



Middlesex Community College

SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2014

SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MISSION STATEMENT

GOALS FOR 2013/2014 ACADEMIC YEAR

NEWSLETTER

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MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Sustainability Advisory Committee is to:

- Engage the Middlesex community in dialogue on environmental sustainability
- Identify best practices that focus attention on the most efficient use of college resources
- Develop fiscally responsible recommendations addressing sustainability issues on both campuses

GOALS FOR 2013/2014 ACADEMIC YEAR

- Textbook Reuse and Recycling
- Celebrate Earth Day and Sustainability Week
- A Bigger, Better MCC Garden

JOIN US!

If you would like to participate in our committee's activities or have any suggestions or ideas for our newsletter, please contact us at sustainability@middlesex.mass.edu.

SECTION I

SUSTAINABILITY ACTIVITIES THIS SPRING AT MCC

Textbook Recycling March 24 –April 4

Textbook recycling will run for two weeks following spring break. There will be bins at the following locations:

*Talbot – Security Desk
Derby – Security Desk
City 5th floor – next to Kevin Donovan's office
Federal – next to the elevator
Henderson – Hallway closest to Bedford House
North Academic – next to the copy center
Academic Resources – near the ramp to the library
Bedford House – kitchen
South Academic – SA115*

The library welcomes your donation of copies of current textbooks, (or recent editions) that are still useful to our students. Please send them to the library on your campus - clearly marked DONATION. And thank you for supporting our students in this way.

Youth Action for Sustainability



Middlesex students continued their connection with the Gulf of Maine Institute by hosting a mini-conference at the college March 14-15. Students from the Lowell YWCA and Newburyport high school came to learn about urban ecology from local environmental professionals and from the streets of Lowell. These Gulf of Maine Institute (GOMI) teams of young people started their weekend learning with interactive exhibits by Mill City Grows, the Merrimack River Watershed Council, Mass Audubon, Lowell National History Park and the Tsongas Industrial History Center as well as the Lowell YWCA and MCC's Sustainability Committee. An invigorating session by Professor Mike Cermak, who teaches classes on Food and Sustainability at MCC, demonstrated the connection between the food we eat and the bodies we create. Students had opportunities for hands-on learning Saturday morning, participating in groups which documented native and non-native plant and animal species along Lowell's canals and rivers, surveyed the public on their knowledge of polluted runoff into the Merrimack, and worked at Mill City Grows' community greenhouse on Aiken Street. Groups later viewed a film on the history of Lowell at the National Park Service Visitor Center, presented their morning's experiences to each other, and learned about environmental careers from Dr. Carol Shumway of the Merrimack River Watershed Council. Participants enjoyed renewing friendships made during last summer's week-long conference in Nova Scotia and making new ones with newer members of the GOMI teams. Middlesex's team, the United Conservation Ambassador's Network (UCAN) Club, will continue to meet during spring semester on Tuesday afternoons. They are open to new students and look forward to this year's summer conference in eastern Massachusetts. For more information, please contact Diane Lauber, GOMI Faculty Advisor (lauberd@middlesex.mass.edu or Sheri Denk (denks@middlesex.mass.edu) in the Center for Leadership and Engagement.

SECTION I CONTINUED

Reminder: Paperback books may be recycled at any time. For large numbers of books, please box them and arrange for pick up with Facilities.

Tuesday, April 22

Bedford Campus, East Café: 9:00-10:15 City Campus, Lower Level Café, 12-1:15

Why are the Bees Disappearing?

The Mystery of Bee Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) and Its Impact on our Future

Honeybees have flourished throughout the world for 50 million years. They don't just make honey – they pollinate a third of the world's crops. Their pollination is vital to life on earth. Why, then, have colonies begun dying en masse? Come learn about bees, their important place in nature, and the mystery behind their alarming disappearance.

