
UCCS COMMUTES ON TWO WHEELS

By Andrea Hassler

For years, the Office of Sustainability has promoted cycling at UCCS by the day – Bike Jam at the beginning of the year is a celebration of pedal-powered fun—and by the month—Bike Month Challenge rewards the departments who pedal to campus the most for the month of September. Now, through a partnership with Kaiser Permanente, UCCS Campus Recreation is promoting riding to and from campus every day of the year.

Kaiser Permanente's grant program, *Walk and Wheel Colorado: Increasing Walking & Biking in Colorado Through Employer Action*, seeks to motivate people to be active through programs and education, creating walkable/bikable environments and creating places that make walking and biking the preferred modes of transportation. Kaiser Permanente cites research that shows investments in wellness programs have a strong return due to reduced health care, absenteeism, sick leave, and an associated decrease in a number of health problems such as heart disease and stroke. The goal for the program is to increase the number of work commutes made by bike or foot and develop a culture of active commuters at the work place. UCCS has found that this vision aligns with our goals as a campus community, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions and expanding campus health and wellness initiatives.

Through the program, riders earn Pedal Perks points when they commute to campus, participate in related events, and through other promotions and activities. At various times throughout the year, participants can "cash in" their Pedal Perks points to receive prizes. To supplement the funds received from Kaiser Permanente, the UCCS Parking and Transportation Department provided additional resources from the campus Sustainable Transportation Fund to make the Pedal Perks program available for students. The funds will be used over the next year to incentivize the entire UCCS campus community to commute by bike through monthly and semester-long prizes, and event giveaways. In the first month of the program for example, Pedal Perks participants had the opportunity to receive Polar Bottle bicycling water bottles, flat tire patch kits, bike lights, shower passes for faculty and staff, and a chance to win one of two brand new commuter bikes made by Giant with \$100 of additional accessories.

Support for additional educational programming also comes from this program through expanding courses in the SOLE bike workshop on bicycle maintenance and added courses on safe commuting, bicycle handling skills and winter riding tips. Additionally, individuals enrolled in the program have the opportunity to participate in the wellness initiative by taking the Pedal Perks health survey or fitness assessment to track their health progress over the year of participating.

As the year goes by, we hope to keep people cycling as a part of their daily commute. In Colorado Springs, we are blessed with over 300 days of sunshine a year and mild, dry winters. Pedal Perks seeks to motivate the campus community to continue pedaling through awesome prizes as well as gear and knowledge that will help riders from novices to experts be commute-ready every day. So be healthy, help the planet, and have fun!

We've had some great turnouts for Beat the Hill, bike workshops, and Bike for Bagels! Check out the rest of October and November events including Bike Maintenance (Oct 29th), Halloween Costume Ride (Oct 31st), Explore the Springs Bike Ride (Nov 15th) and Winter Riding Clinic (Nov 19th) for free clinics, free prizes, and Pedal Perks points!

GAF HELPS TAKE BACK THE TAP

By Tom Hutton

Finding a pre-packaged plastic bottle of water on campus this fall is not as easy as it used to be.

Pre-packaged water is no longer sold on campus, part of a campus-wide initiative to "Take Back the Tap," which encourages faculty, staff and students to utilize reusable containers, bottle filling stations or just plain old tap water from faucets.

"It is estimated that 45 percent of what's inside a pre-packaged bottle of water comes from a tap anyway," Linda Kogan, director, Office of Sustainability, said recently. "And Colorado Springs municipal water is among the best in the country – there's just no reason to waste money and resources buying bottled water."

Students for Environmental Awareness and Sustainability and the Office of Sustainability took that message to first year students this year. As part of Mountain Lion Experience student welcome activities, students got a UCCS logo-emblazoned metal water bottle, what a previous generation might have called a canteen. The Green Action Fund and the Division of Auxiliary Services purchased the bottles for the students.

The multi-colored, made-in-the-U.S. metal bottles were a hit as students learned why bottled water is expensive personally and to the environment. The metal bottles carried a different message about the waste of plastic-bottled water.

