

# The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

## Joliet Junior College

Project Details		
<b>Title</b>	Creating a Sustainable Campus through Becoming More Responsible to our Environment	<b>Status</b> COMPLETED
<b>Category</b>	8-Planning Continuous Improvement	<b>Updated</b> 09-14-2010
<b>Timeline</b>		<b>Reviewed</b> 10-06-2010
	<b>Planned Project Kickoff</b> 04-01-2008	<b>Created</b> 11-24-2009
	<b>Actual Completion</b> 09-14-2010	<b>Version</b> 3

### 1: Project Goal

**A:** The mission of both the Sustainability Committee and the Quality Action Project is to encourage employees and students of JJC to become more responsible to our environment by living and educating in a manner that conserves resources so that vital resources necessary for life are available for generations to come. Goals include: • Committing to the practice of making a more sustainable future; • Reducing pollution and preserve natural resources; • Being a leader in sustainability in our community by promoting awareness and education; • Initiating guidelines and monitoring the compliance with standards of sustainability at JJC.

### 2: Reasons For Project

**A:** The most recent reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have emphasized even stronger language than earlier reports linking CO2 emissions to global warming and global warming's impact on the environment, economy, and social systems. There are now higher degrees of confidence in the findings of the reports among panel members who are scientific experts on climate from around the world. There is a global effort underway, as well as local, state, and national initiatives to reduce these emissions. JJC has recognized the importance of leading a campus-wide and community initiative to minimize our negative impact on the environment. An important step in initiating the process was attending the Illinois Green Government Coordinating Council's Second Annual Sustainable University Symposium entitled "Green Living" on August 14, 2007, at Illinois State University.

### 3: Organizational Areas Affected

**A:** The entire campus community will be affected by these environmental initiatives. The leadership role has been assumed by the Sustainability Committee, currently led by one professor in Natural Sciences, a superintendent from Facility Services, and the Vice President for Business Affairs. The committee was formed in September 2007. It has since formed 7 Green Teams, as follows: • Carbon Reduction and Utility Conservation Green Team • Building and Construction Project Review Green Team • Business Practices Green Team • Community Leadership Green Team • Communication and External Education Green Team • Education and Curriculum Green Team • Policy and Data Green Team

### 4: Key Organizational Process(es)

**A:** Reducing personal impact on the environment by becoming a wise consumer is the overarching goal of the sustainability initiative. Specific processes to meet the sub-goals are identified below.  Purchasing only what is needed  Business Practices Green Team - Examining cycles of remodeling, including furniture purchases for offices and classrooms  Business Practices Green Team - Determining the most environmentally friendly and educationally productive use of textbooks and paper for instruction  Business Practices & Communication & External Education Green Teams - Examining use of paper and plastic vs. china and silverware in food service areas.  Carbon Reduction & Utility Conservation & Building & Construction Project Review Green Teams - Studying environmental costs of replacing paper towels with hand dryers  Business Practices & Communication & External Education Green Teams - Piloting demos on new resources, such as soaps, cleaning products, and other consumables  Reducing the use of all resources  Reusing resources when reasonable  Recycling whenever possible  Implementing a restoration project for campus  Assessing progress toward meeting the goals of the Sustainability Committee

### 5: Project Time Frame Rationale

**A:** Project (from kickoff to target completion). The Sustainability Committee is a new group, but it began with great enthusiasm and addressed a mission and goals rapidly. College-wide buy-in has been extensive, and timing for this initiative appears to be ideal in connecting with larger state, national, and international goals. By 2010, enough goals should be met and enough measures should be in place that the work will be embedded in the culture of the college.

## **6: Project Success Monitoring**

**A:** Actual completion of tasks will be one measure. Trends indicating reduced usage of resources, reduced costs, increased rates of recycling and reusing of resources, and all items indicated in item F will indicate progress.

## **7: Project Outcome Measures**

**A:** Environmental audits that track trends in usage of resources should reveal reductions in usage and costs, changes in the use of renewable resources, increases in recycling, and improvements in the health of specific resources should serve as indicators. Benchmarks with other institutions involved in similar initiatives will provide comparative data. These institutions need to be identified and are not limited to educational facilities.

# **Project Update**

## **1: Project Accomplishments and Status**

**A:** For the past two years, the Sustainability Committee organizes its processes around a set of goals. Accomplishments related to the goals are described below.

### **GOAL 1. Committing to the practice of making a more sustainable future**

Committed to ensuring that all new buildings and construction related to the master plan are built with a minimum of LEED silver certification.

Installed more energy-efficient lighting at all campuses Completed lighting retrofit at all campuses to more efficient lighting partially funded through grants from DCEO (\$84,000) and Illinois Clean Energy Foundation (\$145,800).

