Academic Initiatives Working Group Internship

Alexi Lamm

Mentors: Tom Evans, Rob Meyer
Introduction

The Academic Initiatives Working Group (AIWG) focuses on three areas of campus sustainability: curricular, co-curricular, and research. The group has had 14 interns since 2007, beginning with internships reviewing sustainability measures at other universities and more recently internships focusing on academic programs and a research clearinghouse at Indiana University. Work of these previous interns provided a significant basis for the 2011-2012 academic year internship. Intern projects had already established a preliminary process compiling courses, and they had compiled a list of sustainability researchers for the research clearinghouse project. Recommendations were in place for the co-curricular area.

The AIWG has done considerable work to compile information on classes, research and other aspects of sustainability. Much of their work is available on the Office of Sustainability (IUOS) website, including projects such as the “Sustainability Clearinghouse” and listings of sustainability courses. However, the information must be easy to search and access to be useful to the campus community. Work this semester focused on continuing the work of previous interns to compile information in the three focus areas as well as making the information easier for the public to access and for the next intern to update.

Goals

1. Working Group
   a. Increase membership
   b. Update AIWG web presence
2. Curricular
   a. Increase accessibility to sustainability-related and focused classes
   b. Promote the development of sustainability-related curriculum
   c. Increase self-reporting by faculty
3. Co-curricular
   a. Improve accessibility to sustainability co-curricular activities
   b. Promote sustainability co-curricular groups and activities
4. Research
   a. Improve accessibility to sustainability-related and focused research
   b. Promote sustainability research

Working Group

AIWG consists for students, faculty, and staff who meet monthly. The group recruited additional students in the spring semester to join the committee, increasing active membership to sixteen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tom Evans</td>
<td>Co-Chair, Faculty (Geography)</td>
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<td>Rob Meyer</td>
<td>Co-Chair, Assistant Director of Activities and Events (IMU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eli Blevis</td>
<td>Faculty (Informatics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Bower-Bir</td>
<td>Ph.D. Student (Political Science/SPEA)</td>
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<td>Sanya Carley</td>
<td>Faculty (SPEA)</td>
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<td>Melissa Clark</td>
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<td>John Galuska</td>
<td>Faculty Folklore/Ethnomusicology; Director (Foster International Living-Learning Center)</td>
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<td>Paul Edwards</td>
<td>Coordinator of IU-HBCU STEM Faculty Research and Student Academic Experience</td>
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<td>Oren Pizmony-Levy</td>
<td>Ph.D. Student (Dept. of Sociology and Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Plassman</td>
<td>Ph.D. Student (Department of Communication &amp; Culture)</td>
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<td>Emilie Rex</td>
<td>Assistant Director (IUOS)</td>
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<td>Michael Sauer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sara Swan</td>
<td>Undergraduate Student (Sustainable Food Security)</td>
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AIWG also had a webpage within the IUOS website. This year the content has undergone minor updates and a design overhaul. The new design includes six webpages and additional course listing pages, which the intern creates each semester. Dividing information over several pages makes the content easier to read and find. The IUOS Green Teams template provided the design for the new pages. See Appendix A for screenshots of the webpages.

Another development over the 2011-2012 academic year was improved organization of the working group’s files. Meeting notes and documents shared between interns and the working group are on the AIWG OnCourse site. Meeting agendas, notes, intern reports, and other documents shared between the intern and mentors are in a shared Dropbox.

Curricular

One of the primary internship duties is to post sustainability courses to both the Office of Sustainability and the Office of the Registrar websites. The continued compilation of these courses begins with the course list of the prior analogous semester, e.g. Fall 2012 referenced Fall 2011, and Spring 2012 referenced Spring 2011. The intern cross checks the lists, and courses that continue to be offered remain on the list. Then, the intern searches the course list for possible listings and solicits additions from faculty members on the IUOS faculty sustainability listserv. Course additions require a review of the course description to determine whether the course is sustainability-related or focused. If the designation is unclear, then the intern requests and reviews the course syllabus, using the following definitions:

- **Sustainability focused** courses concentrate on the concept of sustainability, including its social, economic, and environmental dimensions, or examine an issue or topic using sustainability as a lens. Sustainability is a consistent thread throughout each course component and most assignments are designed to help students develop a better understanding of sustainability and sustainable development.

- **Sustainability related** courses incorporate sustainability as a distinct course component or module, or concentrate on a single sustainability principle or issue.

