

# Sustainability and Student Initiative Status Report

*Written and Revised by SGA's Sustainability Committee (SuCo) in the Fall of 2012: Alexander Barber (Sustainability Senator - SuCo Chair), Talia Arnow (Appointed Senator), Rachel Dance (Academic Chair), Stephanie Seidmon (Transportation Chair), Alexandra 'Z' Steinhauer (Food/Dining Services Chair), and Gabby Stern (EAC Liaison)*

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## 2003

### **Waste:**

The library put up a paper waste display to demonstrate how many trees were destroyed in our paper consumption.

## 2005

### **Energy:**

In partnership with Senate, members of the Lights Out! Project, Residential Life, CEC, and facility services, the hot water in all the laundry room washing machines was turned off.

A proposal to encourage the Skidmore administration to invest in wind energy for our campus energy needs was submitted. Students are actively working with faculty members to devise an economically and environmentally sound plan. Their initial calculations showed multi-million dollar savings over a 30 year period.

Dining Services also sought to reduce energy consumption. Started in 2005 and finished in 2007, Murray-Aikins Dining Hall underwent a renovation which replaced the existing HVAC system with a system that utilized geothermal technology to provide the heating and cooling, allowing the building to attain significant energy savings. The renovation also replaced out-of-date appliances, such as steam and hot water intensive dishwashers, an inefficient large rotary electric oven, and a large steam generator. On a smaller scale, the Dining Hall monitors refrigerator temperatures and uses LED lighting and CFL bulbs whenever possible.

The Sustainable Skidmore committee put together a proposal to encourage the Skidmore administration to set up a working committee to determine economic and environmentally sound practices for the school to implement in the school year of 2005-2006.

### **Food:**

In the fall of 2005, Jonathan Greene created a club called D-hall revolution, whose goal was to identify partnerships with local farms and Skidmore Dining Services. During his next four years, he met with financial and dining services administrators to look at the feasibility of such partnerships. Greene established the first of many local partnerships: Saratoga Apple. During 2006 and 2007, he went on to identify other potential relationships and ultimately proved to the school that we could afford to buy more local ingredients. Since then, "Skidmore's dining services has created several partnerships with local farms and vendors, which reduces CO2 emissions, enhances the bond between consumer and producer, increases local economic benefits while providing the freshest, tastiest and most nutritional food possible" (Dining Services Website).

This was the first year that EAC offered free local and organic food offered at their Earth Day celebration.

### **Transportation:**

A ride board was started in Case to decrease Skidmore student's fossil fuel use. It was simply a chalkboard where people could post where they were going and when, or where and when they needed to go somewhere.

The Village Bicycle Project was initiated, which provides bicycles to Skidmore community members for an afternoon with the goal of decreasing vehicle use. The program kicked off on Earth Day.

### **Waste:**

Skidmore significantly decreased paper use in the library by encouraging Information Technologies to make double-sided printing default setting. It is still the standard print setting on all computers. The dining hall replaced Styrofoam cups with 30% recycled paper cups during renovation. EAC partnered with the director of the Dining Hall to make this happen.

EAC created water-conserving plaques that now hang in every dorm bathroom on campus. Facilities Services paid for the plaques, and EAC hung them up.

## **2006**

### **Energy:**

Students created the Cool It Ma and Pa campaign to get students to persuade their parents to buy green energy from the grid. They persuaded more than a 150 students to call or email their parents about this issue.

Students held a well-attended meeting (over 50 students) with President Glotzbach and Vice President Michael West to discuss initiatives at Skidmore to address global warming.

Students participated in a national Greenpeace campaign called the Climate Voters Cup. Colleges and universities competed with each other to pressure local U.S. Congressional candidates to take action on global warming. Skidmore finished 4th in the country.

### **Transportation:**

The ride board was updated and put on an online forum.

### **Waste:**

EAC and CEC developed Skidmore's first paper policy with the help of the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC). The policy addresses issues such as double-sided printing for faculty, staff and students; reducing the number of unnecessary post office distributions; and reducing the number of posters around campus. Double-sided printing resolutions passed through Student Senate and Faculty. Students continued to work with Information Technologies to reduce the margins in Microsoft Word for all public computers in an effort to reduce paper use and to ensure that public printers are set to automatically print double-sided.

Students campaigned against the Kimberly-Clark Corporation, the largest tissue manufacturer in the world. We sent over 400 protest signatures to the corporation because they are clear-cutting North America's Boreal Forest (the last remaining rainforest in North America). Skidmore was the second college/university to send a message to the Kimberly-Clark headquarters. As a result, the SkidShop started selling recycled tissues. Facilities still uses K-C.

Senate allocated \$3500 to subsidize Skidmore clubs and organizations to buy more environmentally-friendly products. The Sharing the Green fund provides the cost difference between the least environmentally product that they would normally purchase and the more sustainable products.

EAC and SGA organized the Battle of the Quads, a week-long recycling competition between North and South Quads intended to promote Skidmore's new recycling program and expand awareness about proper recycling protocol. They worked with Facilities and the Recycling Coordinator to promote campus involvement. They recommended participation in national competition, Recyclemania, which we continue to do.

Trash to Treasures was the end-of-the-year event where EAC members collected usable goods from the dorms and gave it to the Salvation Army to be sold or donated to local community members.

## 2007

### **Energy:**

Students collected signatures and collaborated with IPPC to advocate President Glotzbach's signing of the President's Climate Commitment.

Students worked with the College to host Focus the Nation events on campus.