In her presentation, Sara Santa Cruz, a SEAS member, said 25 percent of the volume of bottled water represents the amount of petroleum used in the manufacture and transport of each bottle. She also said bottled water quality is less regulated than tap water by the EPA.

Additionally, millions of bottles end up in landfills or in waterways and there are possible long-term health effects of exposure to chemicals in plastic. "Students are getting the message," Kogan says. "Now it's time for faculty and staff to both understand the issue and get on board."

The initiative to end bottled water sales on campus began in 2011 with a successful student election ballot question. UCCS leaders accepted the recommendation to no longer sell bottled water and to phase-in the change. The Office of Sustainability and SEAS, were charged with educating the campus about the decision. In preparation for the change, more than 25 hydration stations – water fountains specifically made for refilling tall, reusable bottles – were installed in buildings throughout campus.

“We are asking the campus community to not order bottled water,” Kogan said. “And to join with the first year students in making a difference. Reusable water bottles with the UCCS logo are available at the bookstore starting at \$4.99.”

OFFICE STAFF TOTALS THREE

By Kimberly Reeves

A note from the desk of Kimberly Reeves:

Events on the calendar, students back from summer break, new curriculum engaging sustainability topics: now the Office of Sustainability can tackle each opportunity with three strong! As the newest addition to the office as the Sustainability Programs Manager, our office has three full-time staff. I hail from the state of Georgia where I was born and raised as a first generation Southerner by two Midwesterners. Although lacking in the accent department, I do enjoy Vidalia onions, shrimp n grits, and magnolia trees.

While pursuing my undergraduate and graduate degrees, I was able to work in two diverse sustainability offices at the University of Georgia and Agnes Scott College where I was able to gain experience in event organization, volunteer management and developed an in-depth knowledge of the recycling industry. Along with working at both institutions of higher education, I had the opportunity to work for the Georgia Recycling Coalition, Athens-Clarke County Recycling Division, the UGA Center for Community Design + Preservation, Fernbank Museum of Natural History and the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4.

I'm looking forward to the opportunity that arises with the projected growth of the university and the chance to help create a culture of sustainability within the UCCS community. I'm also very excited to get to know the wonderful people that make up this strong community, so please feel free to drop by CSB room 230 to say hello!

Cheers,

Kimberly



COMMODOES TO ROADS – LIFE CYCLE OF A UCCS TOILET

By Mae Rohrbach, Oren Facey and Zach Jensen

Water is known as the lifeblood of any community. Colorado is no stranger to water issues when it comes to water rights, floods, droughts, and the aftermath of fires. How has UCCS committed to saving this ever-important resource? The next time you're in Summit Village, take an extra second to notice one of the 233 high-efficiency toilets that was made possible by a project initiated by three freshman.

In the freshman seminar, Sustainable Me!, Zach Jensen, Oren Facey and Mae Rohrbach drafted a proposal, received a grant from the Green Action Fund (GAF,) and implemented a fully-funded \$58,793.25 toilet retrofit project for the entire Summit Village. The original toilets? 3.5 gallons per flush. The new ones? 1.28. The technology is much improved. Students expect to see a major reduction in water amounts and costs in Summit Village as well as reducing energy for Colorado Springs Utilities due to less water pumping and treatment needed to service our campus.

The project succeeded in part due to the partnership of Residence Life and Housing, who provided the labor for the installation, Colorado Springs Utilities, who provided a \$29,000 rebate for using WaterSense toilets as well as recycling of the toilets, and finally, GAF.

The project, assigned by instructors Brent Botts and Linda Kogan, required students to engage their surrounding UCCS community and identify a solution to a challenge incorporating sustainability. After hearing a presentation from Colorado Springs Utilities Conservation Specialist, Frank Kinder, the students sought out the large-scale toilet retrofit project. The group was advised to seek funding through the Green Action Fund, which provides funding for student-sponsored projects that reduce the ecological footprint of UCCS.