Once the courses are compiled, the intern sends the list for inclusion on the Office of the Registrar “Special Course Listings,” posts the list to the IUOS website, and emails the list to the advisors’ listserv.

This semester the course page listings were placed in a MySQL database, and the pages access the information through php coding. This process should assist future interns with expedient posting of the new course lists because interns will be able to upload a spreadsheet rather than hand code each entry into html. Additionally, this interface includes a sort function, which lets users arrange listings by department, instructor, title, class number, and course number. A future addition could be to include links to the course descriptions. However, the time investment required by the intern might not justify the convenience it would provide to users.

Final Products

1. Compilation and publication of sustainability-related and focused courses to the IUOS and Office of the Registrar websites
   a. Spring 2012: 72 courses
   b. Summer 2012: 14 courses
   c. Fall 2012: 51 courses (excludes multiple sections and labs and is continually updated)
2. New PHP-coded interface and sortable function for courses on IUOS web pages
3. Documentation of the process of updating the sustainability course list for future interns
Co-curricular

The co-curricular area was the least focused at the beginning of the semester, and it continues to be the least focused. However, AIWG has made some progress in this area. The group adopted a definition of co-curricular learning in the Fall semester:

Co-curricular learning is *formal and informal out-of-class IU-affiliated learning opportunities that include one or more of the following: involvement with student clubs and organizations; participation in workshops and lectures; interactions with faculty members and others students; and participation in volunteer sessions, internship experiences, or other experiential learning opportunities and activities.*

Subsequent work involved meetings with stakeholders on campus. A Fall meeting with the Office of Student Life and Learning revealed updates to the MyInvolvement interface, which was completed in February 2012, would allow student organizations to list their group’s focus under two categories, instead of one. This would allow sustainability-related groups that had previously identified as service, advocacy, or governance groups to identify as sustainability related as well, making these groups more visible to students searching for a sustainability organizations. However, the expanded listings will take time to materialize since student groups will not update their organization’s profile immediately after the change. Furthermore, the MyInvolvement updates were set to simplify the calendar system, and it now feeds events to the university calendar. This meeting also led to access to the student organization list and an update of the sustainability organization listings on the IUOS website.

A meeting with representation from the Student Sustainability Council (SSC) revealed they largely coordinate the sustainability groups on campus, although some groups choose not to join the council. SSC also sends out weekly emails about sustainability events on campus and maintains a calendar of events. However, student volunteers update the calendar, so it is not always current. The council is interested in work AIWG could do to consolidate a listing of departmental lectures and the dispersed sustainability events around campus.

Group member, Emilie Rex, updated the AIWG on IUOS involvement in information dissemination for co-curricular activities. An IUOS website redesign is underway, and it will lead to a site that is easier to navigate and update. IUOS also maintains a calendar and a weekly email with sustainability updates. Over the course of the semester, the office has focused more on maintaining the calendar, and it is currently up-to-date.

The results of these meetings revealed AIWG does not need to enter the fields of coordinating student organizations or distributing information of co-curricular activities through emails or calendars unless the groups providing the current services require facilitation for coordination of their efforts.

AIWG recognizes time commitment required to publicize sustainability activities and decided to conduct a survey to learn more about where the campus community obtains information. The survey consists of 15 questions, first asking what media respondents use on a regular basis and then asking whether they use the current sustainability options using those media. The final survey questions ask whether respondents have already participated in a sustainability curricular or co-curricular activity, and it ends with demographic questions. The results of this survey could help target future publicity efforts. See Appendix C for the text of the survey.

While the survey results are incomplete as of the writing of this report, preliminary numbers indicate that none of the sustainability sites and tools had over 50% recognition by the 57 respondents. The most recognized tool was the “This Week in Sustainability” listserv from the IUOS with 49.1% recognition from respondents, but only 26.4% used it more frequently than once a month. The least known tool was IUOS calendar, 77.2% of the respondents were unaware it existed, and only 3.6% used it more often than once a month.

The survey did present a few opportunities to reach students. While 64.9% of respondents check Facebook more than once a day, only 36.8% had heard of the Office of Sustainability Facebook page, and 10.5% check it more than once a month. Another potential opportunity was Twitter; 44.6% of respondents use it more than once a month, but only 9% use IUOS Twitter feed more than once a month. The disparities between the general use of these media and the sustainability-specific use could indicate room for
growth. However, many sustainability groups and activities have Facebook and Twitter accounts, so progress might be challenging.

