



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA

SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

College of Arts & Sciences

Newsletter

Spring 2015

SPRING 2015 SUSTAINABILITY SERIES



ROBIN GOMEZ

Mon., Jan. 26 at 3:30 p.m.
101 Churchill-Haines Labs

"Tropical agroecology: Enhancing ecological interactions through vegetation diversification"



GWEN ARNOLD

Thurs., Feb. 19 at 7 p.m.
Farber Hall, Old Main

"Understanding local leadership in municipal-level hydraulic fracturing policy"



YORAM BAUMAN

Mon., March 30 at 7 p.m. | Farber Hall, Old Main

"Comedy, carbon taxes, and climate change: How economics can save the world"

EARTH WEEK SPEAKERS



CRAIG CHILDS

Wed., April 22 at 7 p.m. | Muenster University Center Ballroom

Earth Day 2015 keynote lecture: *"Field guide to the beginning of the world"*

Craig Childs writes about the relationship between humans, animals, landscape and time. His stories come from visceral, personal experience, whether in the company of illicit artifact dealers or in deep wilderness. He

has published more than a dozen critically acclaimed books, and is a commentator for National Public Radio's *Morning Edition*. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Men's Journal*, *Outside*, and *Orion*.



ED BROOK

Mon., April 20 at 7:30 p.m.
School of Law Courtroom

Phi Beta Kappa Lifo Amundson
Lecture: *"Using ice cores to understand climate"*



SEAN KAMMER

Tues., April 21

50th Student History Competition
roundtable: *"New Trends in Environmental History of the Great Plains"*

See the Sustainability Series Web page for full information about all the events:

www.usd.edu/as/sustainability/sustainability-series.cfm



USD Sustainability Club Petitions for Better Recycling on Campus

When it comes to recycling on USD's campus, there is plenty of room for improvement, claim the members of the USD Sustainability Club. That's why the group began circulating a petition last fall to gather signatures from the campus community to adopt "a consistent, reliable, convenient, campus-wide recycling program to be run by University Facilities Management."

"We began talk of a petition during one of the first Sustainability Club meetings of the year," said Emily Hattouni, Sustainability Club secretary and sophomore psychology major. "It was brought up that facilities' recycling is only found in the MUC, and in any other building—if there was recycling—it was the responsibility of certain individuals."

The club, comprised of students with an interest in sustainability issues, distributed petitions to USD students, faculty and staff, who then gathered signatures in support of a robust and convenient recycling program on campus run by an administrative division of the university. Sustainability Club co-president Morgan Appley, a junior sustainability major, estimates that more than 100 petitions circulated throughout campus in the fall semester with a total of more than 500 signatures collected. Appley said the club hopes



to present the administration with 1,000 signatures from the campus community and will circulate more petitions at the beginning of the spring 2015 semester.

"I believe that the petition is a good way to show the USD administration that students believe recycling is an important and necessary service for the USD campus," Appley said. "I believe there are other strategies which might be more effective to raise awareness,

but the petition certainly helped alert students to the fact that there is a problem with the current system of recycling."

The petition launch coincided with an article on campus recycling in the student-run *Volante* newspaper that quoted an administrator who said the push for a more comprehensive program must come from the campus community, particularly students. Appley said the petition should demonstrate student and campus-wide support for recycling.

"I believe that our recycling petition will be an important step in the process of building a comprehensive recycling program on campus," she said. "This is a very basic issue in terms of campus sustainability and it's something we need to take care of by the end of 2015 at the very latest."

President's Committee on Sustainability Forms

USD administrators, faculty and students have joined a committee with the aim of advising President Jim Abbott on issues relating to sustainability.

The committee formed in the fall semester after the USD Student Government Association chose sustainability as a priority issue for the 2014-15 school year. Tyler Torsden, SGA president and senior political science and economics major, said he spoke about the students' plans with President Abbott on behalf of the SGA and the idea to create the committee was born.

"The president currently has committees on health and diversity," Torsden said. "This committee essentially does the same things. It sets the foundation for the sustainability mindset."

Torsden said he appointed student representatives to the committee and Abbott put out a call to faculty, staff and

administrators to join. The final committee is composed of Scott Pohlson (committee chair), vice president of enrollment, marketing, and university relations; Sue Zhu, library associate; Christine Summering, student; Emily Hattouni, student; Shane Semmler, associate professor, communication studies; Nan Jiang, associate professor, mathematical science; Meghann Jarchow, assistant professor, biology and sustainability program coordinator; John Slunecka, student; Bob Oehler, associate vice president for facilities; and Kyle Schoenfelder, Muenster University Center director.

Torsden said the formation of the committee will foster sustainability efforts on campus.

"I think USD is in a really good spot," he said. "Sustainability is something that everybody can get behind. The goal is for USD to be a leader in sustainability."