Students successfully worked with Representative Gillibrand in co-sponsoring the Safe Climate Act.

Students sent letters to Governor Spitzer urging support for state-level climate legislation.

### **Waste:**

EAC initiatives:

- EAC organized a pilot "Recycling Battle of the Dorms" competition among dorms to promote recycling on campus. They hosted a "Rock, Roll, Recycle" concert and "Do It In The Dark Dance" in conjunction.
- A "Bottle Dino" that was built out of thrown away bottles, made many appearances across campus.
- EAC organized a group of students to take down outdated posters and recycle them.
- The Skidmore Shop began promoting eco-friendly merchandise on sale after meeting with members of EAC.
- EAC members worked with city of Saratoga Springs and local businesses to promote discounts for using reusable bags; they sold reusable bags to the community.
- They advertised for discounts on reusable mugs at campus vendors.
- EAC members made posters out of old magazines found on campus to increase recycling awareness.
- Students helped organize a Trash Audit on Case Green to show what Skidmore throws away.
- To highlight plastic bag use, EAC members collected plastic bags on campus and made them into an archway outside of Case.

## 2008

### **Academics:**

Skidmore hired two Skidmore College "Recycling Interns" to develop and promote recycling initiatives on campus. They also hired Northwoods Steward Interns, and thus this ongoing program was established. Stewards work on trail maintenance and environmental education. Sustainable Skidmore also worked with two student interns during the summer to design signage for our geothermal buildings, new occupancy sensors, and a CDTA bus pass program. This was also the first year that Sustainable Skidmore decided to Collaborate with the First-Year Experience and pre-orientation staff to weave sustainability into the context of first-year orientation. Finally, in 2008, Skidmore hired its first Eco-Reps. The Eco-Rep program consists of 10 student internship positions and is designed to increase environmental awareness and inspire behavior change through programming and educational initiatives in the residence halls. These interns are now called Sustainability Reps, or S-Reps.

### **Food:**

In 2008, the Dining hall ended its contract with the *US Food Service* and started working with Quandts, located in Amsterdam, NY. Skidmore is Quandts' largest client, and therefore, Skidmore has

a lot of leverage. We have the autonomy to make relationships with small and local farms. We purchase local breads, local milk, local produce etc. through Quandts, and we market the "Pride of New York" program. When possible, we buy in bulk to reduce waste. In 2008 we also started donating food to the Saratoga Food Pantry.

The EAC had its first Harvest Dinner, which now occurs every October. This event raises awareness about the garden and celebrates the season's fall harvest. They receive donations from farms at the Saratoga Farmers Market. There have since been a total of 4 harvest dinners. Students cook and prepare for the dinner in the Dining Hall Test Kitchen.

### **Land:**

The Sustainability Coordinator, Riley Neugebauer, hired the first Northwoods Steward during the school year and the summer. This position is still responsible for maintaining trails, leading hikes, removing invasive species, planning and running a service day twice during the school year, and keeping up the North Woods blog.

Skidmore has no woodland protection or conservation plan; however, a Faculty Interest Group (FIG) spearheaded by Professor Robert Jones was established in 2012 to determine interests and attitudes faculty and students have in Skidmore's land. They meet about every three weeks. Meetings are open to all faculty, and the Northwoods Steward student sits in on the meetings as well.

### **Waste:**

This year, all management and support staff of Dining Services met to establish current sustainability practices, many of them pertaining to waste. Murray-Aikins Dining Hall began using reusable plates, cups, bowls, coffee mugs, silverware, and recycled napkin and paper products. In addition to reusable tableware, the Dining Hall implemented the "No Tray" policy. For catering events, dining services switched to using biodegradable recycled disposable-ware and containers. Dining services also began recycling glass, plastic, aluminum, newspapers, cardboard and office paper through Facilities. Dining services made moves to reduce waste within food preparation by using large cambros for large deliveries of water rather than individual water bottles and cloth rags for cleaning rather than paper. Staff and work-study students are trained to reduce food waste during food prep. Fryer oil used in food prep began to be sold to Energy Recycling Corporation, a company that provides collection and recycling of waste cooking oil. Furthermore, leftover food was donated to local food pantries (although not as regularly as Dining Services would like due to liability issues).

## **2009**

### **Academics:**

The College improved its stewardship of the North Woods by offering two stewardship positions throughout the summer and one position throughout the academic year.

During the spring and summer of 2009, Skidmore used grant funds to support the Skidmore Student Garden. The Sustainability Coordinator oversaw this student initiative, which proved to be successful beyond all expectations. During the summer, students offered tours of the garden for Camp Northwoods participants and in the fall, the Coordinator worked with several professors to incorporate aspects of the garden into their classes, including two First-Year Seminars. At the end of the season, the students hosted a harvest dinner, which served over 150 students locally produced food from the student garden and the Saratoga Farmers' Market. The garden was highlighted several times throughout the growing season in the local media, as well as in our Skidmore community publications.

### **Food:**

Laura Fralich started the Skidmore Student Garden in April 2009, and it became a sub-group of EAC in spring 2012. Currently, it meets separately from EAC. The garden started as a 60 x 40 ft plot and

then expanded to 60 x 80 ft. The design of the garden was once rectangular rows of raised beds, but changed to a circular spiral after the permaculture workshop in Spring 2011. In addition to supplying to Skidmore's Dining Services, the garden provides opportunities for education and research. In its first season, the garden harvested 1,138 pounds of produce and has done about the same each season. They received overwhelming support from the Skidmore community including students, professors and Dining Services and Facilities staff. We held three major fundraising events that were all very well attended and raised \$632 that was used to purchase garden supplies. They received media coverage from The Saratogian, and The Daily Gazette as well as from various articles in Scope Magazine and Skidnews. Overall, the pilot year of the Skidmore Student Garden provides great hopes for the future of the project.