While Twitter and Facebook are possible areas for growth, “This Week in Sustainability” listserv is currently the most common information source (33.33%). Among the 30 respondents who had participated in a sustainability organization, event, or course, the next most common methods were a suggestion from professor or instructor (16.67%) and a personal invitation from a friend (13.37%).

This survey likely appeals more to people who have an interest in sustainability, which might influence the number of people who recognize sustainability sites and tools to be higher within the results of the survey than the actual proportion within the general population. Furthermore, the distribution methods, e.g. email, Facebook, Twitter, OneStart, for this survey might not reach many of the people who have not heard of sustainability sites and tools because it has been released through many of the same media through which sustainability information is released. The next intern will complete an analysis once the survey results are final.

Final Products

1. Information on the publicity of sustainability activities and organizations by the Office of Student Life and Learning, SSC, and IUOS
2. Results from a media use survey
3. Updated compilation of sustainability-related and focused student groups:

Research

The research focus of AIWG progressed through the creation of sustainability research web interface. Using a list of researchers from previous intern, Elisabeth Gawthrop, and building of the progress of intern Elizabeth Davis, seven faculty profiles and one post-doctoral profile were posted to the new web page. The research summaries include a photo, brief biography, and a summary of prominent works or research focus areas. Following the eight featured profiles is a list of other researchers on campus who work in areas of sustainability. This web page also allows the information to be updated out of a spreadsheet through a MySQL database and php coding. See Appendix B for a screenshot of the research interface.

Final Products

1. New web interface for featuring sustainability-related and focused research:
2. Eight sustainability research features are written and posted
3. Documentation of the process for updating the research website for the next intern

Recommendations/Next Steps

AIWG

• Expand membership to include two to four active undergraduate members. Undergraduates compose the majority of the campus population, and many of AIWG’s initiatives target undergraduate students. However, they are underrepresented in AIWG. The Kelley Net Impact Group has expressed interest in involvement with AIWG.
• AIWG should continue to update its strategic plan, creating measurable goals for the next ten years as well as short-term goals for the next one to three years.
• Update web content to reflect current AIWG goals and projects.

Curricular

• Continue to encourage the Office of the Registrar move towards a system that allows students to search for sustainability courses in OneStart.

Co-Curricular

• Explore methods of compiling sustainability events on campus.
• Use the results of the media use survey to increase the effectiveness of sustainability communications to publicize sustainability courses, research, activities, and organizations.
• Facilitate coordination of IUOS and SSC to list sustainability events in a central location.

Research
• Expand the research webpage to include two to four additional faculty and student profiles each semester, emphasizing winners of sustainability-related grants.
• Ideally, no more than eight profiles will circulate in the feature box, but the names on the researchers in the list at the bottom of the webpage could link to the retired profiles.
• Classify researchers on the list by research focus, e.g. renewable energy, food security, to allow people interested in a particular area identify researchers more quickly.

The committee also brainstormed the following list of unprioritized potential goals.

One-Year Goals
1. More coordination/communication between sustainability faculty across campus
2. Create a “sustainability scholar” program
   a. Provide service opportunity
   b. Cohort of students/ social component
3. Education in residence halls
   Eco-reps
   a. Create resources to support the activities of eco-reps
   b. Meet with people to explore the possibility for next year
   RAs
   a. Create lesson plans or other materials for RAs to use it to educate residents
   b. Summer AIWG and first year experience interns could collaborate
4. Getting external funding for educational sustainability activities
5. Sustainability-specific service learning classes
6. List of sustainability tours available for clubs or classes
7. Coordinate one speaker with a high profile event to create community
   a. SustainIU’s keynote speaker or the sustainability awards banquet speaker

Three-Year Goals
1. Undergraduate sustainability capstone with a permanent course number
   a. It could involve IUOS interns and/or service learning
2. Increase the number of departments offering sustainability courses

Long Term Goals
1. Requiring sustainability course content or courses for students

Conclusion
AIWG interns have performed the task of compiling sustainability courses, research, and co-curricular activities and organizations over the years, and the information has been useful for STARS reporting and people involved in the sustainability movement on campus. However, in order to change more people’s actions, the information must reach a broader audience. This semester continued previous interns’ work in the compilation of information and made progress in increasing its accessibility. The media survey AIWG conducted in the Spring semester will help with ongoing efforts to reach an audience of students, faculty, and staff who have less knowledge and exposure to sustainability concepts and activities on campus.

