

Valpo recognized for green initiatives on report card

Valparaiso University initiatives promoting sustainability on campus – including the construction of new buildings to LEED Silver standards, recycling efforts and investments in clean energy – have been recognized in the “College Sustainability Report Card 2010.”

The report card, prepared by the Sustainable Endowments Institute, profiles the campus and endowment sustainability policies of 332 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. Valpo is one of 10 Indiana colleges and universities profiled in the fourth edition of the annual report card.

President Mark A. Heckler said numerous efforts are under way to make Valpo’s campus more sustainable.

“Valpo, as a faith-based university, takes seriously its responsibility to care for the world by encouraging environmental stewardship that conserves natural resources, benefits the health and safety of the campus community and supports a high quality of life for the community,” President Heckler said.

Valpo’s overall grade in this year’s report card rose to a “C,” with improvements in five of nine categories (administration, climate change and energy, food and recycling, green building and transportation). The University received an “A” in the investment priorities category, with the report citing its investments in clean energy initiatives through private capital spending. In the food and recycling category, Valpo received a “B,” and the report noted the extensive recycling programs on campus as well as a new football turf field made from recycled tires.

Valpo’s sustainability efforts also include:

- Development of three rain gardens on campus that reduce the amount of pollutants entering local waterways.
- Conversion of boilers in all buildings to more efficient models, resulting in a 12 percent decrease in energy costs. More efficient lighting and windows have also helped to improve energy efficiency.
- Construction in recent years of five buildings to LEED Silver standards, including Harre Union and the Christopher Center for Library and Information Resources. Numerous green features were incorporated into the design of Harre Union, which opened in January 2009, including a cooking oil collection and recycling system and occupancy sensors that control room lighting and temperature.
- Purchasing food from local producers and processors, along with fair trade coffee.
- Support for the city of Valparaiso’s V-Line bus system, which allow students to take advantage of public transportation.

The Sustainable Endowments Institute notes that the aim of its report card is to provide accessible information so that schools may learn from each other's experiences, thereby fostering more effective sustainability policies. The report assesses 48 indicators, from green building initiatives to recycling programs to endowment investment policies, and uses an A to F letter-grading system

to evaluate performance. The report card gave Valpo an “F” for its strategy of investing its endowment through a fund of funds approach used by many smaller colleges and universities. Valparaiso University uses the Commonfund as its investment manager. Surveys like those used by the Sustainable Endowments Institute for its report card are designed to be broad and do not take into account specific decisions respondents may make for valid operating or economic reasons unrelated to matters of sustainability. The commingling of funds from different institutions does not meet the report’s criteria for complete transparency of each school’s investments.

“Many smaller private institutions hold a portfolio of investment funds rather than investing directly in shares, bonds or other securities because this approach offers greater stability and diversification at a reasonable management cost,” President Heckler said. “We must be good stewards of our donor’s investments. We believe the report card unfairly penalizes smaller private institutions like Valparaiso University that invest in these types of commingled funds and therefore have no ability to make public their holdings of specific securities.”

In addition to pursuing sustainability in its business operations and policies, President Heckler said the University incorporates environmental stewardship into its academic and extracurricular programs.

Valpo recently became one of the nation’s first universities to offer an MBA program with a concentration in sustainability, teaching future business leaders how taking care of the environment can create new business opportunities and raise profits. The University also offers an undergraduate major in environmental science.

On Oct. 23, the University’s College of Business Administration will host "Leading the Future of Sustainability," a forum featuring three of the world's leaders in developing and promoting sustainable business practices.

President Heckler noted that there are areas on Valpo’s report card with room for improvement, and that an environmental sustainability committee was created last year to examine new opportunities and lead campus-wide sustainability efforts.

“We are committed to pursuing sustainability throughout the University’s operations and academic programs,” President Heckler said. “It is gratifying to see the progress we have made during the past year and look forward to making further strides in the coming years.”

Valpo’s individual report can be read [online](#).

German House celebrates 10th anniversary

Valparaiso University's Kade-Duesenberg German House and Cultural Center is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year as a center for promoting the study and appreciation of German culture on campus and in the community.

Valpo sophomore, junior and senior students who live in Kade-Duesenberg German House are immersed in the German language and culture, doing chores, preparing meals, sharing experiences and studying together while also making a commitment to speak German while in the facility.

"The fact that we have this facility shows the University's commitment to internationalization, and to German language and culture," said Dr. Sarah DeMaris, professor of German and director of the Kade-Duesenberg German House.

