



Finalist's case study



Cranfield University Student Engagement

Bottom up, top down, meet with Outstanding student engagement At Cranfield



Profile

- HE
- 2670 Students
- 1653 staff
- Rural
- Annual Turnover £176M

About the project

Summary

Outstanding results have been achieved by blending a top down and a bottom up approach. The University and the student association are working in partnership have created a win-win situation where the institution and the students have both benefitted. A top down approach was developed with a subcommittee of the executive being established to provide governance. At the same time, a bottom up approach was developed with the formation of a student Green Teams, who compose of a team of passionate individuals who volunteer to take actions to improve the environment. The elected Green Officer sits on the CSA executive team and acts to represent the student Green Team body during meetings with Board of Energy and Environment and working groups.

Project partners

The Cranfield Student Association (CSA) has provided some funding and resources to support us.

The results

The problem

Here at Cranfield University we are exclusively postgraduate institution with the majority of the students studying for master's degree for just one year. This short timeframe presents a major challenge for recruiting a new student green team and engaging the team in environmental activities and campaigns. Also, as a research intensive University we have a major challenge of cutting our carbon footprint and keep waste levels down to a minimum.

The approach

Our approach is to mirror a top down and bottom up approach. We ensure the student body is tied into University government structure by representation on the Board of Energy and Environment (BEE) and working groups. This representation has become much easier with the establishment of a Green Team and Green Officer role. Whilst we ensure there are opportunities for students to take their own lead on developing their own projects, we provide resources for 'green' activities such as conservation events, tree planting, awareness raising, completing recycling/energy audits etc. All students who were active members will receive an end of year certificate and a celebration event for the whole team.



Our goals

To have a thriving student Green Team which we work closely with to reach the wider student body and practice behavior change which benefits both the students and the wider University.

Obstacles and solutions

Obstacles	Solutions
Student period on campus very short	We need to work quickly every fresher's week to recruit new students by asking them to sign onto the Green Team mailing list. This gives us a means of communicating with these students throughout the year and notifying them of events.
No Continuity	Most master's students will not stay for a second year, however, PhD students remain and they can act as a continuation. We also make new students aware of the activities of the former student Green Team.
Lack of time/commitment	Student Green Team activities are entirely flexible and students commit only to what activities suits them.
Lack of staff time/resources	The Environment Coordinator provides assistance and resources to the Green Team when needed.

Performance and results

CO2 savings

Please record the annual carbon savings* you have/will achieve with your initiative**.	
CO2t savings 2016/2017:	24 tonnes (Actual)
CO2t savings 2017/2018:	26 tonnes (Estimated)
CO2t savings over the life cycle of the project:	120 tonnes (Estimated)

The future

Lessons learned

Green Team has to be promoted strongly in the first few days as does the election for "Green Officer". We developed an Action Log which many students valued as it gave them suggestions for actions which could be taken on campus. However not many used it as a log, but more as a guidance. This is something we will look to develop further in future years.



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Top 3 learnings from implementing your project

1. Treat students as key stakeholders and invite them to executive team meetings and working groups.
2. Recruit PhD students into the Green Team so they can help to continue the team for the next intake of students.
3. Provide resources for the Green Team that support them with events and campaigns.

Sharing your project

We make sure that all events, achievements, and photographs taken during events and campaigns are documented and communicated on social media, intranet and via email communication. Sharing information and achievement in this way generates a sense of community spirit and encourages others to join in.

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

Being a finalist in the Green Gown means we are receiving well-earned recognition for our unique work in engagement and behavior change. This helps to not only raise the status of the work to our senior management team, but also can act as inspiration for other Universities and other institutions to do the same.

Further information

Energy and Environment Manager: r.g.ellis@cranfield.ac.uk

Environment Coordinator: b.shepherd@cranfield.ac.uk

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CranfieldGreen>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CranfieldGreen/>

Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/146569024@N06/albums>

Website: <https://www.cranfield.ac.uk/about/environmental-credentials>

www.green gownawards.org.uk

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