

Going Green Together: Promoting Sustainability and Campus Collaborations

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Many academic libraries encourage their students to recycle and have exhibits related to Earth Day/Week. Yet in order to create a richer and more engaging environment, our Library at a public, 4-year institution, tapped into the campus' sustainability initiatives and efforts, and created a Library Environmental Sustainability Group (ESG). One of the campus' four "grand research themes" as outlined in the campus strategic plan is "Understanding and Protecting the Planet." The Library is typically seen as a house for resources and collection. The ESG makes the Library's role in sustainability efforts more active. The charge of the group included developing comprehensive strategies and institutional practices that promote sustainability, including measures to make more efficient use of resources, conserve, and to decrease waste.

This poster session examines the impact of strategies and services on library staff and students implemented over a five-year period. The longitudinal study measures programming and outreach participation as an effective method to stimulate interest and involvement in the greater environmental sustainability movement. ESG members identified campus and community partners, including student groups. Finding campus partners was made easier because of the campus sustainability plan. Since the campus was pushing their own sustainability initiatives, ESG gained momentum on certain projects by aligning the group's goals with campus goals. While value can be measured in the amount of paper recycled or lights turned off, the value of collective practice fostering institutional transformation and individual change is immeasurable. Plans are described in detail so attendees can implement and evaluate similar sustainability initiatives at their institutions.