

Universities aim for 'green' campus

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Sustainability officials from Purdue, Indiana University and Taylor University met Friday to discuss sustainability initiatives to be implemented or investigated on each campus.

The economical factor of power systems has to be feasible, but it has to be environmentally friendly. Most turbines in Indiana are coal-generated.

"For the sake of the environment, I put on my sustainability hat to find an alternative source, natural gas," said Robin Ridgway, director of sustainability and environmental stewardship at Purdue.

IU hires students to perform sustainability research. Last summer, this research resulted in saving 84,000 kilowatt-hours and 1.5 million gallons of water. "You don't have to spend millions of dollars to use technology when you have useful human resources," said William Brown, director of sustainability at IU. Brown said that to have green information technology and to carefully take care of electronic waste are crucial steps toward a more sustainable community.

Changing people's habits would make society "greener."

"The most important issue here is the potential built in the human behavior," said Gregory Eley, facilities services director at Taylor University.

At Purdue, an energy consumption feedback over time by metering power systems will be posted around campus.

"People need to know how much they can save by modifying their behaviors," said Terry Cegielski, assistant director of grounds and sustainability at Purdue.

The discussion touched on recycling and how only a small number of people recycle. Ridgway said making recycling more convenient is the key to get the rest of the people to recycle. At Purdue, a new program has placed trash cans at the ends of corridors and recycling bins close to tables and seating. When a person has to walk to a trash can, they will find more than one recycling bin in the way. At IU, a recycling summit took place to decrease the cost of recycling. At Taylor University, it was reported that 80 percent of students recycle.

Purdue has just joined Recyclemania, a national ranking system of the most "green" campuses. It will kick off in January 2010.

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