Final Report

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Sustainability Map & App Intern
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Introduction

The aim of this position was to showcase sustainable initiatives on campus through the development and refinement of campus sustainability maps. Last year's sustainability map intern began this project by creating the Oberlin Eco-Tour app for iOs. I expanded upon this work by producing a google map available for android and desktop computer users. Bridget and I presented the map to Oberlin College Alumni & Development staff, as well as Admissions, so they can integrate it into relevant activities.

Accomplishments

- **Compiled List for Map Points:** When I started in the Fall, Bridget already had compiled the majority of the locations that would be points on the map. I contributed some points, and then I did research on each location. Some information was available through simple google searches, while for some information I needed to contact Oberlin College staff. After I gathered enough, I wrote concise descriptions. For the map points that represented student organizations, I included contact information and websites. I also included pictures for all points that I either took myself, received from Bridget, or when applicable, took from the organization's website.

- **Created 'Oberlin Campus Sustainability Map' using Google's My Maps:** While Google Maps has been established for some time, customizable “My Maps” is still somewhat new. In order to create the map, I played around with the features for some time. After I had a good understanding of google maps, I imported my descriptions, pictures, and customized map markers.

- **Addressed Issue of Accessibility:** The Oberlin Eco-Tour app was limited because only mobile iOs users could access it. To remedy this, we used the pre-existing my maps interface. People now have the option to look at the map as a sort of virtual tour when using a desktop computer, or they can use the map on android mobile devices.

- **Presented Map to Departments:** Together Bridget and I gave a total of three presentations to the Alumni, Development, Communications, and Admissions departments. We presented to these departments in order to hear how the map could best be utilized for them and record their feedback and insight. We have a list of feedback from these presentations that may be carried out in the future. We also presented to Alumni & Development to encourage them to utilize the map when it might serve their needs.

Challenges
It was a challenge figuring out the best way to make the map accessible. While we thought the 'My Maps' app would easily open up our existing map, this was not the case for iOS. It is not very clear for new users to the My Maps app either. In the end it was fine though because iOS users can still use the Eco-Tour app. However, that leads into my greatest challenge which was making edits to the Eco-Tour app. I am a PC user and the software required to edit and create iOS apps is not designed for PCs. While you are able to download a compatible version, I found it confusing. Furthermore, it was the first time that I had dealt with app design. I ultimately was not able to update the Eco-Tour app.

**Key Stakeholders**

- Bridget, of course.
- Dennis Grieve, Grounds Service Manager, provided a lot of information that I needed for map points. Dennis.Grieve@oberlin.edu
- CIT

**Deliverables**

Here is the link to the webpage on OES's site with the map:

http://new.oberlin.edu/office/environmental-sustainability/sustainability-map/

Organized list of feedback from the presentations with college departments

**Recommendations and Suggestions**

Generally, I would recommend getting started on editing the Eco-Tour app at the beginning of Fall semester. For a beginner, it is a lot to handle. Also, use a mac to do it.

My Maps is pretty easy to use, and I expect for it be updated soon by Google. However in my maps' current form, there is a roundabout way to add pictures and customize icons. In order to add pictures I had taken to the map points, I needed to host the pictures on imgur.com. Also, the available My Maps icons were limited. We used mapicons.mapsmarker.com to create custom icons that followed a theme. Then, these icons also needed to be housed on imgur.

When discussing the map with college departments, make sure that you choose your words wisely. Some people got the impression that the map showcases OES. However, what the map does is much greater than OES's work on campus because it includes work of student groups and other college departments. It’s really to highlight campus sustainability locations to interested perspective students, parents, visitors to campus, and folks on campus wanting to learn more.

**Unanswered Questions**
How can you do you edit the Eco-Tour App? The last intern did leave instructions, maybe future interns will be better equipped to understand them.

**Conclusion**

I believe that my time spent on this project was valuable in that it satisfied my personal interests, and that I developed some technical skills. I enjoyed being a part of OES because it was satisfying to see that a lot is done on Oberlin's campus for a more sustainable future. There are so many great projects on campus that I was happy to showcase with the map. In regards to my technical skills, I now understand Google's My Maps very well. Additionally, our presentations were useful because I was able to practice giving presentations in a professional setting. The low point of the internship was definitely failing to update the app. I hope that future interns succeed where I couldn't, and I am grateful for the experience.