



Finalist's case study



Aston University Sustainability Champion - Staff Anne Perkins

About the project

Summary

Although sustainability is not a normal part of my role, I have always been interested in environmental issues in my personal life and so when the University set up the Go Green Champion scheme, I was keen to take on this role within the library. Over the years I have gradually changed people's attitudes towards sustainability within the library team and I am proud to say that we are now one of the most sustainable departments on campus.

Projects

I started out by recruiting a small team of enthusiastic members of staff. We now hold regular Go Green Meetings to discuss our plans and progress. One of the most successful initiatives we put in place was the monthly recycling challenge, which selects a different item each month that can be collected and recycled or sent to charity. For example, we asked people to donate their unwanted spectacles to a vision charity. Other recycling initiatives have included the very successful book swap, as well as a 'book rescue', which encourages students to donate unwanted text books when they leave the University. These books can then either be reused by the library, sold at a significantly reduced price to students or donated to Better World Books.

Inspired by the success of these schemes, we have more recently run stationary giveaway events whereby staff can donate unwanted stationary which can then be given away to new students. This proved to be so popular that the University has decided to run this as a larger campaign at the beginning of term during Welcome Week. We have also set up a pen recycling scheme in the library by working with a recycling organisation 'Terracycle' and once again this scheme has since been rolled out across the University, with many offices now having pen recycling boxes.

As well as waste and recycling schemes, I have been keen to encourage energy efficiency within the library and have helped to implement several efficiency measures over the years. This has included many simple behaviour changes such as switching off computers, encouraging staff to use the stairs instead of the lift, more efficient use of the dishwashers, as well as wearing warmer clothing in the winter.

As well as these changes in staff behaviours I have also played an instrumental role in making more technological improvements throughout the building to improve energy efficiency. This included implementing a review of lighting levels across the building, adjusting the lights to ensure they switch off after a certain period of time and helping the Estates team to heat the building at the appropriate times and to the right temperatures to ensure minimal wastage. I also approved the installation of CO2 sensors within the library that reduce ventilation when there is low occupancy in the building.



Profile

- Higher Education
- 8860 FTE teaching students; 265 FTE Research students
- 1395 FTE staff
- Urban



Green Gown Awards 2017



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The future

Top 3 learnings from implementing your project

- 1 Make the project as much fun as possible, smiles are catching!
- 2 Find an angle on the project that will elicit enthusiasm in staff and students
- 3 Use social media to promote events and engage with the target audience

Sharing your project

We are always keen to share our successes with the rest of the University, as well as with other University libraries. We often meet with Go Green Champions from other departments to show them how we have implemented our sustainability initiatives within the library. Many of our projects have also been rolled out across the University at a larger scale.

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

Aston University aims to embed sustainability and social responsibility into all aspects of University life. The University is therefore extremely pleased to have external recognition of our progress in this area.

Further information

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