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It's Easy Being Green

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The Princeton Review's *Guide to 322 Green Colleges* lists the University of Dayton as one that demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability in its academic offerings, campus infrastructure, activities and career preparation.

The Princeton Review compiled the book in conjunction with the United States Green Building Council.

"College-bound students are increasingly interested in sustainability issues," said Robert Franek, senior vice president and publisher of The Princeton Review. "Among 7,445 college applicants who participated in our 2012 'College Hopes & Worries Survey,' nearly 7 out of 10 (68%) told us that having information about a school's commitment to the environment would influence their decision to apply to or attend the school."

According to The Princeton Review's profile, the University is attacking sustainability from all sides. Operational sustainability initiatives include waste, grounds, purchasing, parking and transportation, and dining to name a few.

"The University of Dayton is proud The Princeton Review recognized us for our sustainability efforts," said Kurt Hoffmann, University sustainability manager. "We have worked diligently University-wide the past few years to be faithful stewards of our environment in the Catholic, Marianist tradition."

Sustainability efforts kicked into high gear during the 2009-2010 school year with a lights-out approach to an ambitious campaign to reduce campus-wide energy use by 10 percent. The University ultimately reduced its natural gas use on main campus 5.7 percent and electric energy use 4.8 percent that year by upgrading lighting systems, even removing lights without compromising brightness in some places; installing occupancy sensors, closing buildings not used as much during the summer, and programming thermostats and heating and cooling systems to optimize savings. In all, the University saved \$612,329.

The University also started what is thought to be Ohio's largest institutional food-scrap recycling effort and one of the largest university food composting efforts in the nation. In the first year alone, the University diverted 200 tons from landfills.

Also starting during the 2009-2010 school year, the University joined forces with Wright State University, Central State University and the Air Force Institute of Technology to start the two-year renewable and clean energy master's program. Demand is nearly three times the projected enrollment figures.

The following academic year, sustainability efforts expanded to include more student participation. The University participated in a city of Dayton pilot recycling program providing each of the University's approximately 633 units in the student neighborhood with large recycling bins.

Students also started receiving report cards in 2010 demonstrating how they use energy in University-owned housing. The verdict: 85 percent of the 469 monitored student residences received an average or better score, and by the end of the year the University estimated a \$20,000 savings on gas and electric. In addition to the savings, the University empowered the students. A student survey at the end of the 2010-11 school year found nearly half said the report cards made them more aware of their energy usage and changed the way they used energy.

The Princeton Review isn't the only accolade for the University in this area. Last fall, the University's efforts earned a Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS®) bronze rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. STARS gave positive marks to the University for its sustainability policies in human resources, such as employee wellness programs and options for socially responsible investing in retirement; and commended its public engagement in working with city government and other universities on sustainability efforts; and student involvement in community service around sustainability.

Not to rest on its laurels, the University continues its eco-friendly efforts, this time with new construction.

The \$51-million GE Aviation Dayton Electrical Power Research Lab currently under construction will be the University's first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-certified (LEED) building. According to the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED certification provides independent verification a building was designed and built using strategies aimed at achieving high performance in sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

Much of the construction material is recycled. The adhesives, paints, flooring and wood materials used are classified as "low-emitting materials," or not giving off many pollutants. More than 50 percent of construction waste will be diverted from landfills.

The Electrical Power Research Lab will be close to bus lines and a bicycle path to encourage employees to use environmentally friendly alternatives to driving to work.

Landscaping will be water-efficient and the plumbing system is designed to reduce water consumption.

Five new houses being built in the student neighborhoods for the 2012-2013 school year will be certified as green buildings under the National Association of Homebuilders national green building standard.

Find more information about the University of Dayton's sustainability efforts on the Learn. Lead. ConServe. website.

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