



# Sustainability at Harper College

Annual Report 2014-2015



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## Introduction

Harper College is committed to reducing environmental impact across campus. Harper is working to ensure a healthy, sustainable future through campus upgrades, student coursework, community outreach and individual action. Harper has been working to advance sustainability on campus since the signing of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment by President Kenneth Ender in 2010. In 2013, the college published its Climate Action Plan which provided the strategy to achieve its climate goals.

This report provides a glimpse into sustainability on campus throughout the 2015 fiscal year. It is divided into three sections detailing climate commitments, green campus initiatives and campus involvement. Enjoy!

# Climate Commitment



## ACUPCC Progress Report

Harper College began to pursue the goals of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) in 2010. As part of the ACUPCC, a Climate Action Plan (CAP) was developed in 2013 to address action items leading the campus toward climate neutrality. On January 15, 2015, Harper submitted its first progress report of the CAP, showing how Harper has been taking steps toward a more sustainable campus. Facilities Management staff has remained dedicated to enhancing energy efficiency on campus through equipment upgrades, retrofits and continued building maintenance. Harper's numerous infrastructure and energy efficiency projects have created a strong foundation in working toward the campus's emissions reduction goals. Harper's Sustainability Coordinator and the Sustainability Work Group continue their work carrying out the action steps stated in Harper's CAP.

Currently in phase 1 of the CAP, Harper has achieved its first goal of achieving a 5% reduction in energy use of purchased utilities compared to the 2010 base year. In addition, 15% of the energy supplied to campus is from renewable sources

and greenhouse gas emissions have been reduced by 14% since 2010.



## Sustainability Coordinator

Amy Bandman started as Harper College's first Sustainability Coordinator in the summer of 2014. She is working to raise awareness and build participation in sustainability initiatives across campus. Harper is a committed signatory of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment and the Illinois Campus Sustainability Compact. Amy is working to carry out the action steps stated in these commitments, bringing the campus closer to achieving its ultimate emissions reduction goals. Amy works with the student environmental club and serves as the chair of Harper's Sustainability Work Group, a committed group of college employees working together to advocate for increasing the presence of sustainability on campus.



## Going Green Nets Bronze

At the Illinois Governor's Sustainability Awards in October 2014, Harper received the bronze level certification under the Illinois Campus Sustainability Compact for creating a sustainability program and engaging the campus community, specifically:

- Adopting a climate action plan
- Designating sustainability leadership on campus
- Promoting sustainability awareness

*Photo (left to right): Eric Heineman, Senior Sustainability Advisor, Office of Governor Pat Quinn, Amy Bandman, Sustainability Coordinator, Elissa D'Amico, Campus Horticulturist and Kevin O'Brien, Director, Illinois Sustainable Technology Center*

# Green Campus



## Green Buildings

Many construction projects are underway at Harper. In fiscal year 2015, two were completed featuring LEED Silver building standards as defined by the U.S. Green Building Council: the Building D addition and renovation of Building H, Harper's Career and Technical Education Center. Green features of these buildings include low VOC adhesives and paint, occupancy sensors and daylight harvesting, wood panel forestry stewardship, chilled beam technology and regional chiller plant, recycled content and construction waste management. Approximately 90% of the materials taken from the construction sites have been recycled.



## Waste Reduction Plan Update

In September 2014, representatives from Patrick Engineering performed a campus waste audit, sorting all trash collected during a 24-hour period. This audit takes place every five years and is submitted to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Results revealed that Harper has exceeded its waste reduction goal. The current rate of 77.6 pounds per student represents a 50% decrease from the 1987 rate. Other findings revealed there were large amounts of recyclable materials in the waste stream. This data has helped to target areas of improvement in campus waste reduction.



## Peat Pots, Plugs and Plants

Each year Harper's Roads and Grounds Crew home-grows many of the plants used for campus landscaping. Small plants called "plugs" are planted in individual pots and are nurtured until ready for planting. A new method of planting was introduced in 2015 that utilized peat pots. Each plug is grown in a peat pot made with decomposable, organic material. The pot is left on the plant when it is planted and it decomposes throughout the season, giving the plant nutrients. This new method of planting reduces the amount of plastic and waste that goes into this process. In the spring of 2015, the crew planted over 1,300 plugs to be used around campus.

*Photo (left to right): Eduardo Montiel, Joe Meehan, Raul Artega, Ernesto Garay and Andy Doherty*

# Green Campus



## Waste Reduction

Automated hand dryers have been installed across campus to reduce reliance on disposable paper towels, improve bathroom cleanliness, reduce purchasing costs and cut back on the volume of paper going into the landfill. The hand dryers have been successful in reducing costs and environmental impact across campus. Not only has this change reduced paper waste on campus, it has also reduced the amount of plastic trash can liners being purchased and disposed of. During fiscal year 2015, Harper reduced paper towel usage by 4.3 tons, creating a savings of over \$12,000 on paper towels alone.