Designed LEED Silver 17,022 square foot Automotive Expansion, 35,111 sq. ft. Natural Science Expansion and 124,871 square foot Health Professions building.

Received a grant to start a Local Foods enterprise.

Began composting all kitchen vegetable and fruit waste on a daily basis.

Replaced C and D Building roof systems with white reflective EPDM roofing.

Purchased wind turbine and photovoltaic equipment to start non-credit training programs.

Replacing paper towel dispensers with blow-dryers in all restrooms.

### **GOAL 2. Reducing pollution and preserve natural resources**

Began restoring the Main Campus natural areas and lake. JJC removed invasive plant species from 65 acres of woodland surrounding the campus with the goal of returning the area to its original condition—an oak tree savannah surrounded by prairie grass.

Closed the college on Friday through Sundays for the first time for the 2010 summer semester, saving nearly \$30,000.

### **GOAL 3. Being a leader in sustainability in our community by promoting awareness and education.**

New non-credit and short-term training programs in Driving America's Green Products and renewable energies, including wind turbine, green technology, and photovoltaic.

Collaborated with a variety of community agencies to hold the GR2010: Celebrating Sustainability conference on campus in April 2010.

The event was a free public event that featured public speakers, organic foods, how-to workshops, and eco-friendly exhibits.

Held a Sustainable Building Resource Fair for the community that highlighted the potential of implementing sustainable processes in architecture and construction.

### **GOAL 4. Initiating guidelines and monitoring the compliance with standards of sustainability at JJC.**

Participated in the ACUPCC. Reporting is very extensive, with the first report (the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report) due September 15, 2010. This report needs to be updated annually. The next major report is due May 15, 2011, the Climate Action Report. This report requires an extensive amount of research, monitoring, and evaluation.

The Sustainability Committee meets on a monthly basis throughout the academic year. This year, the Sustainability Committee met on 9/2/09, 10/8/09, 11/12/09, 12/10/09, 1/14/10, 3/11/10, 4/8/11, and 5/13/10. The committee is fully functioning and plays an integral role in governance in terms of recommending actions and providing a forum for dialog, planning, and research. There are two new co-chairs. Changes to the goals and committee structure may occur in the next year, but the committee and general framework will remain.

## 2: Institution Involvement

- A:** The main vehicle for involvement in sustainability is the Sustainability Committee. It represents a broad spectrum of the campus and includes faculty, staff, and students.
- Communications are conducted through meetings, the college newsletter, and Sustainability website. Additionally, the college hosted several sustainability meetings and forums on the campus that were open to internal and external audiences.
- Other activities that fostered involvement and communications this past year included:
- \*Recycling Art Show open to the public.
  - \*A public relations campaign at the Early Childhood Center, with students wearing recycled t-shirts and demonstrating to college students how to recycle.
  - \*The Natural Sciences Department produced a video, in conjunction with the Media Services Department, highlighting ecological restoration of the natural areas surrounding the college. This video was placed on-line and presented in a variety of forums.
  - \*Collaborated with a variety of community agencies to hold the GR2010: Celebrating Sustainability conference on campus in April 2010. The event was a free public event that featured public speakers, organic foods, how-to workshops, and eco-friendly exhibits.
  - \*Incorporated sustainability as an element of the Master Facilities Plan website.
  - \*Held events and participated in Earth Day on 4/21/2010 throughout the week.

## 3: Next Steps

- A:** Planned next steps include the following. However, it should be noted that some of them are contingent on resources.
- \*Developing new goals for the Sustainability Committee.
  - \*Incorporating sustainability into the update of the college's strategic plan this year.
  - \*Enhancing communications and updating the website.
  - \*Enhancing resource-development strategies, including grants and fund-raising.
  - \*Budget for a staffed and resourced person to administer sustainability on campus.
  - \*Developing the college's Climate Action Plan, as part of our commitment to the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC).
  - \*Sign the Illinois Sustainable University compact.
  - \*Participate in STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Research System) as a method of tracking sustainability across campus. STARS is offered and supported by the AASHE (American Association of Sustainability in Higher Education).

## 4: Resulting Effective Practices

- A:**
- \*JJC was able to save over \$30,000 by closing on Fridays over the summer 2010 semester. This also reduced carbon output by the campus.
  - \*JJC held a very successful event on campus, GR2010: Celebrating Sustainability in April 2010. It provided a forum for local businesses and community members to engage in dialog about sustainability.
  - \*JJC has implemented several non-credit courses in sustainability.