### **Land:**

The first season of the Skidmore Student Garden turned out to be a huge success. They ended the season with 1,138 pounds of produce harvested at an estimated value of \$1,111.73 on a 2,400 square foot plot of land.

*Refer to the annual report and add in the appendix at the end*

<http://www.skidmore.edu/sustainability/documents/2009StudentGardenReport.pdf>

### **Transportation:**

The EAC biking group led a bike repair day, which was co-sponsored by the Cycling Club.

## **2010**

### **Energy:**

10/10/10 Rally for Climate Change sponsored by 350.org

Students participated in the national Powershift Conference. Over 100 students attended movement-building workshops for a weekend culminating with a peaceful protest at the US Chamber of Commerce. Students had the opportunity to speak with our senators urging them to sign climate change legislation.

### **Food:**

A third grade class from the Saratoga Springs Waldorf School took two field trips to the garden. Volunteers led a workshop about harvesting for the children. The class visited the garden two times in the Fall of 2010.

The first of a now annual Tang Garden Dinner co-sponsored with the Tang occurred. The event fosters good publicity with the Saratoga community and Skidmore Administration, and a garden work party always occurs before dinner.

Campus Food Events:

- Dunkerley Dialogue Tang Museum dinner featuring SSG produce
- Harvest Dinner
- Lecture by Keith McHenry from Food Not Bombs
- EAC potluck dinner
- Food Justice Conference at Northeastern
- Food Waste Audit in the Dining Hall
- Truck Farm Film Screening
- The Farmer and the Horse Film Screening
- Beats for Beets Garden Fundraiser
- Permaculture workshop with Ethan Roland from Appleseed Permaculture

The Environmental Studies Capstone "Composting at Skidmore" looked at the physical, administrative, and economic feasibility of creating a composting program for Skidmore's horse manure, food waste, and lawn waste. The students conducted a food waste audit of the Dining Hall,

finding that “assuming that the facility is open 329 days a year (230 weekdays and 99 weekend days), and that waste production is constant throughout the operating year, the Murray-Aikins Dining Hall produces 182,641 lbs of food waste. Pre-consumer waste comprises 56,390 lbs, or 30.8%, of this weight and post-consumer waste is 126,251 lbs, or 69.2%.” The students went on to identify a different composting facility options depending on the type of financial commitment the college was ready to make. They concluded that a facility located on Skidmore’s property is not just physically and economically feasible, but economically sustainable as well, as it would save the college money on fertilizers and actually provide a stream of money made from selling the compost.

### **Transportation:**

In the fall of 2010 the Sustainable Mobility Solutions Class taught by Jeff Olsen produced the Skidmore College Centennial Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan in response to a greater need for sustainable campus mobility. The document that the students generated explains the needs for transportation and mobility related solutions. The class explored Skidmore’s existing conditions related to transportation and mobility and compared Skidmore to its peer institutions. They conducted a campus survey to determine current trends in transportation and desired improvements and conducted bike and campus audits. These audits focused on the amount, usage, and locations of bike racks and crosswalks. In addition, these audits looked at accessibility, path issues and motor vehicle safety. The class also compiled data on the amount of land area devoted to car parking and buildings on campus. Three on-campus case studies including a perimeter path, the North/South divide, and bike sharing are highlighted in the document as future efforts that Skidmore can explore to increase sustainable mobility on campus. As a result of the work conducted by this class and the report, a perimeter path has been constructed by facilities and now is in use by the campus community. The full text of the report can be found by accessing this link:

[http://cmsauthor.skidmore.edu/sustainability/Campus\\_Groups/upload/StudentSustainableMobilityClassReport-Fall2010.pdf](http://cmsauthor.skidmore.edu/sustainability/Campus_Groups/upload/StudentSustainableMobilityClassReport-Fall2010.pdf)

### **Waste:**

Students collected bottles for the Tang Exhibit. The event was co-sponsored with the Tang. Talia Arnow ‘13 started the EAC composting sub-committee. Members and student interns built a compost bin with the help of facility’s staff to be located in Scribner village. Sustainable Skidmore establishes three student composting interns. Riley and three composting interns organized a Food Waste Audit in Dining Hall. Establishment of Compost Initiative in Northwoods Village. Purchased small kitchen containers for each housing unit. Each building received a larger bin in which they could place their food scraps. EAC composting subcommittee responsible for organizing food scrap pick up, weighing, placing the food waste into the unit and managing the compost pile. Finished compost is utilized in the Skidmore Student Garden.

## **2011**

### **Academics:**

In the Fall of 2011, a student intern, Alex Barber ‘13, began research on the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, & Rating System (STARS), a program of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). STARS is an internal assessment tool for colleges and universities to measure and report their sustainability initiatives at a national level. The research he gathered during the Fall semester was an initial data and information gathering to see what Skidmore is doing and the potential range of points earned would be to receive a rating. To cap the semester, a meeting was held with Michael West, VP for Finance and Administration & Treasurer, and he approved moving forward with the STARS process, which led Skidmore to become an official STARS Participant.