“Greening Vermillion” Organization Links Campus and Community

Last year’s city-wide Earth Week event, spearheaded by the USD Sustainability Program, garnered so much interest that participants throughout the community decided to create a new organization aimed at making Vermillion “the greenest little town in South Dakota.”

Maggie Pettersen is vice chair of the new group, named Greening Vermillion.

In regards to sustainability and environmental activities, “there has been a lot going on in Vermillion for years and we want to intensify what we’re already doing,” Pettersen said. “We had such a phenomenal interest in doing Earth Week last year that people said they wanted to have an organization that promoted doing green things all year round—not just on Earth Day or Earth Week.”

Greening Vermillion’s mission is to engage Vermillion area people, businesses and government to identify and adopt sustainable practices. The board of directors of Greening Vermillion, which recently was awarded status at a non-profit 501c(3) organization, are Pettersen, Meghann Jarchow (chair), Morgan Appley, Rich Braunstein, Jim Heisinger, Alice Alexandrescu and Phyllis Packard. A number of the group’s members have worked on environmental issues in the community through the Sustainability Program, the Sierra Club’s Living River Group and other organizations.

“One of our goals is to work very closely with the university and bridge the gap between town and gown,” Pettersen said. “We will help townspeople know what’s going on at the university and the university people know what’s out there in the town.”

Some of the specific projects planned by the group include organizing the annual Earth Week celebration, implementing a Bring Your Bag campaign, creating outdoor classrooms at Prentis Park and Clay County Park, building a children’s maze at Spirit Mound and planting more trees in Vermillion.

For more information, visit the organization’s website at www.greeningvermillion.org.



USD Active in AASHE

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) is the primary organization for sustainability in higher education. Nearly 2,000 people attended the 2014 AASHE conference in Portland, Ore. in late October including Meghann Jarchow, Ph.D., Sustainability Program coordinator and Morgan Appley, sustainability major. Jarchow and Appley gave an oral presentation at the conference titled “Using Earth Day as a catalyst: Creating a link between the university and community.” Jarchow gave two additional poster presentations: “Collaborative information literacy instruction for sustainability” with Lindsay Marlow, science librarian, as co-author, and “Developing a sustainability curriculum” with Brennan Jordan, Ph.D., associate professor, earth science, as co-author.

The 2015 AASHE conference will be in Minneapolis, Minn. Oct. 25–28, and USD will be a host institution at the conference. “The 2015 AASHE conference will be an excellent promotional opportunity for the Sustainability Program,” Jarchow said. “We are excited to be able to highlight our program at a large, international conference.” In addition to being a host institution, the Sustainability Program is planning to have even greater participation by faculty, students and staff at AASHE 2015.



SUSTAINABILITY FACULTY SPOTLIGHT – RANJIT KOODALI



Students and their professor gather around an instrument used to simulate solar radiation in associate professor of chemistry Ranjit Koodali's lab. Pictured are (clockwise from bottom left): Chia-Ming Wu, Ranjit Koodali, Benard Onserio, Luther Mahoney, Sunav Shrestha, Kaitlyn Stern and Shivatharsing Rasalingam.

USD students interested in the politics and science behind renewable energy production could learn a lot by studying the practices of some European countries at the forefront of adopting solar and wind energy as a means of supplying their citizens with municipal power. That's why Ranjit Koodali, Ph.D., associate professor of chemistry, is organizing and leading a study abroad experience to Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany this spring.

"These are three good and representative examples of countries that have embraced renewable energy," Koodali said. "Through the program, students will have the opportunity to visit renewable energy agencies as well as research laboratories. They will get a flavor for the policies and issues that pose challenges for developing renewable energy."

Koodali's experience in solar energy research makes him an ideal candidate to lead the program. His research projects include converting solar energy into hydrogen fuel and using the sun's power to degrade harmful chemicals in the air and water with the aid of a photocatalyst material. Koodali came to USD in 2005

and holds Master's and doctoral degrees from the Indian Institute of Technology Madras in India.

In 2010, Koodali earned the USD President's Research Award for Excellence in the Early/Mid-Career Category and was a finalist for the Belbas-Larson Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2010 and 2014. In addition, Koodali received the 2013 Cutler Award in the Natural Science and Math category for excellence in teaching and research from the College of Arts & Sciences and was a recipient of USD's President's Research Award for Excellence in the Established Faculty Category in 2013.

Koodali said bringing USD students to the European countries that have made great strides in producing renewable energy may give interested students information to persuade legislators to adopt these technologies and practices in the U.S. "I hope that by meeting with policy experts and researchers, students can get a better perspective of the challenges and barriers to increasing our share of renewable energy production," he said.

Sustainability Listserv

If you would like to receive updates about the Sustainability Program, please sign up for the Sustainability listserv. Through the listserv, we send out information about upcoming events and other information related to the Sustainability Program. Please e-mail Meghann.Jarchow@usd.edu to be added to the listserv.



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