Introduction

The IU Office of Sustainability has already developed programs that reach out to students living on-campus in the dorms or in the Greek community. However, when students move off-campus for many may find themselves uninformed about what they can do to live sustainably off-campus as a part of the Bloomington community. Many students who move off-campus may be living on their own for the first time; this presents a unique opportunity for IUOS to provide students with sustainable living tips designed to help them develop sustainable habits now that can shape their experiences in Bloomington, as well as the rest of their lives.

This is the first year for an internship geared toward off-campus student living and other the course of the summer I worked to set a foundation for the internship by setting up a website geared towards students living off-campus. The website, CityLife, will provide a student sustainability toolkit including checklists, a serve as a general guide to what is offered in the Bloomington community. The tips and resources offered will include and tips to help students develop sustainable behaviors many areas including—transportation, waste, energy consumption, sustainable food, a green moving guide, and a guide to throwing a more sustainable party or tailgate. Over the course of the summer I also had the opportunity to talk with some Bloomington apartment complex owners about the implementation of their recycling program and collaborate with other interns to discuss possible future projects for students living off campus that may fall under other working groups or existing internship positions.
Process

I began the project by conducting research on what other colleges and universities offered to their off-campus students in the way of sustainability resources. After collecting information from other schools and examining their websites I determined that most other schools reached out to their off-campus students by providing a general student sustainability guide in the form of a PDF document. I wanted to take a different approach to reaching out to students as IU also has an existing PDF document and IUOS has an internship dedicated to updating the guide. I was able to work closely with the intern who was updating the general student sustainability guide, but decided on a final product that would be web-based, instead of a PDF and more specifically tailored to off-campus students.

After establishing what final form the guides would take I began the process of researching and writing the guides that would become the web-based toolkit. I divided the project into issue areas: sustainable eating, green moving guide, transportation, energy and water conservation, and socializing sustainably. I began by writing the eating guide and then compiling a guide to Bloomington restaurants and grocery stores that provided locally food or specialized in vegan and vegetarian food. After compiling the food guide, I realized that compiling the guides and additional resources one by one would be unmanageable considering the time constraints if a summer internship. I then began writing all of the remaining guides and compiling external resources. I edited the guides and met with other interns on a weekly basis to prevent overlap in the research and to discuss student programming in the future. I was then able to meet with Elisabeth and launch the WCMS website and begin the process of learning how to put the website content online.
The final step of the process will be to conduct an impact assessment to determine if the current webpage design and format are effective means of communicating to students. I have worked with the orientation guides intern to create a simple survey to ask the working groups for their opinions on the presentation of our final projects. Responses are on a 1-6 scale ranging from not effective to very effective. We were unable to do a random sampling for survey responses; however, this may be something that becomes more of a possibility once students return to campus in the fall. It will be important for future interns to evaluate whether or not the website is an effective means of distributing information to students, or whether a new format would be more effective.

**Uses of product**

The CityLife page will serve as a go-to resource for off-campus students to learn about sustainable living and in the future I would like to see events and programming offered to students on the website. I would also like to see the website format developed in greater detail to offer new media like podcasts and video streaming. The web-based format of the guides ideally allows students to easily access the tools at any time, and download the guides on to their own computer or print off the checklists if necessary.

**Recommendations**

After this summer IUOS will have a final product that can continue to grow for years to come, ideally our off-campus sustainability tips can be used and updated for future years, and the final web presence of this project can be a go-to resource for students looking for information about sustainable living and eco-friendly community events. I would like to see a final product that can serve as a well-used reference website for students, that can be an ongoing project for
IUOS and be continually updated with current events and seasonably relevant tips, guides and community events. Ideally we will be able to build relationships with other student groups like the Union Board or IUSA who might both be interested in participating in helping IUOS promote the website or get involved in updating the content or planning events for off campus students.

Specifically, IUOS might think about starting an academic year internship that coordinates with other student groups like the Union Board, IUSA or SPEAUUSA to host lectures and other events for student living off campus. An academic year intern could also get more involved in the daily lives of students by providing podcasts on the website and developing new media web resources for students throughout the year. The category of off-campus living is very broad and overlaps with many existing groups and the mission of many external organizations. Ideally the website would eventually host content or guest columns from these interested parties in the interest of disseminating sustainability information and bringing the community into the process of educating students. There are many exciting opportunities for collaboration with this project and I would like to see more people get involved with the website in terms of adding content and updating the design.

There also might be an opportunity for students to get involved in this project and IUOS’s mission by participating in generating website content in a sustainability course like one similar to the one Bill teaches. A blog portion could be added to CityLife to chronicle students’ thoughts as they are introduced to topics in sustainability.