During the Fall 2011 semester, several students, spearheaded by Talia Arnow '13, formed a group within SGA to discuss the formation of a Sustainability Committee (SuCo). The group was formed in response to SGA's inability to represent student concerns and support initiatives that address campus wide sustainability issues. A draft of the operating codes for the committee were put forth, and the structure outlined for the following semester, with the understanding that the committee would be in a trial phase and evaluated by SGA at the end of the semester to determine its effectiveness and necessity. The group was designed with a sustainability senator, seven willingness to serve positions. These positions individually focused on the topics of transportation, waste, green building, food, energy/climate, academics, and land management, with an additional EAC representative, two S-rep positions, and a senator. Senate passed the design of the committee and the committee was officially formed in the spring. The committee is continuing in its trial phase into the Fall 2012 semester, after which the final decision will be made by SGA about its continuation. The group is currently rewriting the operating codes and reformatting the structure, completing a status report, and providing information to other students via the status report when it is complete. The current structure of the group includes several willingness-to-serve positions, one Sustainability Senator, a step-up Senator position, an EAC liaison, and 2 S-Rep liaisons. The willingness-to-serve positions were meant to fulfill some of the topic areas within sustainability, and include: energy and climate, land use, waste, local food and dining services, academics, green building, and transportation.

### **Energy:**

A group of ten students met with President Glotzbach and Riley, the sustainability coordinator, about signing the President's Climate Commitment.

The EAC 'Energy Working Group' was officially established in EAC.

Students participated in 350.org's 'Moving Planet,' an international event for groups congregating to send a message to the world about the need to move away from fossil fuels, dirty energy, and dirty money.

65 Skidmore students attended the Keystone XL Pipeline protest in Washington DC on November 6th.

Skidmore Fracking awareness campaigns, fracking petitions for FrackAction, participation in common council meetings in Albany

Green Umbrella Convergence (NYS energy youth movement focusing on anti-fracking and anti-coal powered campus. spreading awareness of NY environmental issues to NY schools)

Students attended Powershift NY.

### **Food:**

Farm Spring Break was a project organized by Anna Graves '14, which provided an opportunity for 10 other students to join her in Essex, NY during spring break to explore sustainable agriculture in springtime in our climate. The students helped with preserving and baking, tapping maple trees, threshing/winnowing black beans, and learned from community members and farmers there about sustainable agriculture, livestock, and more. Other recent food initiatives include Farm Spring Break, a trip to Full and By Farm in Essex, NY, organized by Anna Graves '14 which gave students an opportunity to learn winder farming skills.

Erin Donnellan and Kate Ito analyzed the Saratoga Springs Local Food System in their capstone "Understanding the Saratoga Springs Local Food System: An Analysis of its Local Food

Market." Rebecca Drago and Laura Fralich analyzed Saratoga County's commitment to providing low-income communities with local, sustainable food in "Food Matters: An Analysis of Programs in Saratoga County Addressing Access to Local Food and Low Income Communities."

Beginning in the 2011 fall semester, Sarah Arndt began running the Real Food Calculator as one of the Dining Services and Sustainable Skidmore interns. The Real Food Calculator is a food assessment tool to track a college's purchasing over time. Sarah completed the calculator for the months of October 2011 and April 2012 and found Skidmore's real food percentage to be 11.11% and 8.53%, respectively. An intern continues to run the calculator in the 2012 fall semester. The end goal is for Dining Services to sign a contract committing to reach 20% real food by 2020. A RFC group, which

began holding regular meetings in the 2012 fall semester, is working to achieve this goal. The Real Food Challenge (RFC) is a national organization working to “[leverage] the power of youth and universities to create a healthy, fair and green food system” (website). Their principal campaign is to shift \$1 billion of existing university food budgets away from industrial farms and unhealthy food and towards their definition of “real food” (local/community-based, humane, fair, and/or ecologically sound) by 2020.

The Food Working Group, a subcommittee of the EAC was formally established in Fall 2011. Previously, the Skidmore Student Garden was the focus of the Food Working Group, until the garden became its own subcommittee. Currently, the Food Working Group is the umbrella for new initiatives like the Real Food Challenge and Food Day. It has partnered several students with the dining services to conduct projects, campaigns, and audits to increase local and organic product purchasing. The EAC hosts several potlucks each year which are always locally sourced. Food became an area of focus after the Skidmore Student Garden was established. A Local Foods Cookbook created by Jewels O’Brien and Laura Mindlin in the Food Group can be found at:

<http://cms.skidmore.edu/diningservice/sustainability/sustainability-cookbook.cfm>

The Skidmore Student Garden designed logo for the garden and ordered stickers and screen-printed bags. They also hosted a permaculture workshop, which redesigned and made long term plans for garden.

The food position of the Sustainability Committee has been held by Z (Alexandra) Steinhauer ’13 for both the Spring 2012 and Fall 2012 semesters.

The initial support and request for funding from the President’s Discretionary Fund for student, staff, and faculty participation in the NOFA-NY Winter Conference stemmed from a CEC meeting in Fall 2010 which led to a proposal and funding from the President’s Office for the conference in January 2011. In the second year the conference attendance was funded from as a result of a proposal to the Finance & Budgeting Office.

Joshua Ness: ES 205: Forest Conservation. In the Fall of 2011, Josh had his students measure soil respiration in the garden and taking soil samples. They also sampled the compost applied to the garden that was purchased from Booth’s Blend Compost. In Fall 2012, Josh had the students go to the garden and do some observation and testing related to pest dynamics, plant composition in the garden as linked to vigor and quality and the chemical analysis of some of the different plant species. The Sustainable Skidmore Office organized a Fruit Tree Workshop on campus during Fall 2011 in order to provide students with some skills related to pruning and caring for fruit trees. The 4 apple trees and 2 plum trees were planted as a part of research and a proposal that was put together by the students in the Garden Committee in the Environmental Action Club the year before. The workshop was open to the community as well, and 2 community members attended, in addition to 3-5 students. Adam Quist, formerly an employee of Bob’s Trees, offered his services for this workshop and provided both a presentation in the classroom and a hands-on demonstration of how to properly prune and care for fruit trees that you have recently planted.