When asked, Zach Jensen is able to mention many of the numerous benefits to managing a large-scale project in his freshman year, but he also agreed that "one of the most challenging aspects of applying for the Green Action Fund was communicating with many different entities on and off-campus that would have insight into the timeline of a project this large."

After funding confirmation, dedicated volunteers helped with the removal and installation of the new Toto low-flow toilets in May 2014. The next steps are to collect data for the amount of money and water UCCS has saved, the estimated payback period of the retrofit, and present at the Colorado Sustainability Conference along with the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) conference held this year in Portland, Oregon. The recycled toilets will be back! They will be used as part of the Alpine Village development. Full circle, that's sustainability.

COMPASS CURRICULUM – POINTING TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE UCCS

By Kevin Gilford

In recent years, UCCS has made great strides toward sustainability but we are excited about perhaps our most significant accomplishment yet: starting this fall, every student matriculating at the university will be required to take a course and demonstrate knowledge in sustainability. Sustainability is an integral component of the new [Compass Curriculum](#), the campus-wide undergraduate, general education program to provide the right tools, knowledge and experience for students' success in today's world. UCCS is one of the first universities in the country to require sustainability knowledge for all graduates.

Compass Curriculum was designed to provide every student, regardless of their major, with the skills and knowledge that employers say they want from graduates and includes problem-solving and critical thinking, communication and collaboration, creativity and strong professional ethics, and understanding the importance of inclusivity and sustainability. Sustainability in the curriculum “cultivate[s] self-awareness and understanding of their impact on economic, social, or environmental sustainability at the local, national, and international levels.” Courses are designed to inform students how to live within the environment as well as to consider current and future generations' social and economic needs.

In addition to sustainability, students are encouraged to explore and take courses in all of the six colleges on campus to become exposed to a breadth of disciplinary perspectives that will assist them in making decisions in their future professional lives. In their junior year, students will take navigation courses, team-taught by faculty from a variety of colleges and departments, which provide the opportunity to learn and apply their knowledge from a range of disciplines. Before they graduate, every student will participate in a summit experience course that is designed to apply and integrate knowledge in their major. For those students who want to learn more about sustainability, UCCS will continue to offer the [Sustainable Development Minor](#), an 18-credit-hour program that is an excellent complement to any major program of study at the university.

Imagine the world four years from now when thousands of students and recent graduates—engineers, pre-med and pre-law students, business managers, health professionals, teachers, computer programmers, artists and, yes, environmental scientists—have learned about sustainability and take their knowledge and passion into the world. We can!

SOAKING UP THE SUN

By Matthew Driftmier

This student-initiated project invites the campus community out into the 300+ days of Colorado Springs sunlight to study and relax while connected to their studies via the accessibility to power outlets. In Spring 2014, three new solar umbrella tables were installed on the UCCS campus around the University Center and the Kraemer Family Library. The goal of the project is to help bring sustainability out of the back rooms and into the limelight.

This project was approved and financed by the Green Action Fund, which is funded as well as directed by students.

These tables feature four solar panels which provide power to the outlets along the umbrella pole. Electronic devices can be charged via standard wall outlets and USB charging ports through battery-stored energy powered by the solar panels.

Furthermore, the benches and table are made of recycled plastics, so the campus community can sit on sustainable materials while their devices are charging on sunshine.

With sustainable practices usually happening behind the scenes, such as LED lights or water-efficient toilets, the solar umbrella tables are a highly visible commitment to sustainability within the UCCS community. These tables provide a hands-on interaction with renewable energy and the idea that sustainability can be integrated into our daily lives with little to no change to our normal activities.

An added advantage of the solar table is to power music for events on the Upper Plaza. So now all student groups can consider holding a greener event with power from the sun.

Projects like the solar umbrella tables show that sustainability is within everyone's reach; no longer something to be longed for, but something that everyone can take part in every day.

Thanks to the generous support of student fees at UCCS, the Green Action Fund underwrites student-approved projects. More information on this and many other Green Action Fund projects can be found at www.uccs.edu/gaf.