron to see how the installation of the interactive computer screens is going. We want to make sure that our ideas of sustainable projects are incorporated with those computer screens. By checking in once a month with both Wyatt Catron and Gail Kuromiya, we will be monitoring the success of this project. We will also be working with Susanna Hamilton to verify that the sustainability map on Western's website is being updated.

Conclusion

Currently Western Washington University has many sustainability projects. Some of these projects have signs, some do not. For the projects that do have signs, some of those signs are not clear and/or up to date. This includes both physical and digital signage.

There are some specific ideas we have on how to go about this sustainability signage project. We would like to have all old and out of date signs updated, LEED certified buildings be labeled, websites be updated, and a couple of energy dashboards implemented in high traffic areas.

In conclusion, our main goal with this sustainability signage project is to make it clear to people who come through campus that Western has these sustainability projects because Western is proud of them and should show it. This will be done by adding limited physical signage and updating current digital and physical signage on Western's campus and website.