Future interns should continue compiling and promoting work in the curricular, co-curricular, and research areas while continuously thinking of ways to increase the usefulness of the information through dissemination to a broader audience.
Appendices

Appendix A

Academic Initiatives Working Group

AIWG Working Group and Strategic Planning

The IU Task Force on Sustainability (IUTFS) created the Academic Initiatives Working Group in 2007 to address the need for academic and co-curricular programming on the IUB campus and in the surrounding community. With the establishment of the IU Office of Sustainability in 2009, the IUTFS transitioned into the Campus Sustainability Advisory Board (CSAB). The Academic Initiatives Working Group continues its research and programming as one of seven CSAB working groups. This section addresses the mission, strategic plan and membership of this group.

Interested in getting involved with sustainability related academic initiatives on campus or promoting sustainability in your degree program or others on campus? Please contact aiwg@indiana.edu.

Mission

To build an integrated program of academic research, undergraduate and graduate education, co-curricular and service-learning opportunities, and community outreach that will move Indiana University Bloomington into a position of national leadership in sustainability studies.

To move Indiana University towards its goal of leadership in the new academic arena of sustainability, an integrated program of exceptional undergraduate and graduate education, research and creative activity, and community outreach that builds on the academic strengths of IU's academic resources must be established. Such academic sustainability initiatives should include the interrelated aspects of ecology, economic and social equity, public health and wellness, globalization and international relations, urbanization and poverty, and the politics and economics of food. They must also involve the integration of the academic, co-curricular, and operational elements of campus life.

Working Group Membership

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<tr>
<th>Working Group Member</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Email (ifindiana.edu)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Evans</td>
<td>Co-Chair, Faculty (Geography)</td>
<td>evans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob Meyer</td>
<td>Co-Chair, Assistant Director of Activities and Events (IMU)</td>
<td>robemeyer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eli Blevis</td>
<td>Faculty (IUOS): Graduate Student (SPEA)</td>
<td>eliblevis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacob Bowes-Bir</td>
<td>Graduate Student (Political Science/SPEA)</td>
<td>jbowesb</td>
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<td>Sanya Carley</td>
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<td>Faculty Folklore/Ethnomusicology: Director (Foster International Living-Learning Center)</td>
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<td>Emilie Rex</td>
<td>Assistant Director (IUOS)</td>
<td>eixrex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Sauer</td>
<td>Sr. Research Analyst (Registrar)</td>
<td>mjpauser</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Academic Initiatives Working Group

## Projects and Progress at IU

- **Research interface launched** (2012)
- **Planning degree on Environmental and Sustainability Studies** (2011)
- **Sustainability course compilation** (2010)
- **Sustainability Teaching Awards** (2009 - present)
- **Sustainability Research Development Grants** (2009)
- **Establishment of the IU Office of Sustainability** (2009)
- **IU Task Force on Sustainability** (now **Campus Sustainability Advisory Board**) created AIWG (2007)

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## Environmental Literacy Student Learning

- Various graduate and undergraduate [Sustainability Degree and Concentration Programs](#) are in development
- Geography: MS Sustainable Energy
- Kelley School of Business: Sustainable Enterprise
- Area Certificate in Sustainability
- College Environmental Studies Committee
- **Food Studies Ph.D. minor**
- New "SU" Registrar designation for courses related to sustainability. See full listing of sustainability related courses
- **Sustainability Teaching Awards** offered through Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs (awarded 2009)
- Beginning Fall 2009, the Green Thematic Community, taking up one floor in a residence hall, will provide space for a community that embodies, explores and spreads awareness of all things related to sustainable living.
- Eleven residence halls have volunteer Eco-reps who promote environmental change on campus.
- **IU Energy Challenge** pits dorm and Greek house residents in a competition to see who can reduce energy and water consumption the most
- The College of Arts and Sciences' **Fall 2010 Thematic** – "sustain-ability: Thriving on a Small Planet" will feature a full semester of multi-disciplinary academic opportunities around the theme, with special course offerings, speakers and events

## Research, Scholarship, & Creative Activity

- **Sustainability Research Development Grants** offered through the IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs (awarded 2009)
- Faculty Research Support Program Grant focus area through the Office of the Vice Provost for Research
- The following internships through the IU Office of Sustainability have helped to further academic initiatives related to sustainability at Indiana University:
- **SustainIU** held in Spring 2009 focused eight days of panel discussions, lectures, films, and volunteer opportunities around sustainability
**Summer 2012 Sustainability Courses**

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**Co-curricular learning is**

Formal and informal out-of-class IU-affiliated learning opportunities that include one or more of the following: involvement with student clubs and organizations; participation in workshops and lectures; interactions with faculty members and others students; and participation in volunteer sessions, internship experiences, or other experiential learning opportunities and activities.