"German is very important at Valpo because of our historic ties to the Lutheran church and its German roots. Valpo was founded by Lutherans and we continue to have many Lutheran students with German heritage." Dr. DeMaris says that as a result of the success of the Kade-Duesenberg German House, both French and Spanish language immersion houses have been founded on campus in recent years. Currently, 13 students reside in Kade-Duesenberg German House, with the first floor serving as a cultural center and the second floor as a residence hall. Students say the experience helps them prepare for their study abroad programs, and also aids in their transition after their return from studying abroad in Germany. Valpo senior Sam Grossnickle, a Valparaiso native, has lived in the house for the past two years and said being immersed in the German language has been valuable. "It's been nice to have one foot on campus and one in another culture, a place to concentrate on your German in daily conversations," said Grossnickle. "It's like a world unto itself." Many students who have lived in the German house have gone on to work in Germany in various roles or to work for German companies with offices here in the U.S. As part of the 10th anniversary celebration, Kade-Duesenberg German House is hosting a Berlin Wall Film Festival, commemorating the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The next screening will be Oct. 30 at 6:30 p.m., "Das Versprechen" (The Promise), a romance in which a couple plans an escape to West Germany, but are separated in their attempt before being reunited 28 years later after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

A long-standing Valpo tradition will take place on Feb. 12, as "Fastnachtsfeier" (Germany's Mardi Gras celebration) will bring music and dancing, led by Jay Fox and the Bavarian Showtime Band, to Harre Union (<http://www.valpo.edu/union>)Ballroom from 9 p.m. to midnight.

In the spring, Valpo's seventh annual "Theaterfest" will feature a gathering of more than 100 high school German students from the area, hosted by Valpo students enrolled in the German Drama Practicum. "Theaterfest" will take place April 7 at Valpo's Center for the Arts.

Valpo continues to host Kaffeestunde coffee hours at Kade-Duesenberg German House on Fridays throughout the academic year. Kaffeestundes are held from 4 to 5 p.m. and are open to the public.

More information about Kade-Duesenberg German House and Cultural Center and about German programs at Valpo is available online at <http://www.valpo.edu/germanhouse>.

Commitment to global learning shows in Fulbright awards

Valparaiso University's long-standing commitment to international education continues to be illustrated with the University being recognized once again as a national leader in preparing students for the flagship international exchange program of the United States.

Valpo was second among master's level institutions with three students winning prestigious Fulbright awards for international study, research and teaching

during 2009-2010, according to information recently released by the Institute of International Education, which administers the Fulbright Program. An additional two students won Fulbright awards to teach English in Austria, which are administered separately from other Fulbright awards.

For the fifth time in six years, multiple Valpo students were awarded Fulbrights in 2009-2010. Valpo's five recipients are the most to earn the fellowships in a single year, and since 2004, 17 Valpo students have won Fulbrights to teach or conduct research in Egypt, China, South Korea, Germany and six other countries.

Dr. Charles Schaefer, associate professor of history and Fulbright adviser, said the University's international programs – which include faculty-directed study centers in four countries and a dozen other international programs – play an important role in preparing students to succeed in a global world.

"The exposure to another culture and the opportunity to perfect a foreign language are valuable experiences for Valpo students who study abroad," he said. "For our Fulbright winners, the opportunity to envision a research project on location means that when they commence writing their proposals they are far ahead of the game."

The University's 2009-2010 Fulbright winners are:

- Jonathan Eaton, a history and humanities major from Sequim, Wash., who is conducting research on cultural heritage preservation in Albania;
- John Dimmick, a history and art major from Indianapolis, who is teaching English at a school in Germany;
- Elizabeth Coyne, a political science and international service major from Naperville, Ill., who is teaching English and conducting research in South Africa;
- Jadon Nisly, a history major from Partridge, Kan., who is teaching English in Austria; and
- Joy Gieschen, an art and German major from Fort Wayne, who is teaching English in Austria.

Eaton's fascination with cultural heritage began in the fall of 2007 while studying at Valpo's Cambridge Study Center in England. Intrigued by the Greek, Roman and Egyptian antiquities at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Eaton asked the museum's keeper of coins and medals if he could work in the department – an offer that was accepted and soon had Eaton identifying Roman coins and brushing up on Attic Greek. This fall, Eaton is beginning to explore cultural heritage in Albania, a nation he said is enjoying growth and stability after decades of social, political and economic turmoil. He will visit museums and other cultural sites throughout the country, speak to museum officials and cultural scholars, and conduct interviews with ordinary Albanians. "As Albania stabilizes and plans for its future, many are looking to their country's past to rebuild a healthy and strong national identity," Eaton said. "Not only will this have implications for how Albanians reconcile themselves with their past, but also how they envision their future relationships with their Balkan neighbors and with the European Union." Dr. Schaefer said Valpo's investment in and promotion of faculty members from a variety of academic programs who go abroad to gain even deeper cultural immersion also is a crucial element supporting global learning in all elements of campus life. "I always tell students that a Fulbright is a collective, University-wide project that reflects equally on the quality of the faculty," he said. In 2008, Valpo won the prestigious Senator

Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization from NAFSA: Association of International Educators, recognizing it as a model for other institutions of higher education in preparing graduates with strong cross-cultural skills and global awareness. In addition to its study abroad program, the University also hosts approximately 300 students from more than 50 countries and offers a variety of academic programs in languages and international studies. More information about global learning at Valpo is available [online](#). Four of Valpo's Fulbright winners – Eaton, Dimmick, Coyne and Nisly – are enrolled in Christ College. Approximately 1,550 American students were offered grants to study, teach English, and conduct research in more than 110 countries throughout the world beginning last summer through the Fulbright Program, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State.