

University of Chester Student Engagement How to Turn the Tap Off with a Trashion Show!



Profile

- HEI
- 18000 students (includes full and part time students)
- 1800 staff
- Rural

Section 1 About the project

Summary

The University of Chester became the founding member of the [DoNation's Do Good for Uni program](#); aiming to get students and staff pledging simple sustainable behaviours. 28 Faculty Teams compete on the [DoChester](#) league to save the most carbon from the 790 DoActions, and counting, pledged this year.

Project partners

The University of Chester partnered with [The DoNation](#), a bright new social enterprise which the University could support to help achieve our vision. The DoNation programme helps individuals to take actions to make sustainable living normal and inspire others to do the same.

Category supported by



Scottish Funding Council
Promoting further and higher education

Section 2 The results

The problem

DoChester was launched to take the place of Carbon Cutters, which was the University's previous online pledging page, run by the Geography Department. The DoNation is a tool that helps individuals to make small behaviour change over the space of 2 months.

The approach

We held a number of events to get students pledging with the DoNation these included:

1. Freshers' Fair – Student volunteers collected pledges on iPads and handed out reusable water bottles in return;
2. [#OurYearofWater](#) - In November we launched a sponsored pledge for Do Chester, asking every staff and student to Tap it – [Student Union Presidents blog online](#);
3. [Wild Thing I think I Love You](#) - Sustainable Futures students screened Project Wild Thing and collected DoChester pledges for their module project;
4. [Trashion Show](#) – Sustainable Futures students joined with a keen fashion student to run an 'upcycling' fashion show and raise pledges for DoChester for their module project;
5. Green Impact Workbooks include DoChester pledges action, which was audited by student auditors;
6. Two Work Based Learning Students were employed in the Sustainability Unit to organise the Green Tie Awards, this June 2014, for Green Impact Teams and organised [a ThunderClap](#) to raise awareness and thank the teams through social media. 100 people supported the ThunderClap.

Finalist's case study

Our goals

Our aim for the DoNation initiative was to raise awareness of our Green Chester campaign and to encourage staff and students to make small behaviour changes in their day-to-day lives to embed sustainability in the culture of the University.

Obstacles and solutions

Obstacles	Solutions
Students making pledges	Groups of students devising and running events for students to raise awareness and get them to make pledges.

Performance and results

116 students made a total of 312 pledges (almost 40% of all pledges made) through the DoNation DoChester league, representing 7 of our 8 faculties. The pledges resulted in 14259kg CO₂ to be saved. To date a total of 1729kg of CO₂ have been confirmed as completed.

The majority of student pledges were made as a result of peer-to-peer recruitment, and it is this peer-to-peer activity that is really exciting for us – in addition to the actual pledges made, students felt moved to curate a fashion show upcycling clothing. As part of their final year module, 2 groups of Sustainable Futures students from the Geography Department were tasked to raise awareness of the DoNation campaign as academic projects, and encourage staff and students to pledge. The Trashion show idea was suggested by a student (who did all of the fashion designs) at a Green Forum before being taken-up by Sustainable Futures students as a project. Over 40 students attended the Trashion show and signed up to the DoNation. A second team of students gathered a further 30 student pledge cards completed at a quiz and bake off event at the Student Union. The final team of students advertised and volunteered at our Climate Week screening of Project Wild Thing last March, they brought ipads and spoke to people, including the local community, about the DoNation.

It is this collaborative engagement – nudging students to think around the issues to change the behaviour of their peers, through a variety of tactics, that is a powerful unexpected outcome of the DoNation initiative.

The tap it, Eat Seasonably and Eat up actions have all influenced how students and staff think about supply chains and one person said on her confirmation message: "I now use tap water all the time in work, I bring in my own coffee instead of using takeaway cups and I use tap water at the gym." It has become more acceptable to spend money on food waste separation and recycling bins, among other infrastructure.

Section 3 The future

Lessons learned

The Do Good for Unis programme is so flexible that it has provided a stepping stone for engagement across the University and helps to make behaviour change a joined up activity. Staff take part and compete through the league and through the Green Impact workbooks, which students audit. Students also pledge – starting at Freshers' Fair and as Sustainability StARs they engage with staff on issues which are important to them like waste and fairtrade, which allows us to have a dialogue internally as to how we run the organisation.

We have signed up for another year with the DoNation and we continue to integrate the initiative into activities across the University, including employability training, Student Academic Rep training (StARs), Green Impact,

Finalist's case study

academic projects (i.e. media and marketing and Geography) as well as the new Green Chester campaign theme for 2014/15 which is on re-use and repair (and buying less). This year we will have two distinct campaigns. Our first is for the pledge to Eat Up, and every single Fresher was sent a postcard about it and the second campaign is to Fix It, which we're hoping the DoNation will develop a new Action for! In March we will have a re-use and repair fair for students and ask them to pledge to Fix It.

Sharing our project

As an early adopter of the Do Good for Uni (now called Do Good for Business) initiative, our colleagues at The DoNation have often highlighted the University of Chester in their nationwide publicity <http://www.thedonation.org.uk/about/news/press-releases/do-good-chester>. The DoNation was featured as one of the 50 new radicals in the Observer on 7 September 2014. The Do Good for Business programme is available to all, and would be a valuable tool for any University/College looking to engage students and staff in adopting simple sustainable behaviours.

An extended version of our Green Gown film was shown to Freshers during this year's induction. We have shared it as a case study across institutions and on the Green Chester website and 'Uni of You' corporate pages. We have provided vox pops to the DoNation for their new film to market the refresh of the site as Do Good for Business.

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

We have been developing and integrating the sustainability agenda at Chester over the last few years; being a Green Gown Student Engagement Award finalist is a huge honour and recognises the hard work of our students and staff. It will raise the profile of sustainability at Chester and encourage us to do more.

Further information

Alice Elliott, Head of Sustainability a.elliott@chester.ac.uk

www.greenchester.co.uk

@greenchester

www.facebook.com/greenchester