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Introduction

The Indiana University Office of Sustainability (IUOS) has consistently assisted a significant amount of other IU offices and departments since the early 2000s. IUOS has previously, and is currently, collaborating with the First Year Experience (FYE) program, which assists students with the transition to university living through programs like Orientation and Welcome Week. Residential Programs and Services (RPS), which manages on-campus housing and dining options, also has also been receptive to IUOS initiatives, especially involving facilities improvements and recycling. The FYE intern has been (and hopefully will remain to be) an important liaison between RPS, FYE, and IUOS, working with all three organizations in order to create a culture of sustainability at IU Bloomington.

Impetus for Program

At the broadest level, the purpose of this internship is defined by its job description as

“to continue the work of the summer and academic interns by collaborating with: (1) FYE to create a sustainability assessment and improve on existing sustainability initiatives and (2) RPS to create implement student centered programming focusing on sustainability.”

In addition to this main purpose however, the FYE intern also provides a vital service for sustainability at Indiana University. Because the FYE intern has the ability to reach out not only to first year students as soon as they arrive on campus, but also to collaborate with the relevant offices that assist freshmen in the transition to the university lifestyle, he/she thus plays a significant role in shaping opinions about sustainability on campus. In order to create a culture of sustainability at Indiana University, incoming students must see that sustainable behavior is the default way of living, the social norm, at IU Bloomington.

While the FYE intern must therefore convince first year students almost immediately upon (or even before) arrival that sustainability is a priority at IU Bloomington, it is mandatory that the intern communicates clearly to RPS, FYE, and first year students not only the importance of sustainability, but also the amount of high-quality resources, programs, and events that IUOS has to offer to the larger University. Sustainability must not only be seen as important, but also as trendy, exciting, and enjoyable.

In order to create a culture of sustainability at Indiana University, the FYE intern has a responsibility to students, FYE, and RPS—he/she should provide them with all the information and resources they need to be as sustainable as possible.
History of Program

Below is a summary of some of the past projects of interns. Without these successes and projects, more widespread acceptance of sustainability at IU Bloomington would be unattainable.

**Freshman Orientation & Welcome Week**
- Passed out general information about sustainability resources and opportunities at an IUOS table at the Resource Fair during Orientation
- Posted recycling signage on all of the trash cans and recycling bins within the freshman orientation zones across campus
- Created and distributed sustainable packing guide to incoming students
- During the Welcome Week FYE-sponsored “Midnight Madness” event, an all-night Wal-Mart shopping trip where students are taken on buses to shop and participate in games, signage was created that demonstrated which products were “Green Room Certification Program Approved.” Signs were posted on products throughout the store that were the more sustainable options. A table was also set up at Wal-Mart during the event and sustainability information and promotional material was distributed to students.

**IUBeginnings: Sustainability**
- Planned an outing via IUBeginnings to take students on a tour of some of the sustainability involvement opportunities offered by IU and Bloomington
- Unfortunately, the trip was cancelled after one year due to a lack of student participants.

**RA & EcoRep Resources**
- Created tours and other resources for students to learn about and become more involved with sustainability at IU

**Green Room Certification Program (GRCP)**
- Updated, organized, and publicized the program and the Greenest Floor Challenge (GFC)
- Used social media, EcoReps, posters to increase student awareness and involvement
- Oversaw the logistics of the program—including the certification process, and the distribution of prizes
- 525 rooms were certified in the fall of 2013!

**Social Media**
- Used websites like Facebook, Pinterest, and blogs to publicize IUOS programs
Current Goals

The FYE Intern has traditionally worked within the three connected areas, featured in the above cyclical diagram. All three areas influence each other—the more sustainably-minded RPS staff members are, the more sustainability-related student outreach will occur; this will then encourage FYE and RPS to continue sustainability initiatives, further fueling the cycle. Any change in one area ultimately affects the two other areas and the whole system as well.

RPS Staff Development

*RPS Staff will have full access to and awareness of high quality sustainability resources.*

Traditionally, at greenrps.indiana.edu there has been a series of resources for Residential Assistants, such as sustainably-themed bulletin board kits, event guides for IUOS events, and programming suggestions. It is important to constantly expand these resources and to make sure they are up to date.

FYE Collaboration

*Sustainability initiatives will become more incorporated into the language, resources, and programs of the FYE.*

Currently FYE does not directly support or neglect sustainability initiatives in its publications, on its website, or through its programming.

Student Outreach

*Student programs and publicity strategies will be renewed and improved in preparation not only for the fall semester, but also for summer programming like Orientation and Welcome Week.*

The FYE intern is responsible not only for the GRCP and GFC, making sure that these programs continue to grow and expand, but also for ensuring that students learn about other campus sustainability initiatives as well. It is important to directly connect students with sustainability, through conventional and unconventional/attention-grabbing programming, tabling, and advertising.
Methodology/Strategies

Learning
One of the most important aspects of this internship was discovering what had been done, and deciding what steps should be taken next. The first three weeks were largely spent reading documents written by past interns, analyzing the IUOS website, and making connections with FYE, RPS, and other interns.