## Water Audit Training

In March 2015, Harper hosted a water audit training session sponsored by the Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN) and the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center (ISTC). Water efficiency experts from Water Management, Inc. walked participants through the water audit process, explaining and demonstrating how to determine how much water the campus is using and how to find reduction opportunities. At the end of the two-day workshop the Water Management team finalized a water balance for the college that shows campus water usage. This data is valuable moving forward, as it provides a picture of how much, and where, water is being used on campus.

*Above Right (left to right): Russ Horner, Water Management, Amy Bandman, Harper College, Bill Hoffman, Water Management, Nate Keener, Lewis and Clark Community College*

## New Sustainability Webpage Launched

Harper's sustainability webpage got a new look in February 2015. This is the place to learn about "all things sustainability" at Harper College. The site features campus sustainability highlights, current green projects, green tips and resources, climate commitments, monthly utility usage, ways to get involved, and much, much more. [HarperCollege.edu/GoGreen](http://HarperCollege.edu/GoGreen)



# Involvement

## Welding Students Leave Their Mark on Campus

Students from the Welding and Fabrication program at Harper began making bike racks to be used on campus in the fall of 2014. The idea for the class to fabricate bike racks came from both a need to find a practical application to the class's bending and welding lessons and the need to increase the number of bike racks on campus. It was a perfect fit.

The first two student-fabricated bike racks were installed on campus in spring 2015. This is a great opportunity to showcase student work on campus while helping to contribute to Harper's green efforts. Instructor Adam Phan shares his excitement for spotlighting the program and "giving the students such a great opportunity to have a long lasting, positive impact on campus; this is really something we can all be proud of."

*Top Photo (left to right): Adam Phan (Instructor), Matt Henderson, Robert Wilkinson, Sam Long, Bridget Matbes, and Jeff Vander*



## Monarch Butterfly Tagging

Harper's student environmental club tagged monarch butterflies in September 2014 to track their fall migration to Mexico. Butterflies that have been tagged at Harper in the past have been found in the mountains of Mexico months later, thousands of miles away. Students learned about monarch habitat and migration habits. Monarchs are a threatened species and Harper students are doing their part to preserve them.

## National Bike Challenge

The National Bike Challenge is a nationwide event that unites thousands of bicyclists both new and experienced. It is a fun way to challenge the community to ride. Harper's National Bike Challenge Team wrapped up its second year at the end of summer 2015. The team of 23 riders rode over 1,900 miles, burned 102,866 calories, saved \$725 and prevented 1,153 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> from entering the atmosphere.

# Involvement



## Sustainability Work Group

In January 2015, a new work group was formed under the shared governance structure at Harper to advance sustainability on campus. The group, made up of individuals of many disciplines and employee classifications, works to collaborate in the implementation of the college's Climate Action Plan, promote a culture of sustainability on campus, infuse sustainability into the curriculum and establish community partnerships. This group reports to the Facilities Committee.



## Little City Garden

Campus sustainability and students from Harper's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa partnered with local nonprofit Little City, an organization that provides advocacy for individuals with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities, to create an accessible, organic vegetable garden that will serve the community at Little City. Volunteers from the honor society prepped the garden for the growing season, planted its crops and continued to work throughout the summer and fall months to see the garden through to harvest. Student volunteers worked weekly at the 6600 sq. ft. garden laying an accessible mulch path, spreading compost, planting, watering, weeding and harvesting. Phi Theta Kappa was also able to use club funds to donate an irrigation system to the garden. Produce grown at the garden includes: watermelon, corn, pumpkins, tomatoes, carrots, onions, peppers, cucumbers, green beans and sunflowers. The garden project has been a fun learning experience for both Harper students and the residents of Little City.

## Earth Week 2015

Harper's student environmental club hosted a week-long series of events during Earth Week 2015. Presentations, volunteer opportunities and an environmental film brought students, employees and community members together to celebrate our beautiful Earth. Earth Week highlights include:

- **Bike Commuting** - Wayne Mikes, Dave Simmons & Terry Witt
- **The Environment as a Public Good** - Dr. Josh Sunderbruch, Harper College
- **Animals of Africa** - Mukila Maitha, Harper College
- **Start Seeing Monarchs!** - Kim Savino, Monarch Researcher
- **Less is Best: Redefining Garbage and our Future** - Mary Allen, Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County
- **Birds of Prey** - Mark Spreyer, Stillman Nature Center
- **Elemental** - Environmental Film
- **Volunteer Opportunities** - Penny Road Pond and Little City



[harpercollege.edu/gogreen](http://harpercollege.edu/gogreen)