

GEOG 4065

Service-Learning Task

Desktop Research

Chosen Article: Growing a student organic garden within the context of university sustainability initiatives written by Duram and Williams (2013)



Background

- Selected University: Southern Illinois University (SIU) Carbondale
- Covered sustainability aspects:
 - (1) Green campus
 - (2) Student and community engagement
 - (3) Partnership externally with communities and the private sectors



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Growing a student organic garden within the context of university sustainability initiatives

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Growing a
student
organic
garden

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the evolution of a student organic garden at a large public university, as an example of student initiatives that promote both university sustainability and student-focused sustainability education on campus.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors conducted quantitative and qualitative analysis to document the evolution of the university's Local Organic Gardening Initiative of Carbondale (LOGIC), which is the student-initiated and -operated organic garden at Southern Illinois University.

Findings – The student organic garden evolved in three stages, each of which had specific goals and accomplishments. Stage I (establishment): students in Geography courses took action to get the garden established; key components included funds from a sustainability scholarship and student-initiated camps Green Fund, dedicated undergraduate students, negotiating campus bureaucracy and motivating broad support. Stage II (evolution): a high tunnel was added to the original raised beds garden, a graduate assistant position was filled to manage the garden, additional funds were secured, a permaculture demonstration site was added, the volunteer base was established and LOGIC began being included in campus and community events. Stage III (future) challenges include: consistent leadership, long-term funding, guarantee of land availability, student graduation/turnover and increasing student involvement.

Originality/value – This paper provides a longitudinal perspective on the evolution of student-led sustainability efforts which require progressive, inclusive action from multiple stakeholders across campus and in the community. Several replicable practices include student leadership in sustainability initiatives, actions for promoting local food in the university structure and methods of negotiating complex institutional settings.

Keywords Multiple stakeholders, Local food, Organic garden, Student initiatives, University sustainability, Sustainability education

Paper type Case study



1. Introduction

Sustainability in higher education is a complex and sometimes daunting endeavor. The inherent problems within university structures (e.g. funding, bureaucracy, conflicting goals and changing personnel) make the implementation of sustainability a challenge

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SIU Student Gardens

What we do:

*Work in the fields of
Sustainable Farm*

Make gardens



Plant



Pull Weeds




Harvest



*And EAT what we
harvest!*



 LOGIC SIU Student Garden

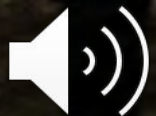
Intervention

- Local Organic Gardening Initiative of Carbondale (LOGIC)
- Kick off by undergraduate students in early 2009, LOGIC has already lasted for 4 years at the time of writing
- LOGIC has evolved in 3 stages:
(1) Establishment □ (2) Evolution □ (3) Future Challenges





University's Role in the Intervention



Level of Intervention	Details
Geography students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established the Green Fee Came up the campus garden idea Drew up a professional proposal for the garden Donated the winning prize as the primary funding for daily operations Set up a weekly farm stand for the sale of campus-grown produce in both the campus and town market
Registered student organization (RSO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed people to participate in campus green fairs, farm tours, workshops, nutrition and health fairs and other campus activities
Graduate Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spoke at public events (e.g., Field Day & conferences) Held campus tours
University Management (inc. the University's Plant and Service Operations staff, Dining Services and the College of Agriculture)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green-light the planning and construction of the organic farm Helped with the application of funding from the Green Fund to produce food for the campus





Problems Encountered & Attempted to Solve



Problems Encountered	Solutions
The SIU did not have an existing system to manage sustainability-related project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founding of Sustainability Coordinator position and Sustainability Council helped to formulate a sustainability plan and aid sustainability projects proposed by students
Interested students lacked the funding and human resources to kick-start the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referendum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Fee (↑ \$10 student fees / semester) • Generating > \$300000 / year in “Green Fund”
The initial plan to have small garden beds only provided the dining halls with little food, which was far from enough for achieving the ultimate goal of having a sustainable campus food system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built a high tunnel to gradually expand production & extend growing season • Applied for funding for a graduate assistant for managing the increased workloads
Manpower for developing and maintaining the LOGIC garden was very limited and not enough in the long run	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to actively participate in the LOGIC project by linking the works done in there with class service hour requirement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they can earn “money” and spend them at the LOGIC farm stand





Outcomes

- Successful
- It has gradually evolved, from tiny original garden bed to permanent farm growing produce for the consumption of campus dining halls and even selling to neighbouring townspeople, forming a self-contained food system in both the university campus and community
- Many students have volunteered themselves to help with the maintenance of the organic farm (even with the professional guidance provided by faculty advisor)
- Grants for the operations and equipment of the LOGIC garden are secured, so future expansion is ensured (i.e. Green Fund)
- The campaign for the LOGIC garden has successfully earned the recognition of students and community which the SIU is a university with comprehensive sustainability goals
- An educational opportunity for the students and the public to become more aware of food sustainability issue □ Established as one of the earliest activist success and give rise to the American food movement

THE END

