Final Report

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Green Office Program Intern
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Introduction

The purpose of the Green Office Program (GOPro) is to encourage Oberlin College faculty and staff to undertake sustainability initiatives in their offices. GOPro is the sister program to the Green Room Program, which promotes similar initiatives for students in their dorm rooms. However, where the Green Room Programs relies on a simple checklist completed by students on the Honor System, GOPro strives to go much deeper in its analysis of office behavior and assurance that the pledged initiatives are being followed. Grounded in a combination of office audits, Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) research, and communication between the Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES) and a designated office liaison, GOPro is designed to ensure that committed offices are actively working to reduce their carbon footprint and meaningfully quantify the energy savings that result from this program.

Before mid-fall of 2015, GOPro was still in development. Much research had been completed about the logistics of the program, but the program still hadn’t entered its piloting stage. During the 2014-2015 academic year, GOPro intern CJ Blair researched green office programs at other colleges and universities to find examples by which to develop the program. After much research, a handful of criteria arose that were clear should be focal in Oberlin’s GOPro. Among them were the following:

1. Offices must be subject to audits by representatives from OES
2. The duty of reporting back to OES about how the program is proceeding should be designated to a liaison for each office
3. An award-based ranking system should be developed to promote healthy competition between the participating offices

The version of GOPro that was used in the fall 2015-spring 2016 pilot included these three objectives, with additional complexity added by an initial survey form that gave each office a starting ranking, as well as a Qualtrics survey to assess their experience with the pilot. The award plaques were obtained after an instructional clinic with Nicole McGee of Upcycled Parts, an art studio in Cleveland that specializes in found-object art. The following is an outline of the final draft of the program that was implemented for the pilot:
1. Oberlin Faculty and staff who expressed interest in GOPro were e-mailed to ask if they would like to participate. They were then asked if they would like to serve as their office’s liaison for the program, or if they knew anyone else who would be interested in the position. They were then directed to the Green Office Program page for FAQs about the program and an outline of liaison responsibilities:


2. If the office said they wanted to participate, they were sent the following survey form to give their office an initial ranking (either bronze, silver, gold, or green): [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1sCjK_WOAWkeP8KhsmsS7uYNYq2xmzlJoRqTh3nJTsl/edit#gid=2044382111](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1sCjK_WOAWkeP8KhsmsS7uYNYq2xmzlJoRqTh3nJTsl/edit#gid=2044382111)

**Note that the liaison fills out this form on behalf of their office, but it is our hope that they communicate with their co-workers as they do so to accurately reflect the norms and behaviors of the office.**

3. Based on their responses to the survey form, the offices were given a ranking and an award plaque to match the ranking.

- Award plaques were designed after an instructional workshop in found-object art with Nicole McGee at Upcycled Parts in Cleveland:
  Nicole McGee nicole@upcyclepartsshop.org
  Here is an example plaque: [https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0B1JyV97NaZbCOXh3VFYalpBNig](https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0B1JyV97NaZbCOXh3VFYalpBNig)

- Plaque Materials:
  - hodgepodge,
  - paper shopping bags (brown surface of plaque)
  - hardcover book (the plaque itself),
  - various paints
  - bottom of plastic bottle (the flower),
  - buttons and ribbon (flower stalk)
  - construction paper (flower petals and leaves)

- Plaque Construction:
  - coat strips of the paper bag in water-hodgepodge mixture using a paintbrush, and then lay them across the covers of the book.
  - When the paper has dried and adhered to the book, paint the surface however you would like.
- Cut the bottom off a plastic bottle and paint it the color that corresponds with the ranking of the office (bronze, silver, gold, or green). NOTE: This part of the plaque will be interchangeable, so make sure the flower is easily removable so a flower that reflects the rank of the office may be added.
- Cut bits of construction paper into the shape of a leaf and then roll them tightly so that they curl.
- Paste the flower head to the plaque and arrange the paper leaves around it. You may simply use a ribbon as the flower’s stalk, and add other materials as you’d like, BUT BE SURE THEY ARE ALL RECYCLED MATERIALS

4. After they were given their plaque and certification level, each office received a consultation about ways in which they can recertify at a higher level and what sustainable initiatives they were taking that they were proud. When the program is launched, it is our goal to have individual offices featured in the OES newsletter, with a blurb mentioning who they are and how they are contributing to sustainability on campus – as well as feature articles on our website.

5. Several weeks after they were given their plaques, a Qualtrics survey was sent out to the piloting offices to assess their experience with the program, asking specifically what was working for them and what could be improved, as well as if perceivable behavior change was seen in their office after they joined the program.

6. In Fall 2016, in tandem with the full launch of the program, it is expected that the pilot offices will be asked if they want to recertify.