Organizing
After the intern had conducted the appropriate research, it was helpful to list out tasks required and to map out the internship to keep everything under control. This organization strategy was also used as a way to improve the IUOS website pertaining to RA resources, the Greenest Floor Challenge, living sustainably on campus, and the Green Room Certification Program. Spreadsheets are helpful to arrange to-do lists. Mapping techniques were also used.

Collaborating
Each semester IUOS hires a talented team of interns. Especially since this was the summer semester, and little student outreach programming was in place, it was extremely helpful to take some time to plan student outreach strategies and programs with fellow interns. Also, each intern has a different area of expertise, so through collaboration, a variety of student programs covering different topics can be easily planned.

Results

RPS Staff Development
- Website updates:
  - Content was updated to be slightly more formalized (Rachel Joseph was fond of exclamation points)
  - A new Sustainability Pledge for RAs was developed to involve more of a commitment, and specific options of how to fulfill that commitment to sustainability.
    - A Sustainability Pledge certificate/door dec (to be given to RAs who take the pledge) was designed
  - New Resources were developed
    - A list of suggestions for a sustainability field trip replaced the sustainability tours section
    - 2 new bulletin board kits with assembly tips were created, one for the GRCP and one for Green Building
    - A new section was added with a few tips on how to be a sustainability mentor. The section features tips on how to start sustainability conversations with residents one-on-one.
    - The section on programming ideas was updated to include a build your own notebook DIY craft, and also information on the Peer Educator Program
  - A new RA newsletter template was developed to be sent out every other week to the RAs
- RPS Resource Fair
Plans for the IUOS table have been solidified with the help of fellow interns Dana Schroeder and Hayley Smith (bike safety materials may also be available from Henri Venable).

- Magnets featuring a IUOS calendar of events and IUOS contact info/links to resources for fall were secured
- The Fair will take place August 13th at the IMU

- Participated in the presentation for RPS Director Training with other IUOS affiliates, and learned from their feedback

**FYE Collaboration/FYE Specific Student Outreach**

- **Website Updates**
  - Developed a Fall 2014 Sustainability Programming Timeline graphic and updated content on that page
  - Developed and re-organized the Green Packing Guide on IUOS website, adding educational hyperlinks as well
- **WW New Student Service Day**
  - Contacted FYE and collaborated to offer rain garden and campus garden work days as part of New Student Service Day (where freshmen students sign up for a day of volunteering). New Student Service Day takes place on August 24 from 11 to 3.
- **Taste of the Union**
  - Followed up with Mara Dahlgren to set up an IUOS recycling game and information table at Taste of the Union (where freshmen students engage in an interactive tour of the IMU). Taste of the Union takes place on August 21 from 5:30 to 8PM.

**Student Outreach**

- **GRCP**
  - Revisions to the program include
    - New water bottles (collaborating with Hayley Smith and the Student Sustainability Council to secure funding)
    - Criteria was updated and made slightly more vigorous. More changes to student behavior are now required for certification, also there are now 55 criteria instead of 47
    - Criteria was moved to the about the program page, and now includes educational hyperlinks
    - A point system has been put in place so that certification requires a score of 65 out of 145 points
  - Website revised and updated to reflect those revisions
    - A new Google form (certification form) was created and embedded on the website
- **GFC**
  - Revisions to the program include
    - Pizza parties will only be provided for the floor in each residential neighborhood (before it was in each residence hall) with the highest percentage of green-certified rooms
    - Plans to secure funding through the Student Sustainability Council and IUSA were made
  - Website
    - Content was updated
- **Recycling Blitz**
  - Plans for this program were developed with fellow interns Mimi Zakem and Dana Schroeder
Permission was secured from Sandra Fowler and dining hall managers to host an educational recycling program in McNutt and Gresham dining halls during Welcome Week (8/18-8/22)

- Plans to have promotional events for the Energy Challenge in the residence halls and the Hutton Honors College were developed in collaboration with Hayley Smith

Recommendations

- Attempt to create more of a partnership with FYE, rather than always having to do things for FYE, let’s try to have them give back to us
- Attempt to create more of a partnership with RPS, rather than always having to do things for RPS, let’s try to have them give back to us
- Develop some way to measure how much the GRCP changes student opinions and behavior
- Amplify the social media of IUOS
- Table at Wal-Mart during Midnight Madness of Welcome Week

Unanswered Questions

While significant progress is made every year in establishing the culture of sustainability, certain questions can always use consideration:

- How can we revitalize IUOS social media to broaden our audience and spread our messages?
- How can we gradually gain wider institutional success at IU? How can we attract more of those individuals who have never even heard of sustainability?
- How can we get sustainability language to be implemented within the mission statements of IU offices and departments? Or to be widely acknowledged and followed?
- Is the Green Room Certification Program achieving a more sustainable student body in the residence halls? Do students continue to live a sustainable lifestyle after they have obtained their Green Room Certification?
- How do certain floors win the Greenest Floor Challenge? Are they being honest? Is the competition or the pizza the motivating factor?
- Because the Energy Challenge is now using water bottles, what other incentives should be introduced to the GRCP/GFC to improve participation and distinguish the GRCP as a separate entity?

Conclusion

The summer of 2014 has been a brilliant season of planning for the Sustainability and the First Year Experience Internship. It was a great chance to rally all forces in preparation to launch some great student-outreach programs in the upcoming fall semester.