Presented by Eastern Apicultural Society certified Master Beekeeper Brian Pride of Bee Pride in Lebanon, Maine. A beekeeper since 2009, Pride teaches bee-related classes and workshops at the York County shop he co-owns with his wife, Peggy. Committed to the Master Beekeeper's mission of education and assistance to new and existing beekeepers, he is also an active instructor for local adult education courses. An award-winning mead maker, Pride was awarded the first-place ribbon and Silver Platter for his elderberry mead at the 2012 EAS show held in Burlington, VT. In 2013, his mead placed second in his division at the Mazer Cup International Mead Competition held in Boulder, CO.

MCC Community Garden Version 2.0

Bedford Campus

Bigger...Better...More Bountiful

- Registration will begin starting 1st week in April - Watch out for Newscaster for On-Line Application
- 4 foot by 6 foot garden plots available; experienced gardeners will be available to assist folks who are novices
- Garden plots will be available for planting 3rd week of May; Garden preparation events are planned for 3rd week of April and 2nd week of May!

Students in Professor Donna Gray's Introduction to Psychology class were recently asked to complete an assignment relating to the "Psychology of Sustainability". Students selected a behavior to change, in addition to researching how sustainability is practiced in another culture, in this case, Ireland.

The following are excerpts from Kevin Cahalane's paper:

The US Environmental Protection Agency defines sustainability as being: "based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment" (Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], 2014). The EPA goes on to say that real sustainability balances social and economic needs with environmental ones. It is essential that we maintain our air, water and food supply (EPA, 2014).

I reduced energy use in my home by using power strips for my electronic devices, changing to Energy Star light bulbs, and insulating doors and windows. By simply turning power strips off when televisions and other electronics were not in use, I reduced my yearly usage of electricity by 8%. By switching to Energy Star light bulbs, I reduced the energy used to light my home by 75%. That means I use 75% less fossil fuel to light my home than I did with regular bulbs (Energy Star [a Federal agency], 2014). That is also a saving for me of about \$6 a year per bulb. Insulating my doors and windows reduced my heating costs from 2010 by 25% for 2011. Since I heat with natural gas, that means less carbon emissions from my home.

I am conscious about where and how my food is produced. Reducing the amount of meat that we eat makes food more sustainable. The EPA says that the cattle raised for human consumption is the largest source of methane emissions in the world (EPA, 2013). Industrial agriculture also causes erosion, destruction of plant life, pollution of air and water, pesticide poisoning, and huge carbon emissions from fossil fuel usage (Horriagan, Lawrence and Walker, 2002). By shopping for produce at farmer's markets and only eating meat once a week as opposed to five or six times like I used to.

Recycling is a big part of my family as well. Our neighbors always comment on how much we recycle. According to the EPA, recycling just one aluminum can saves enough reduce fossil fuel and pesticide usage.

SECTION II

CONTINUED

I get fresher produce, I am healthier, and I am helping to sustain the environment. The Earth has a generous supply of minerals and materials, but it is not finite. Recycling maintains sustainability of steel, aluminum, glass, paper products and plastics. I have researched the recycling guidelines for my town and I follow them to the letter. I have initiated a recycling program at work as well. I also use town provided water barrels to collect rain water. I use the rainwater to water my lawn and wash my car.

In the long term I hope to at least help slow climate change and the depletion of the planet's resources. Because most people I know do not take sustainability as seriously as I do, I don't hold out much hope that my behavior will have a serious impact on sustainability. It seems that most people want to go through life consuming without a thought for the planet. I will not stop what I'm doing, because I want my children to also respect the planet. If we all made an effort to support sustainability, we would find out that there are many responsible ways to get the things we like.

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Recommended by Pat Hyde, Professor of Developmental English

The Dirty Life by Kristen Kimball

Many young people today contemplate life choices that will be better for the environment and more sustainable for the planet than those of previous generations. My daughter, Chrissy, is one of these people. She spent last summer working as an apprentice on an organic farm outside Essex, New York, a lovely setting on the shores of Lake Champlain. My husband and I visited her in September and got a quick glimpse of her day-to-day life on the farm.