Sustainable Skidmore organized a few opportunities for students and community members to learn more about sustainable agriculture and local foods. One was offered in Fall 2011 and featured Moie Kimball Crawford ’69, an alum who has spent thirty years in the sustainable agriculture field with her husband. They own and operate a farm in south-central Pennsylvania called New Morning Farm. Moie provided a lecture and slideshow about her farming experience to the Human Dilemmas Scribner Seminars, and also in the evening as a public presentation.

Sustainable Skidmore organized a film screening and panel discussion in Spring 2011 focusing on sustainable agriculture, due to growing student interest in this area. The event featured a screening of the film [The Farmer & the Horse](#), by [Jared Flesher](#), and concluded with a panel discussion with the filmmaker, local farm owner and operator [Michael Kilpatrick](#), Farm Spring Break Organizer Anna Graves ’14, and Skidmore Student Garden Manager Gabriella Stern ’13. The film highlights young beginning farmers in New Jersey who are interested to farm with more sustainable methods such as utilizing horses instead of tractors, but also shows how challenging and difficult the transition to farming has been for many of them. The event was free and open to the public.

Riley Neugebauer (Sustainable Skidmore) talked with Mark Miller in Spring 2011/Summer 2011 about creating local food interns to work with him, a faculty sponsor, and Sustainable Skidmore to better understand the challenges faced by both the Dining Hall and farms in establishing more



local/sustainable food partnerships. Mark was supportive of this, as was Jim Rose, so Riley then worked with ES to identify a faculty sponsor. Monica Raveret Richter, who is in Biology, and is an ES Affiliated Faculty member, agreed to act as the faculty sponsor for the first interns, and she has remained the sponsor over the course of the 3 semesters that we have offered the internships. She can only have a maximum of 5 interns per semester, so in 2012 there were 5 doing internships or independent student projects in the Spring and Fall. Mark acts as the on-site supervisor for these interns in the Dining Hall, except for one or two that either do community-based internships or work directly with Riley in the Sustainable Skidmore office. This has been set up, thus far, under the ES299 or ES399 rubric, or for independent study credit. Information about Internships for credit can be found at: <http://cms.skidmore.edu/advising/internships/index.cfm>

The Skidmore Herb Garden was a project initiated by Roz Freeman '12 and Eva Fillion '12 as a part of their local foods internship during the Fall and Spring Semesters of the 2011-12 Academic Year. They worked with the Dining Hall Management, a local farmer with expertise in growing herbs (Aaren Harris from Wing Road Farm) who Monica Raveret Richter in Biology has worked with in the past, Sustainable Skidmore, and Facilities Management in order to bring the project from an idea phase to reality. In Spring 2012, it was installed on the green, near a flowerbed, between Jonsson Tower and the Dining Hall. The agreement was that students would care for the herb garden, chefs would harvest from the garden, and Sustainable Skidmore would generally provide oversight. The bed contains both annual herbs and perennial herbs, so each year one of the rows will need to be replanted with annual plants, while the other row will continue to come back each season.

Real Food Challenge Regional Training, August 2011: Sarah Arndt

NOFA-NY Summer Workshop on Food Safety, Summer 2011: Margot Reisner & Gabby Stern

Campus Food Events

- Establishment of Food Working Group as an official EAC subcommittee
- Harvest Dinner Fundraiser
- Food Working Group local food and farmers cookbook
- Involvement in Real Food Challenge/Real Food Calculator
- Beats for Beet Fundraiser
- Separation of the Skidmore Student Garden from Food Working Group
- Garden Work Parties
- NOFA-NY conference. President's Discretionary Fund sponsored 20 students and staff to attend.

### **Land:**

This season, the Skidmore Student Garden raised several hundred dollars through fundraisers and selling merchandise. They produced over 500 pounds of food which was sold to Skidmore Dining Hall. In addition, they expanded the garden to be aligned with the principles of permaculture.

Refer to the annual report and add in the appendix at the end

<http://www.skidmore.edu/sustainability/documents/2011StudentGardenReport.pdf>

### **Waste:**

- Hydration Station Initiative Proposal finished and submitted to administration and facilities
- Take Back the Tap campaign. Build a water bottle sculpture from collected plastics on campus.
- continuation of Northwoods composting program organized by EAC waste sub-committee
- Ideas generated about Scribner composting
- Attended NRHG meeting with Rochelle Calhoun, Mike West, Riley, Res-life, facilities to bring sustainable initiatives such as composting and filtered water to the table.
- Significant library renovation in which we...
  - converted to energy efficient lighting
  - recycling computers
  - refinishing of furniture using all natural, biodegradable products
  - old shelving was sold for scrap metal
  - purchased low-emission carpet
  - motion detector lights

# 2012

## **Academics:**

For the first time in the history of Skidmore Unplugged, the Sustainability Coordinator worked with a graphic design class, which created the logo, a real-time electricity dashboard Website.

