

University of Exeter Sustainability Champion Jonathan Cresswell Cultural Change Project

Section 1 About the project

Summary

Embed, and create a legacy for sustainability, and successfully engage college staff to further the University sustainability agenda.

Project partners

College [Green Impact](#) Teams and the [University Sustainability Team](#)

Section 2 The results

The problem

Low sustainability risk profile score along with a lack of awareness of sustainability initiatives and training meant that sustainability was not profiling high on the College's agenda.

The approach

Develop a long lasting approach to environmental sustainability through embedding policy and awareness, and the empowerment of sustainability coordinators and staff.

Our goals

Increase awareness, raise the profile of environmental sustainability, manage risks, and share success.

Obstacles and solutions

Obstacle	Solution
Awareness of Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further learning and uptake of sustainability making the University Environmental Sustainability in the Workplace training mandatory for all technical staff and include it as a PDR objective. • Active sustainability coordinators within the college. • All College staff are encouraged to attend course/e-learning module, representing 884 staff.
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a new section of their website dedicated to Environmental Sustainability. • The policy has also been communicated to all new and existing CEMPs staff via the monthly Sustainability newsletter, representing 884 staff.



Profile

- 19,300 students, over 93% of whom are full-time.
- 2,200 members of staff in 6 Colleges over 3 campuses.
- Top University in the SW. 7th place in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide.

Category supported by



Finalist's case study

Empowerment and staff 'buy in'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit and lead 10 new Green Impact teams to take part in the 2013/14 initiative. This signifies the single biggest representation from any college in the history of the project. Clear governance for Sustainability established within the college.
Raising profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability included as a standing agenda item in the College Health and Safety Committee chaired by the Dean and reported to the University Provost and Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

Performance and results

- **Improving reputation** - Article within the sustainability newsletter that circulated to 980 staff; and new section on college intranet dedicated to promoting sustainability and policy information.
- **Continuous improvement** - Challenges misconceptions and current processes (opened college to scrutiny to improve sustainability credentials); commissioned College waste audits; and helped the sustainability team to understand unique college technical issues.
- **Future proofing/changing culture** - Acted as an exemplar College and 2 other colleges are directly replicating it; ambassador across senior management and created inclusion of sustainability as a standing item on the senior management agenda; created a can-do culture embedding sustainability in everyday business; streamlined governance structures e.g. sustainability job descriptions; staff sustainability training (884 staff). Working with University Energy Manager to reduce our College carbon emissions – we commissioned a report to identify the potential of reducing to zero carbon emissions. Actively working with the University in the development of our carbon management and action plan.
- **Reducing risk of non-compliance** - Through a sustainability-led College Risk Profiling audit, we have seen a drastic improvement from 18% (11/60 points) to 77% (46/60 points) including 5 'outstanding' and 7 'satisfactory' criteria and only minor recommendations to be actioned. This represented the most improved college and has set a precedent for other colleges to aspire to. This also importantly reduces the risk of non-compliance and pollution incidents.
- **Increasing staff engagement/embedding sustainability** - Passion and leadership saw our 12 Green Impact teams (10 in Exeter, 2 in Penryn) achieve 4 Gold, 3 Silver, 5 bronze awards along with an environmental improvement special award in their first year taking part in the scheme. Green Impact teams creating 663 greening criteria as a direct result; staff have become more cohesive; external Colleges directly replicating.
- **Supporting EU funding** - Increasing sustainability has positioned the College to secure and maintain funding from EU partners and meet legislation requirements.
- **Reducing carbon footprint** – The College has reduced its energy consumption by 2% and gas consumption by 17 % compared to this time last year.

Section 3 The future

Lessons learned

- Embedding, empowerment and communication are key to improving the awareness and culture of an organization. Only by leading by example and getting staff 'buy in' will a project be successful.
- I am looking to encourage greater student involvement in college sustainability issues and green impact workbook tasks. This will be essential to keeping sustainability high on our agenda.

Sharing our project

- Improved communication of important sustainability information with the development of a new section of their website dedicated to promoting and sharing information on Environmental Sustainability and Policy.

Finalist's case study

- The policy communicated to all new and existing staff via the monthly Staff newsletter, representing 884 staff.
- Other Colleges within the University have adopted our content and approach to embedding sustainability.

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

It is a real honour and a privilege for both the University of Exeter and for myself to be put forward for this award. The cultural change and embedding of environmental sustainability project was undertaken to change perceptions and promote sustainability in the College, but it has also encouraged other Colleges to replicate. Recognition of our efforts in this area are received gracefully and mean a great deal to us.

Further information

University website: <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/>, **Sustainability website:** <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/sustainability/>

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