**SWATeam Recommendation**

**Name of SWATeam:** Zero Waste

**SWATeam Chair:** Dr. Timothy D. Stark

**Date Submitted to iWG:**3 April 2020

**Specific Actions/Policy Recommended (a few sentences):**

 We are recommending a pilot program for what we are calling the *Student Sustainability Ambassadors* initiative. The main idea is to have teams assigned to buildings – one team per building - on campus with student volunteers playing a central role in these teams. Other members of each team: the Building Manager, one or two Zero Waste Contacts in each building (i.e. staff or faculty volunteers in each building from a list of campus contacts that the ZW Coordinator will put together with a view to promoting ZW.)

The focus of each team: all aspects that are relevant to whether a building is being operated sustainably with attention to the actions of people in the building. This includes reducing waste, increasing recycling, sustainable purchasing, natural landscaping, energy use, amount of printing that is done, and so on. A large focus will be placed on relating these components to the iCAP goals and objectives.

Student Sustainability Ambassadors will speak with people who work in the building about issues they notice and about how they use the building. They will work to quantify waste/energy/resources used/etc. in their assigned building. They will help to inform people in the assigned building about all matters pertaining to sustainability including issues at the campus level, in particular the goals of iSEE and F&S. They will also work to provide solutions to problems they identify in their buildings.

**Rationale for Recommendation (a few sentences):**

 A major aim is to provide interested students with leadership and educational opportunities while helping the university to meet its iCAP goals.

**Connection to iCAP Goals (a few sentences):**

 This will provide a way to promote all iCAP goals and initiatives, making them central to the operation of each building and to the work and activities of everyone associated with the building. One of the tasks of the Student Sustainability Ambassadors will be to promote within “their” building all relevant sustainability programs. They would make sure that recycling is being done properly; that every unit in their building is encouraged to sign up for the green office program; that their building is included in the “lights off” program; they would try to meet with everyone associated with the building to explain iCAP goals; and so on.

**Perceived Challenges (a few sentences):**

 As with all new initiatives, we expect that there will be a great deal to be learned about what works best. There is a lot involved: making sure that the volunteer experience is meaningful, that the academic component is challenging and relevant, and that this initiative actually helps the campus to achieve its iCAP goals.

**Suggested unit/department to address implementation:**

iSEE, F & S, in cooperation with Zero Waste SWATeam, Office of Volunteer Programs, Housing, Volunteer Illini Projects, Student environmental organizations (e.g. SECS, Engineers without Borders, Red Bison, Bee Campus …), University Y, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

Anticipated level of budget and/or policy impact (low, medium, high):

 Low-medium

Individual comments are required from each SWATeam member (can be brief, if member fully agrees):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Team Member Name  | Team Member’s Comments  |
| Tim Stark (Chair) | This is an excellent recommendation and I think the course will be well attended. |
| Robert McKim(Recommendation Lead) | I enthusiastically support this recommendation. If implemented, this initiative has a potential to provide a large number of students with a role in promoting iCAP goals across our campus. |
| Maddy Liberman (Recommendation Lead) | There is a need for understanding how sustainability goals, including but not limited to those outlined in the Illinois Climate Action Plan, can be achieved in the various kinds of university buildings. This recommendation will serve to meet this need, and further increase sustainability on campus while also providing a fantastic service-learning opportunity for students. I fully support this recommendation. |
| Leon Liebenberg | I enthusiastically support this initiative. |
| Thurman Etchison | I fully support the Student Sustainability Ambassador Recommendation. The interaction with staff will be very educational for both the student and staff members and will almost certainly lead to a change of habits regarding sustainability. I believe the program will build on itself in that once positive impacts are seen and measured, the results will cause more buy-in from staff. I believe the collaboration amongst Ambassadors will prove to be very educational as they will learn about the issues different type buildings present. The effects of this program will impact sustainability far beyond the campus as these students will have developed the knowledge and ability to effect change when they leave campus for a career. This program will also indirectly pay for itself in terms of savings from being more sustainable. |
| Aaron Finder | I fully support this recommendation. This will be a great learning and leadership opportunity not only for students but also building managers and their staff. I really like how the course will include campus facility tours like the waste transfer station. This will give the participants a big picture view and the challenges we face at various stages of our institution. To overcome these challenges, we need to pursue new creative ideas. This recommendation will offer the perfect environment to foster these new ideas by bringing students, faculty and staff together for the common task of moving towards achieving iCAP 2020 goals. |
| Shantanu Pai | This recommendation, among other things, provides Waste Management and Recycling program with on the ground support, accountability, and guidance required to implement our zero waste goal, thus I support the recommendation. |
| Manying Zhang | I totally support this recommendation. It provides students and staff with more learning opportunities of being sustainable. And students could have practical and interacting experience. Education builds the foundation of long-lasting sustainable environment. This course is very helpful for everyone together to achieve iCAP 2020 goals. |

Comments from Consultation Group (if any; these can be anonymous):

Explanation and Background (can be supplied in an attachment):

This pilot program will be an experiment, with the aim being to expand the initiative, ideally to all campus buildings, if it is judged to be a success. The initial pilot program should be implemented in a number of *types* of buildings (e.g. residence halls, buildings with many classrooms, buildings with labs, administrative buildings, etc.) with a view to implementing it across campus if it is judged to be a success. Part of the purpose of the pilot stage is to work out how to structure the initiative so that it will have longevity.

Perhaps10-20 students the first time.

Students who serve in this capacity will sign up for a year-long volunteer commitment. (The aim is for them to become familiar with “their” building over a sustained period of time.)

They will be eligible for two hours of academic credit each semester provided they enroll in the course (NRES 285) and fulfill all requirements for the course, including the service component and all writing and other assignments.

In the course students will develop ideas to tackle sustainability issues in their buildings and on campus. Students might develop a research or monitoring project for their assigned building. They will also read and discuss some of the best current literature on what it takes to be a sustainable university.

The course will meet once to twice a week and have a different focus each week, starting with an overview of sustainability on campus, touching on what has been achieved, current initiatives, goals and so on.

Initially the course would be focused in part on developing this initiative and working towards its future development and expansion across campus. So the initial cohort of students will have as part of their task to work out how to make the initiative a success. The students will therefore be combining learning with organizing a new initiative and with engaging parts of the university community.

This will be true service learning: serving the campus while learning a great deal about what sustainability means on a campus such as ours, learning to lead a new initiative, and learning to be ambassadors for sustainability on campus.

Possibly apply for iSEE course development funds or a Student Sustainability Committee Grant, if needed.

 Syllabus is attached below for further details.