Spring 2012, STARS data collection continued in another internship in the Sustainable Skidmore office by Alex Barber. The bulk of the research performed was on the curriculum. Each course listed in the course catalog was looked at and determined if it was "Sustainability-Related" or "Sustainability-Focused" using definitions from STARS. Nearly 200 of the classes were classified as either related or focused, with around 50 offered each semester. This list is continually updated and recounted, with new classes added to the full list each semester.

In the Fall of 2012, STARS work continued. The final push for data collection and reaching out to stakeholders has been the focus. A lot of information and data has been collected on peer and aspirant schools to see how they have gone through the STARS process and what has come from their work. This semester is dedicated to completing the STARS report as fully as possible to access if Skidmore should pursue a STARS rating and how it can be used internally to not only highlight the successes, but also to determine where in the College sustainability actions can still be taken to make the campus as sustainable as possible.

## **Energy:**

The energy working group of EAC organized fifteen students to attend a fireside chat with President Glotzbach to discuss the President's Climate Commitment. The task was delegated to Karen Kellogg to organize a meeting with these students to discuss Skidmore's sustainability plan and climate commitment. Members from EAC energy group and SuCo (SGA's Sustainability Committee) attended a meeting with Karen Kellogg the newly appointed Associate Dean of Infrastructure, Sustainability, and Civic Engagement and Beau Breslin the Interim Dean of Faculty. The result from that conversation is the declaration that Skidmore will be developing sustainability strategic plan that would address the signing of the President's Climate commitment by the end of the year. Senate had a lengthy conversation led by SuCo and EAC on the President's Climate Commitment.

## **Food:**

The Summer of 2012 was the garden's 4th season of vegetable production, all of which is sold to the Skidmore Dining Hall to be used in Emily's Garden and in other chef creations.

Sarah Arndt '14 worked on a local food and local distributor survey during her internship with the Sustainable Skidmore Office during the summer session 2012. She used the Cornell Farm to School Toolkit as a model to create the surveys, and then connected with Cornell Cooperative and NOFA-NY to help send the links out via the networks that those organizations have. Due to a very limited response rate to the survey, Sarah and Riley chose to turn that project into another internship opportunity for the Fall 2012 semester. MK Johnson took on this internship and is currently working to build additional contact information for local farms and distributors that she can reach out to directly about the surveys, and is reaching out again to both NOFA-NY and Cornell Cooperative. Both of these organizations have been very supportive and helpful in this effort. The goal is to gather responses from local/regional farms and distributors who have interest in supplying more local food to large customers such as Skidmore, so that we can then build additional connections for local and sustainable food purchasing, analyze the data, and then determine next steps in connecting distributors and farms both for our own purchasing needs, and for others as well.

The PEAS First-Year Pre-Orientation Program was based on the idea that growing, cooking, and eating food brings people together and brings the much-needed attention to where food comes from. First-years who participated explored initiatives at Skidmore and the surrounding community in agricultural and food systems sustainability. They planted and harvested in the Skidmore Student

Garden, visited Pleasant Valley Farm and Homestead Artisan Farm, prepared a delicious dinner with local foods, met the Dining Hall staff, helped with a community garden project at the Saratoga Race Course for the workers there, and visited the Saratoga Farmers Market. Students were able to learn about where their food comes from, and discover ways to increase local, fair, ecologically sound and humane food sources on campus. Each first-year student who participated paid \$325 for this opportunity.

Student Organizers/Facilitators: Margot Reisner '14, Will Conway '14, Roz Freeman '12, and other garden members, and with minimal support from Riley Neugebauer in the Sustainable Skidmore Office. Margot Reisner and Will Conway '14 co-facilitated the program in August 2012.

In addition to the Real Food Challenge internship and calculator process in the Dining Hall, there is a group of students working on the Real Food Challenge campaign, which asks for a commitment from institutions to purchase 20% local food by 2020. Students involved with the Real Food Challenge in EAC include Sarah Arndt '14 (2011-12), Faith Nicholas (2011-12, 2012-13), Elizabeth Cohen (2011-12, 2012-13), and others.

#### Skidmore Student Garden in Courses

- Sarah Breckenridge: EN 105: Food Literacy. Sarah had the students visit the garden in this course in both Spring 2012 and Fall 2012. For the Fall course, students were also able to harvest some of the vegetables to use in their cooking competition. Sarah also has invited students from her Honors Forum 200 course to visit the garden with the EN 105 students for the Fall 2012 semester.
- Alison Barnes: ES351A: Environmental Art. In Spring 2012, several students in Alison's Environmental Art course decided to focus on the Skidmore Student Garden for their environmental art project. One group chose to install two bluebird houses near the garden while another student or students installed a glass sculpture in the garden to help in beautifying the space.

In addition to the capstone research undertaken by Will Dowling '12 in regards to a campus CSA program that could be offered to students, another student, Z (Alexandra) Steinhauer '13, also began working on a similar initiative with an off-campus vendor, Field Goods. Z invited the owner of Field Goods to campus to present to Dining Services Management, Karen Kellogg, and Riley Neugebauer to better understand what her product offering was. The concept is that this company would source produce from local farms (they are mainly concentrated in the lower Hudson Valley currently) and then bag them into sizes that would be appropriate for an individual or household depending on what people were interested in, and then students and others could help manage a pick-up once per week where students, or faculty/staff, could come and collect their bag to take home with them. The Dining Hall had interest in potentially offering local breads, cheeses, or other similar products in tandem with this. Sustainable Skidmore and some of the Environmental Studies faculty are interested to explore more local farm options for something like this before moving forward on a partnership with a company that doesn't currently support immediately local farms in Saratoga or Washington County.

