

April 30, 2012

Dear University Community:

Under the leadership of President Allen Sessoms, UDC has committed to being a leader in sustainability in the higher education sector. Building on its core strength as a urban land grant university and as the only public university in the nation's capital, UDC will provide academic, service learning, internships and research opportunities for students to increase their environmental literacy, to be better stewards of a more sustainable society and to be better prepared the emerging green jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We will continue to "walk the talk" as we improve our day to day operations and make our facilities more sustainable thru energy conservation and efficiency, water reuse and management and improved waste management, recycling and composting techniques. The Van Ness campus shall be an exemplary, livable and touchable example of sustainability for students and residents of the District of Columbia.

Over the past 20 months, with the leadership of the Sustainability Initiative, UDC accomplished a great deal. In that time, the university has:

1. Authored the District of Columbia Mayor's College and University Sustainability Pledge (CUSP) and convened the nine DC based universities that signed the pledge. The pledge is an agreement by the schools to pursue a range of sustainability measures related to energy use and buildings, green education, transportation, waste reduction, grounds maintenance, purchasing, and the monitoring and reporting of progress. This collaborative approach to sustainability among the city's major institutions of higher learning is the first of its kind in the nation. No other U.S. city has formed such a compact between its entire higher education sector and its local government to advance sustainability.
2. Hosted three Sustainable DC meetings for the city, including the most recent citywide working group meeting in February where nearly 300 people attended. Also, UDC's two Sustainability Initiative staff members serve as co-chairs of the Green Economy and Climate Change working groups.
3. Established the National Capital Region-Watershed Stewards Academy in partnership with the Anacostia Watershed Society to empower community activists and leaders help their neighbors change how they handle storm water by completing a 15 week course and taking on a Capstone Project that will begin to reduce pollution and runoff at its source, neighborhood by neighborhood.
4. Received the 2012 Business Leaders for Energy Efficiency award from the Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships. NEEP recognized UDC's commitment to sustainable innovation and

for UDC's contribution in keeping the Northeast a national leader in accelerating energy efficiency. This award puts UDC in distinguished company. Previous winners include Princeton University, Syracuse University, BAE Systems, and Bigelow Teas.

5. Developed or enhanced 14 sustainability courses to better educate and prepare our residents for the emerging green careers.
6. Hosted the Green Living DC Expo for the last 3 years, the largest neighborhood festival in the city dedicated to promoting green and healthy lifestyle choices.
7. Increased recycling rates from 13% to 33% in six months to achieve the third-highest waste diversion rate among DC universities and colleges.
8. Created the Sustainable City Faculty Fellowship (SCFF), a program to support the "retrofitting" of existing curriculum to include sustainability and service learning and to train faculty to use a sustainability lens through which to view their discipline, and to use that perspective to broaden and enhance their approaches to teaching and learning.
9. Partnered with SavWatt, a for profit company, to bring in at no cost to the university a street light that is powered solely by wind and solar energy, the Eco Pole.
10. Hosted an Eco District training workshop to equip district government officials, federal officials, development professionals and community stakeholders with tools to build comprehensive green neighborhoods.
11. Hosted two blind filtered tap water versus bottled spring water taste tests on campus with the filtered Brita water from the campus emerging as the overwhelmingly preferred by participants.
12. Participated in numerous watershed and campus clean up events.
13. Saved \$250,000 by eliminating the hard copy course guide mailing three times per year.
14. Conducted six campus sustainability tours attended by nearly 60 people. Seventy-five percent of the tour survey respondents said they had **never** visited the campus before.
15. Hosted Spring lecture series titled Union Station: An American Icon which featured discussions on the architectural history, retailing and transportation operations.
16. Provided technical guidance in making the 2011 Back to School BBQ a zero-waste event.
17. Placed four students into internship positions with non-profits focused on environmental advocacy.
18. Hosted the Liberian Environmental Summit with government officials from both Liberia and the United states to help develop national environmental policies for Liberia.
19. Received \$65,000 incentive grant from the DC SEU for energy efficient lighting retrofits. The result: a 41% reduction in energy consumption in the two Board Rooms.
20. Registered as a Charter Participant of the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) and one of only a few of DC based institutions to complete the assessment. STARS is to universities what LEED is to buildings. UDC scored a Bronze for the 2012 STARS assessment.

21. Negotiated a \$60,000 grant from the DC Department of the Environment for the installation of Big Belly solar trash and recycling compactors on campus.
22. Frequent presenter at conferences and education fairs such as the Smart and Sustainable Campuses conferences, Eco District Summit, Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education conference and many others.
23. Featured by the Sierra Club Magazine in their annual Coolest Schools addition.
24. Conducted assessments of vending and waste management practices which identified inefficiencies and lost revenues.
25. Received the 2012 Business Leaders for Energy Efficiency award from the Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships. NEEP recognized UDC's commitment to sustainable innovation and for UDC's contribution in keeping the Northeast a national leader in accelerating energy efficiency. This award puts UDC in distinguished company. Previous winners include Princeton University, Syracuse University, BAE Systems, and Bigelow Teas.
26. Assisted the DC Housing Authority in their efforts to implement for the first time a recycling program for their tenants.

The work of the Sustainability Initiative will continue this summer. In June, UDC will host for the second time the Green Roofs for Healthy Cities training which will bring green roof practitioners from all over the United States and Canada to our campus to learn the latest innovations in green roof technologies. For two weeks in July and August, UDC will host the Das Haus, a prototype solar house showcases German green building technologies. This will provide an experience for students and citizens to see firsthand the latest green building innovation. And be on the lookout for details on the next zero waste Back to School BBQ, green catering standards for campus events and policies to make our graduation ceremony more sustainable and less impactful on the environment.

But there is still more to do. And it will require all of us – students, faculty and staff – working together, pushing beyond our comfort zone and not accepting the status quo as the standard of performance. As the UDC Sustainability Initiative evolves, we hope that you will join us in making UDC the greenest university in the nation's capital.

Sincerely,

Howard Ways, Director of Planning and Sustainability  
Josh Lasky, Sustainability Manager