I was drawn to The Dirty Life out of curiosity about what living on an organic farm would really entail if a person committed for the long haul. In 2003, the author, Kristen Kimball, a young Harvard-educated woman, moved from her life as a freelance writer in New York City to a farm just a few miles from where my daughter recently finished her apprenticeship. In this book Kristen describes her first year on Essex Farm as she works with Mark, the man she loves, to carve out a life very different from any she had pictured for herself.

As she describes learning to use draft horses for plowing, transporting piglets in the hatchback of her Honda, clearing rats from her house and out buildings, and creating meals from food she and Mark have labored to grow, the author takes us with her on her journey through the tough, unending work of trying to make a go of it on a little bit of money and a great deal of commitment and heart. She learns about the tribulation of judgment by parents and friends and the joy of growing close to neighbors in a tight-knit community. And through all of the daily work, work, work, there is no guarantee that either the farm or her relationship with Mark will stand the test of time.

If you are interested in the topic of organic farming, or if you are just interested in learning about an alternative life-style, I think you will enjoy this book.

Section III

Continued

ANOTHER BOOK RECOMMENDATION

Recommended by Donna Gray, Professor of Psychology

Silent Spring by Rachel Carson

I was first introduced to this powerful book as a required read for an Ecology course I took as a high school junior in the early 1970's. While growing up in the city, the idea of the atrocious effects of pesticides was perhaps furthest from my mind as a teen. After all, our food came from the supermarket and water came from the tap where nothing could possibly harm it, right??

This book captured the realization that our planet must be protected from the hazards among us. It was Carson's visionary brilliance, in the early 1960's, which first sounded the alarm to the potential long-lasting impact of pollutants in our environment, whether in our food chain, insect and animal populations and water supply, to name a few. Her warning has directly resulted in the ban of DDT and other cancer-causing pesticides in the US, in addition to improving government regulations.

Silent Spring is an often graphic must-read for everyone concerned with preserving our planet for present and future generations. Her non-scientific, practical writing style makes this book easily relatable for most audiences. We owe much gratitude to Rachel Carson as a visionary of the environmental movement.

"It is not possible to add pesticides to water anywhere without threatening the purity of water everywhere." from *Silent Spring*, page 42.

Earth Day 2014 Tuesday, April 22

How much do you know about Earth Day? When it was first celebrated? Who founded it? What book helped launch the modern environmental movement and led to the widespread ban of DDT? What American river caught on fire in 1969? Test your knowledge of the history of Earth Day and other environmental milestones by taking the Earth Day Trivia Quiz at The World History Project site.

Click on the following link to find out if you are an environmental sage or a statistical anomaly:

http://worldhistoryproject.org/quizzes/earth_day

Recommended by Douglas Moffett, Professor of Biology

An Inconvenient Truth, by Al Gore

Very watchable and interesting, this film presents persuasive evidence of the reality of global warming and compelling arguments why every American needs to take the matter seriously. Though it has been several years since 2006 when this film was made, new evidence of global warming and new extreme weather events simply reinforce the message of this film. Every American should watch this film.

Food, Inc.

Wow! This film is a real eye opener! With meticulous documentation, this film points out the extent to which American agriculture and food production has been taken over by a very few huge corporations, who rigidly control the production and treatment of most of the foods we eat. The focus of these companies in their management of this food production is to maximize corporate profits rather than the public good and the well-being of the people of the United States and indeed the world. These corporations are so huge and wealthy that they have been able to manipulate the U.S. government into giving huge subsidies for the production of key crops such as corn. As a result this corn can be sold at very low prices; export of this subsidized corn to the rest of the world has undercut the prices paid for corn in many parts of the world so that local farmers cannot compete; they cannot produce corn as cheaply. Thus this undercuts local food production in many parts of the world.

Also very disturbing is the insight into how these corporations control CAFO, or Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, the way most of our pork, beef and chicken are produced these days. These farming operations are bad for the animals, the farmers and the environment.

