



Engaging students at Southern Illinois University Carbondale's Student Organic Garden

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The Beginnings

- Eco Dawgs- Student wanted to create a garden that grew food for the school
- Geog 429- Demonstrate the viability and benefits of growing food organically in Southern Illinois
- Leah May, Jon Dyer - contacted different departments to see where the garden could be located:
Vermicomposting Center
- Garden needed to be functional and fulfill a certain purpose
- Geog 488- proposal drawn up for the garden
- Christensen Award for Student Research in Sustainability, \$500, Garden Won, LOGIC is an RSO



More Production

- First students saw need for more production to come from the garden
- Proposal put into the Green Fund for a high tunnel to be constructed and a graduate assistant position
- Green Fund/ Sustainability Council: Eco Dawgs - \$10/ semester
- Basic tenants of proposals: contribute to sustainability at SIU, be highly student designed and led, incorporate education, outreach, and/ or research
- Other students moved on



Original Goals

- Educate – Students, University, Community
- Produce – Food for the Dining Hall
- Organic – Learned the benefits in Geog 429, Dr. Leslie Duram, Geography of Local and Organic Food
- Sustainable - Closed loop system
- Community – Incorporate and network with the Local Farmers in the area
- Connection – With SIU students and other departments on campus, other community schools and community residents

Important relationships

- Housing: Chef Bill Connors
- Geography Department: Dr. Leslie Duram, Dr. Matthew Therrell
- Green Fund
- Dining Halls: Making connections, talking, discussing how we deliver, what they like, need, use, etc.
- Agriculture Department: Dr. Alan Walters, April Vigardt
- Student body

Operations

- Housing provided tools and seed to get started
- Green Fund provided tools and seed for continuation
- Garden manager, funded by Green Fund, Graduate Assistant
- Interns
- Volunteers

Student Involvement

- Site for classes: Geography of Local and Organic Food, Sustainable Development, University Sustainability, Elementary and Middle School Curriculum, Sustainable Vegetable Production
- Internships through Geography Department, Sustainability Council
- Student workers from Geography, Plant and Soil Science, and Forestry
- Local tour site for area middle and high schools





Successes & Obstacles

- Student interest grew quickly
- Environmental Ambassador Award: Incentive for Student Participation
- First workshop, Record Keeping
- Seasons of Dining Halls coordinated with seasons of garden: Need better understanding
- Summer: Need a full time paid worker
- Coordinate with RSO: Graduate Assistant & RSO officers

Needs for the Future

- Incorporate garden manager as a permanent position, money for a few student workers, this money possibly coming from Housing and/ or Green Fund
- Continue working with the Agriculture Department
- Network with SIU students: Raise awareness on campus
- Connect with local community/ local farmers
- Build alumni networks
- Draw a deeper connection between people and their food source
- Network with other universities

Future Goals & Aspirations

- Continue organizing, collaborating, and informing
- More production and more student involvement
- Permaculture Site is developed and grows:
demonstrate new, innovative ways to grow food
- Vermicenter and gardens: Sustainability
Demonstration Site
- SIU – understand the potential, administration
takes notice
- Workshops, conferences, research
- Financial sustainability



My research

- Case study
- Surveyed students
- Interview stakeholders
- Put together ideas of students and stakeholders to design a possible future plan for the long term structure of the garden- present this to administration

Thank you, Questions?

- www.sustainability.siuc.edu/food