

## **Advancing Campus Sustainability Through Green Labs**

by Alex Greanias

For many students and faculty alike, our laboratories on campus serve as both academic research facilities and incubators for innovation. From computer and circuitry, to robotics and radon labs, these facilities are crucial to providing practical educational opportunities for all who use them. So how cool would it be if there were a program that could track progress on how these labs operated, while providing suggestions on how they can run more efficiently? In fact, our Green Lab Program does just that! To find out more about what the program is all about, I asked the experts about their experiences working with Green Labs so far.

Now in its second year, the Green Lab Program was created in collaboration with UCCS Environmental Health & Safety in Spring 2015. Energy and Water Conservation Supervisor, Brandon Bishop, describes the main objective of the program - "to build awareness among the lab personnel about things that they can do within their labs to reduce their energy footprint and to reduce waste. We then hope to motivate them to take action." In this manner, the Green Lab Program strives to make sure each laboratory operation is more environmentally and economically sustainable than the one before it, while encouraging others who use the labs to set an example for future procedures.

Assistant Director of Sustainability, Kevin Gilford, has been an integral manager of the program from its conception. Kevin explains that within the many laboratories that operate on campus, "There are lots of opportunities to achieve energy and water conservation in those spaces." He continues to describe the two main components that give the program purpose: surveys and inventories. The Green Lab Program first administers educational surveys to laboratories regarding energy and water conservation, and then makes an inventory of equipment and practices that could be improved upon for future experiments. Kevin mentions that this also provides "real world experiences in being more sustainable in lab operations," adding more educational opportunities specifically for students at UCCS looking to pursue careers that deal in lab work.

Primarily in its data-collecting phase for implementing improved lab operations, the Green Lab Program currently offers various ways for students to get involved. As Brandon states, "We are always looking for interns within the Office of Sustainability." Cynthia Norton, Hazardous Material Specialist for Environmental Health and Safety (and co-founder of the Green Lab Program), says, "If you are a student who works, volunteers, or simply takes a lab, then you can help build awareness amongst your fellow lab mates and encourage students to do sustainable things, like closing [fume] hoods," among other practices.

So whether you're busy working or just hanging out with friends, you support the Green Lab Program and what it stands for every time you make an effort to be more sustainable in the labs. Thank you for your recognition and support!

For more information about the Green Lab program, please contact [conserve@uccs.edu](mailto:conserve@uccs.edu), or visit our website at [www.uccs.edu/sustain/programs/green-labs.html](http://www.uccs.edu/sustain/programs/green-labs.html).