This film is a must-see for anyone that cares about the environment, their food they eat, or the future of humankind.

A Taste of Justice: Fair Trade, Science Education, and MCC Community Partnerships

By Michael Cermak, Assistant Professor of Sociology

Jada Marquez, a 5th grader at the local Bartlett school grabbed the thirty-two pound bucket and raced it across the gymnasium in front of a roaring crowd of over 100 students. We counted how many times she ran a thirty-yard course in thirty seconds before she slammed the bucket down, exhausted. Jada had no idea why I had asked her to do this but she rose to the challenge and gathered the courage to show-off to her peers. In front of the crowd, she told me how it made her arms hurt and what hard work it was. I turned to the students and said, "Now imagine doing this hundreds of times a day in ninety degree heat, and making only a few dollars a day. Then you'll have some idea of what kids all over the world do to bring us some of the produce we eat here in the US."

This event was the opening presentation I gave at the Bartlett school to recruit students to join me in creating a Fair Trade science fair at their school. I brought eighteen MCC students who had signed on to work with the Bartlett students for the next eight weeks. As a teacher and in my life, one of my specialties is sustainable and socially-just food system education. This program was an ambitious one that would have seven teams of mixed MCC and Bartlett students create science projects that would be shown at a "Fair Trade Fair" eight weeks later. Our primary learning goal was to have all participants learn about the importance of Fair trade for addressing problems in the food system. Our general goals were to promote mentoring experience for the MCC students, science literacy and exposure to college students for the 5th and 6th graders, and good teamwork skills for all of us.

Over the next month and a half we met about once a week. At each meeting the teams would come together to plan and develop their chosen a specific chocolate or sugar was a science an experiment to analysis. One compared Fair bananas for how team found that bananas lasted not use harmful treatments that often get workers sick. They explained this story in a beautiful poster that was shown at the fair.





SECTION IV Continued

The fair was the “icing on the cake” for the Fair Trade Science Fair program. We had all seven posters ready to show and students had practiced their presentations. We also had many stations set up including a place to get fair trade hot chocolate, design fair trade crafts and the same bucket challenge we had done at the first presentation to illustrate how hard exploitive farm work can be. Over 150 people visited the fair that day and the students got to show-off what they had learned with their MCC partners. All participants reported learning a lot about fair trade and sustainability in the food system. We have already started the second round of this project and will have another fair in a month and a half. This program has helped build sustainable education but also a key partnership between MCC and the community. We are looking forward to continuing this for years to come.

Inter-Campus Shuttle

www.middlesex.mass.edu/icshuttle

The SAC committee would like to remind students, faculty and staff about the FREE Shuttle service between the Bedford and Lowell campuses! The shuttle runs throughout the day, making it more convenient to take classes, attend events or meetings on the other campus without worrying about transportation.

An additional advantage of this form of “carpooling” is the decrease in the number of cars traveling between campuses. This is very important, as the personal automobile is the single greatest polluter and emissions from thousands (even millions) of vehicles on the road adds up. Driving a private car, is probably a typical person’s most “polluting” daily activity. Any time you can “share a ride” will cut back on a little pollution!

So, if you have the opportunity, do a little something for the environment and take the MCC Shuttle and leave your car behind!

Beekeeping Class

The Merrimack Valley Beekeepers Assn

Are you interested in Beekeeping as a hobby?
Are you thinking about beekeeping as a business?

Classes held on:
Every Tuesday for 6
weeks starting
March 4, 2014
6:30 – 8:30pm
Optional videos at 5:30



Class Admission
\$35 – Individual
\$45 - Family
(Includes one-year
club membership)

Come learn about Bees and Beekeeping from the experts!!



Class conducted at
St. James United Methodist
Church,
646 Daniel Webster Hwy,
Merrimack, NH



For more information call John (978) 458 8001
or email beeschool@inbox.com
or go to: <http://www.mvbee.org/beeschool.htm>

About the Sustainability Advisory Committee

SECTION VI

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On the web at:

<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/sustainability/>