#### State and Regional Conferences:

- NOFA-NY Winter Conference, Saratoga Springs, January 2012
- Food Policy Council Workshop/Meeting, Rochester, NY, Summer 2012: Sondra Lipshutz, Margot Reisner, Sarah Arndt, Jenn Garvin
- Real Food Challenge Regional Training, August 2012: Elizabeth Cohen & Faith Nicholas
- Field Trip to Antonucci's Local Producer Farm, Juliano's, Summer 2012: Sarah Arndt '14, Jim Rose (Executive Chef), and other Dining Services Staff.
- UMASS Amherst Permaculture Your Campus Conference, Summer 2012: Margot Reisner
- 6th Annual Farm to Cafeteria Conference, Burlington, VT, Summer 2012: Riley Neugebauer (Sustainable Skidmore), Frank Esposito (Dining Services), Sarah Arndt
- Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference, Saratoga Springs, October 2012: Faith Nicholas, MK Johnson, Karen Obaid, Jewels O'Brien, Laura Mindlin

#### Summary of Local Food Intern Outcomes from Spring 2011-Fall 2012:

- Herb garden between Jonsson Tower and Dining Hall (Roz & Eva 2011-12 academic year)
- Became a Real Food Challenge School (2011-12)
- Real Food Challenge Baseline Assessment of our Real Food purchases (Sarah Arndt 2011-12 academic year and summer 2012)
- Visit to Williams College (Roz Freeman, Eva Fillion & Sarah Arndt Fall 2011)

- Assisted the Dining Hall in donating additional leftover foods to the Saratoga Economic Opportunity Council Soup Kitchen due to research on the Good Samaritan Act which prevents legal liability for the food donor in order to incentivize the donation of the food to those in need (Eva Fillion and Roz Freeman Fall 2011)
- Assisted the Dining Hall in identifying vegetarian or vegan recipes that could be used for some of the theme dinners such as the Harvest Dinner in the Dining Hall or the Vegetarian Dinner (Eva Fillion and Roz Freeman 2011-12)
- Improved Dining Hall communication for students about local food options
- Educational information for Food Day 2011 (Sarah Arndt Fall 2011)
- Information about local foods found in the dinner meal which was found on a white board just past the cashiers for about a month during the Fall 2011 semester (Eva Fillion and Roz Freeman Fall 2011)
- Updated Dining Services Sustainability website and content (Jewels & Laura Spring 2012)
- Created survey for local farmers and local distributors (Sarah Arndt Summer 2012) and initiated meetings with Cornell Cooperative Extension and NOFA-NY to get the word out about the survey, added it to the website, etc. We have created another internship with MK Johnson for Fall 2012 to also work on getting the survey out. NOFA-NY is going to let us have a table at their Winter 2013 Conference to help get people to fill out the survey, and is putting a blurb about it into their conference packet/brochure that goes out in Fall 2012.
- Initiated conversations with NOFA-NY about a workshop or session at the Winter 2012 Conference in Saratoga Springs that looks at farm to institution and distributors and the challenges big end users like Skidmore face in trying to find local producers to buy from. Sarah Arndt (Summer 2012) started this process with Riley and Sustainable Skidmore, and now MK Johnson is continuing work on it for her Fall 2012 internship - and the topic has turned into a full day workshop because of interest from farmers. Skidmore will be a part of a panel in the workshop and the college will try to help in encouraging distributors to participate in the workshop.

### **Land:**

In the Spring, an herb Garden planted between Jonsson Tower and the Murray-Aikins Dining Hall and a Rain Garden was built near the tang (see 2012 Food).

In order to provide the school with an organized collection of information on these woodlands, a research team in summer 2012, consisting of Sondra Lipshutz '13, Melissa Green '13, Matthew Tatkov '13, and Jeremy Rosen '14 participated in student faculty collaborative research to construct the Skidmore Woodland Atlas. Under the guidance of Professor Robert Jones of the economics department, the students used geographic positioning systems (GPS) and Arc Map, a mapping application, to create various maps explaining and surveying the land. These maps include information on trails, surficial geology, bedrock types, points of interest, and history. Overall, this collection of maps and other information on Skidmore's many parcels opens the land to students and faculty for use and research.

### **Waste:**

Sustainable Skidmore hired official Student Compost Manager.

Two bikes were purchased to help the efficiency in picking up the compost in Northwoods Hydration Station installed in Starbuck Center.

The Student Compost Manager began picking up coffee grounds to be composted in the EAC composting unit in Scribner Village.

## **2013**

### **Academics:**

Designated service-learning courses involve an academic/community building project. There is currently a list of these courses being offered in the Spring of 2013.

### **Food:**

Over the past few years, the Garden has turned into a great community space for students. There is now a picnic table located near the garden and an improved gate to gain access to their storage shed. Additionally, a fence was approved in the capital budget process for the 2013 Fiscal Year, and is a project being undertaken by Sustainable Skidmore, Facilities Management, and students in the Garden Committee.

### **Waste:**

Take a Mug Leave a Mug Initiative Started and received 600+ dollars to start the program

## **Current Policies**

Dining Services sells its fryer oil at 35 cents a gallon to be converted into biofuel. Dhall staff are looking into building a converter on campus to fuel facility vehicles. Currently, they are revamping the Dhall sustainability website. We are buying biodegradable paper goods to be used around campus. On these cups, dishes etc. will be a QR code that will lead you to the website. Also, a farm in Watertown is building a greenhouse just for Skidmore.