Results

The pilot of the program was incredibly helpful in providing feedback about the strengths and weakness of the program, as well as giving hope that the program could enter a full launch in the fall. The following were the participating pilot offices, their location on campus, their liaisons, and certification level:

1. Center for Information Technology (CIT)—Mudd Library, Barbara Winterich  
   <bwinteri@oberlin.edu>  **BRONZE**
2. Science Library—Science Center, Alison Ricker  
   <aricker.oberlin.edu>  **SILVER**
3. Environmental Studies—Adam Joseph Lewis Center, Ben Hobbs (formerly Catherine Hoyle)  
   <bhobbs@oberlin.edu>  **GREEN**
Science Library was the first office to be certified (October), then CIT (November), and then Environmental Studies (December). Science Library was the most helpful of the three pilot offices for providing feedback, and they were the only office to complete the Qualtrics Survey and work with OES for creative solutions for GOPro reminders in their office (i.e. Let OES use their table tents to post reminders for the program).

Science Library also featured the plaque prominently in their office, on their circulation desk where it is visible to anyone who enters the office. The results of their survey suggest that they have continued the sustainable initiatives that helped them certify Silver, but that the plaque has generated little discussion of the program and many of their employees aren’t aware that they are participating.

The CIT liaison has been difficult to get in touch with, but she did allow an audit of their office in bottom of Mudd Library, showing the various places where posters or stickers could be placed to remind staff about the program. The plaque was not placed in a particularly conspicuous part of this office, and the results of the Qualtrics Survey are still pending.

Environmental Studies met almost every criterion listed on the survey form when they certified Green. It was difficult to get feedback from them for most of the pilot because the new director of the Adam Joseph Lewis Center, Ben Hobbs, replaced their former liaison. The plaque is in the Lewis Center Library, and Ben Hobbs has expressed concern that this is not conspicuous enough a location. The results of their Qualtrics Survey, and other feedback about the program, are still pending.

The pilot of this program has made it clear that greater effort must be made to check in with offices and quickly respond to any difficulties with the program. With future offices, it will be important for the intern to make sure that the plaques are placed somewhere that is visible to both office employees and visitors to the office. A greater frequency of office check-ins, perhaps bimonthly, might be advantageous when an office first enters the program to clear up any questions and conduct an audit of the office space (not to determine certification, but to see what OES can help with, a la CIT visit).

Also useful may be a summit that includes liaisons and employees from participating offices. This summit could provide a space for participants to discuss their experience with the program, share ideas for enhancing their office sustainability, and receive suggestions for OES about how to certify higher. Ideally, this summit would occur when all offices have been in the program long enough to assess whether or not GOPro has led to perceivable behavior change or discussion of sustainability in their office.

Accomplishments

- **Artistic Development**—located a found-art studio in Cleveland and attended a clinic to learn how to make award plaques for GOPro. Developed a working template for the plaques that will serve as the basis for the award system in the program.
- **Program and Strategy Research**—spent many hours researching programs similar to this one on different college campus and developed a process for how it would work based on the best of what I found through this research
• **Criteria Development**—re-evaluated (and expanded on) the tentative criteria made for the program last year, then with each attached an explanation of why it was important and how much energy it could save

• **Pilot Launch**—reached out to three offices on campus who expressed interest in GOPro, found liaisons for each, certified and made a plaque for each office

• **Pilot Feedback**—communicated with all offices during the pilot to receive input about their experience, in part through a Qualtrics survey that may continue to be used through the full launch

**Challenges**

Initial difficulties came during the 2014-2015 academic year, during which a working template for the program had to be devised based on the research collected by the former GOPro intern. Further difficulty came from finding an artistic outlet through which to make the award plaques, which thankfully landed in the hands of Upcycled Parts with an instructional clinic on making the plaques. The pilot of the program proved challenging in a variety of ways, particularly regarding how to receive sufficient and meaningful feedback from the piloting offices. The primary ongoing challenging will be this regulation of feedback, and it will be important for offices added during the Fall 2016 launch to report any questions or concerns they have to the Green Office Program intern to ensure the program runs as planned.

**Key Stakeholders**

- Nicole McGee from Upcycled Parts Shop in Cleveland: <nicole@upcyclepartsshop.org>
- Bridget Flynn Oberlin Sustainability Coordination bflynn@oberlin.edu
- Barbara Winterich CIT liaison bwinteri@oberlin.edu
- Alison Ricker Science Library liaison aricker@oberlin.edu
- Ben Hobbs Environmental Studies liaison bhobbs@oberlin.edu
- CJ Blair Green Office Program Intern cblair@oberlin.edu

**Deliverables**


Green Office Criteria: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1sCjK - WOAWkeP8Khs7uYNyq2zmJIoRqTh3nJTsl/edit#gid=2044382111