- **Get Involved** on campus through a student organization.
- **Attend an event**
- Get connected through a listserv. Email susanvent@indiana.edu to stay updated.
# Appendix B

## Sustainability Research at Indiana University

### Craig Smith

Craig Smith is a postdoctoral researcher at IU whose primary interest is in applications of meteorology to wind energy. In 2005, a five-month thru-hike of the Pacific Crest Trail sparked his interest in mountain meteorology. Smith cites this as, “easily the most formative portion of my education.” He learned first-hand the applications of mountain meteorology, the value of wilderness and the destructive tendencies of anthropocentric points of view. He brought these points of view back from the trail, and he applies them through his research. Advances in wind energy technology and forecasting through research such as Smith’s could allow society to leave more land undeveloped by collocating wind farms with food farms or locating them offshore. Smith says that an increasing role of renewable energy might allow the U.S. to realistically acknowledge, if not address, our greenhouse gas emissions, as well as reduce mercury emissions from coal plants, which account, in part, for restrictions placed on the consumption of fish in places as close to IU as Grisy Reservoir. Smith notes that renewable energy might be difficult to contextualize, but it affects people locally.

### Listed Faculty Researchers: 53

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<td><a href="http://www.indiana.edu/~crjustice/">http://www.indiana.edu/~crjustice/</a></td>
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<td>Daniel Knudson</td>
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<td>Steven Krell</td>
<td>Business</td>
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Appendix C

The Indiana University Office of Sustainability oversees many sustainability-related activities on campus including a degree program, internships, speakers, course offerings, and activities. The office is trying to assess the best way to deliver news of these activities to the campus community and would greatly benefit from your feedback.

Participation is voluntary, and survey data is collected anonymously. Please choose the options that best approximate your usage.

15 Questions
Estimated completion time: 5-10 minutes

1. How often do you access these sites and tools?

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2. How often do you access these sustainability sites and tools?

Acronyms used below:
Indiana University Office of Sustainability (IUOS)
Student Sustainability Council (SSC)

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3. Have you taken a sustainability focused or related course at IU?
  - Yes
  - No

4. Are you involved in a sustainability focused or related organization at IU?
  - Yes
  - No

5. Have you attended any lectures on campus (separate from classes) that have addressed sustainability themes?
  - Yes
  - No

6. Have you participated in any sustainability related service events (e.g. clean up days in Dunn’s Woods, Hoosier to Hoosier Community Sale, Greening Cream and Crimson)?
  - Yes
  - No
7. If you have been involved in a sustainability organization, attended a sustainability-related event, or taken a sustainability-related course, how did you hear about it? Please choose the option most influential to your decision.

- IUOS Blog
- IUOS Facebook page
- IUOS Twitter feed
- IUOS Google calendar
- "This Week in Sustainability" listserv
- IUOS sustainability course list
- IU Office of the Registrar sustainability course list
- SSC Facebook page
- SSC Google calendar
- Other (please specify)

8. Please list three ways that IU Office of Sustainability can better deliver news and information about sustainability related activities to the campus community:

1. 
2. 
3. 

9. Please share any additional comments here.

10. Select the classification that best describes you:

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Grad student
- Staff
- Faculty

11. In what year did you first move to Bloomington?

- 2012
- 2011
- 2010
- 2009
- 2008
- 2007
- 2006
- 2005
- 2000-2004
- 1995-1999
- Before 1995

12. Do you live on or off-campus?

- On-campus
- Off-campus

13. Your Sex:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender

14. What is your racial or ethnic identification? (Mark only one)

- American Indian or other Native American
- Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- White (non-Hispanic)
- Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, other Hispanic or Latino
- Multiracial

15. Which best describes your overall GPA at college? (If this is your first semester of college, please report your expected GPA)

- Below 2.0
- 2.0 – 2.5
- 2.6 – 3.0
- 3.1 – 3.5
- 3.6 – 4.0

Thank you for your time and participation!
Please direct questions to aiwg@indiana.edu.