## 5: Project Challenges

- A:** JJC witnessed some successes in the areas categorized below, but within the categories there are still areas that need improvement in the areas of resources, leadership, programming, technology, and evaluation.
- \*Resources: JJC has only a small budget under the auspices of the sustainability committee. JJC has been successful in devoting resources to new construction and obtaining some grants focused on environmental sustainability, but there are very little dedicated resources devoted towards implementing sustainable processes in operations and academic planning.
  - \*Leadership: The Sustainability Committee currently has excellent, dedicated, and knowledgeable new co-chairs whose service started in summer 2010. Members of the committee are also dedicated. The leaders and members of the committee serve without pay and devote time on their own. However, there is no dedicated staff or leadership for sustainability at the college. Without a champion or leader whose sole or primary responsibility is sustainability, it is difficult to coordinate processes and lead efforts that enhance sustainability, particularly when it comes to areas like academic programming and technology.
  - \*Programming: JJC has made progress in non-credit areas in terms of programs for sustainability. There are also pockets of sustainability in terms of curriculum and course-work, but as of 2010, JJC does not have a degree or certificate program in a field that focuses on environmental sustainability, like wind turbine, solar, or water management.

\*Technology: There have been some improvements, but more progress needs to be made in terms of using technology to enhance sustainable efforts at JJC. Areas where technology has the potential to enhance sustainability at JJC include paper-use reduction, printing strategies, software virtualization, storage, remote shutdowns or energy-efficient monitors. Technology could not only support the creation of efficiencies, but also the creation of intellectual capital by supporting learning strategies that promote sustainability and embrace sustainable practices in all coursework.

\*Evaluation: Evaluation for the ACUPCC and Illinois Sustainable University will provide valuable information about environmental sustainability college. With dedicated staff, we would like to implement AASHE STARS reporting system. Another potential area of continuing evaluation in sustainability is with the college's program review processes.

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## Update Review

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### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: We commend the institution on its extensive work. The goals and their supporting activities demonstrate a high level of commitment to this Action Project and to promote changes in the culture of the institution (AQIP Category One - Helping Students Learn, Category Five – Leading and Communicating, and Category Nine - Building Collaborative Relationships).

### 2: Institution Involvement

A: The institution has demonstrated great involvement from stakeholders, both internal and external, in these sustainment activities. The new practices are becoming part of the campus's regular culture and activities.

### 3: Next Steps

A: Although this project is scheduled to end this year, providing additional resources to support these activities will demonstrate continued commitment to the principles this Action Project was designed to embed in the institution (AQIP Category Eight – Planning Continuous Improvement).

### 4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: If a portion of the savings indicated here could be applied to the activities addressed in Item 3, they will help to establish the on-going success of this Action Project.

### 5: Project Challenges

A: Joliet Junior College has recognized significant challenges that are faced by many colleges that seek to institutionalize change. Maintaining the Sustainability Committee and supporting the efforts of the committee to extend the impact of this Action Project into the future will provide encouragement to those involved in future Action Projects. If they feel that their efforts would only be of value during the period of a project, this would limit their future involvement. We encourage JJC to continue to implement this project.

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## Project Outcome

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### 1: Reason for completion

A: We have reached the three-year point on the project, we have fulfilled the defined goals, and we have institutionalized the processes so that they will continue without the formal reporting of an AQIP QAP. The Sustainability Committee of the college is now an integral part of strategic planning and construction.

### 2: Success Factors

A: The timing for this project was serendipitous. Because the college was fortunate to pass an extensive building referendum about the

same time as the project began, sustainability was emerging in the national spotlight, and the college had the opportunity to implement numerous initiatives for sustainability. The momentum for the project was strong throughout and continues unabated.

Substantial progress was made, as reported in the update of September 2011, on the **four major goals** of the project.

The **Sustainability Committee** is a mature, effective committee with regular meetings, open access, and well-publicized records. The committee has also transitioned leadership and maintained a successful plan of succession in leadership roles.

**Involvement** of individuals throughout the college and community was extensive. Outreach included all segments of college employees, students, preschoolers in the Early Childhood Center, and the JJC community as a whole.

**Cost savings, greater awareness, celebrations, and personal commitments** to a range of projects have all been implemented.

### 3: Unsuccessful Factors

**A:** One area of the project which has emerged but is not mature is **sustainability in the classroom**. This initiative is ongoing and will continue after the retirement of the project. Greater use of technologies to minimize depletion of resources, such as paper, needs further work.

More **resources** need to be devoted to these sustainability projects.

Emerging **curriculum**, such as a degree or certificate program on environmental sustainability, needs further work.

Because JJC has experienced extensive administrative turnover in the past three years, time has had to be spent keeping the leadership informed and prepared. Most recently, the tragic death of the college President on August 12, 2011, along with previous losses of two senior administrators to other colleges, has left a leadership gap for the college. Every effort is being made to maintain a high level of progress and commitment, but the remaining senior administrators are relatively new to the college and are working to continue progress.