SGA has a policy which states that only a certain portion of a club's budget can be spent on food. Once the money is allocated, it is at the club's discretion how it is spent. In order to determine how much money each year is allocated for food each year, someone would have to go through each individual club's budget, find the food line and keep a running total. Further complicating it is that the budget could be used to spend on cups/plates/silverware and not necessarily on food. There is no clear, easily obtainable, answer numbers wise.

Summer Garden Manager and North Woods Stewards: Every summer, the height of the growing season for the garden, a garden manager is hired. With the help of the North Woods Stewards, they harvest the vegetables, weigh them, and bring them to the dining hall. They also work with Camp North Woods to educate the kids on local and healthy foods. The garden has its own budget within the Sustainable Skidmore Office, and operates on a \$1500-\$2000 budget during the summer, most of which goes to paying the Student Garden Manager at \$10/hour for 12-15 hours each week. Some expenses are incurred related to the purchasing of seeds, compost, hoses, sprinklers, etc., from year to year.

The garden has a budget as a part of the Environmental Action Club budget, and it is supplemented by the fundraising carried out by the students during their two academic year fundraisers: the Local Harvest Dinner each Fall and Beats for Beets each Spring.

Skidmore College owns over 1,000 acres of land. About 900 acres of this land, including the North Woods, are woodland and 200 of these acres were acquired within the past two years. Subsequently, much of this land has been left unexplored and unmapped.

The Sustainability Representatives (S-Reps) is a program managed by the Sustainable Skidmore Office where ten sophomore students are hired to live in each of the residence halls on campus and provide outreach and education related to sustainability on campus. One of the themes covered by this group of students is food and sustainable agriculture, where they can offer helpful tips and education to the residents in their hall via a bulletin board, emails, programs, and more. Several programs have been done related to food in the residence halls in the last few years since the program has begun, and often programs related to food are done in collaboration with the Peer Health Educators in the building as well.

Saratoga Apple, a local apple orchard and vegetable producer has a table in the lower level of Case Center each Friday afternoon for several hours, which has been a positive relationship for the vendor and something which has lasted for several years. The Farm sells products directly to students, faculty, and staff who stop by the table.

The Dining Hall has a couple of different avenues to go about purchasing the foods that go into the 4,000 meals a day provided at Skidmore College. The large majority is brought to the campus by one of our major distributors. We have a main contract with one distributor, and then several other distributors that we work with on a regular basis. Roz Freeman '12 and Eva Fillion '12 both worked to understand this process and help educate other students about it as a part of their internship during the Spring 2011 semester. Beyond the purchasing through the distributors, the Dining Hall will also purchase occasionally directly from farms – often by putting in an order that can then be picked up at the Farmer's Market. This is often the way that local food is provided for special events organized through the Catering division within Dining Services. Due to liability and food safety concerns, however, the college would prefer to work with distributors. The challenge is that distributors do not have the ability, currently, to tell us how much of our food is local and where it is all coming from in an easy or efficient way, which is where the Real Food Calculator tool will be very helpful. Much of the food coming in from distributors is not local because of challenges related to seasonality, economic viability, storage, transportation, and other logistics. In addition to the calculator tool which will help us get a better sense of our current real food/local food purchasing, the Dining Services Management, Sustainable Skidmore, and local food interns are exploring other distributor options and methods to help support our current distributors to become more sustainable and forge more connections to local food producers.

## References

Internship logs and/or final reports from each semester from the local and sustainable food interns. These begin in Fall 2011 and can be obtained by speaking with Riley Neugebauer, Sustainable Skidmore (sustainability@skidmore.edu) or Monica Raveret Richter, Biology (mrichter@skidmore.edu).

Reactions and Responses to the NOFA Conference from Attendees. Sustainable Skidmore has copies of this information (sustainability@skidmore.edu).

Skidmore Student Garden Annual Reports.

2009: <http://www.skidmore.edu/sustainability/documents/2009StudentGardenReport.pdf>

2011: <http://www.skidmore.edu/sustainability/documents/2011StudentGardenReport.pdf>

Campus-Focused

Sustainable Skidmore Sustainable Foods

Page: <http://www.skidmore.edu/sustainability/initiatives/food.php#local>

Skidmore College Dining Services Sustainability

Page: <http://cms.skidmore.edu/diningservice/sustainability/index.cfm>

Skidmore Student Garden Blog: <http://canyadigitalskidmore.tumblr.com/>

Real Food Challenge: [www.realfoodchallenge.org](http://www.realfoodchallenge.org)

Regional/National Food Systems & Sustainable Agriculture:

Northeast Organic Farming Association of NY: [www.nofany.org](http://www.nofany.org)

UMASS Amherst Permaculture Program: <http://www.umasspermaculture.com/>

Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group: [www.nefood.org](http://www.nefood.org)

Farm to Institution New England (FINE): <http://www.farmtoinstitution.org/>

Farm to School Network: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/>

Cornell Cooperative Extension: <http://www.cce.cornell.edu/Pages/Default.aspx>

Cornell Farm to School: <http://farmtoschool.cce.cornell.edu/>

Skidmore Student Garden:

2009: <http://cms.skidmore.edu/portfolios/portfolio.cfm?catID=570>

2009: <http://cms.skidmore.edu/portfolios/portfolio.cfm?catID=636>

2011: <http://cms.skidmore.edu/news/news.cfm?passID=2907>

2011: <http://cms.skidmore.edu/news/news.cfm?passID=2862>

2012: [http://www.skidmore.edu/home/more\\_than\\_just\\_veggies.php](http://www.skidmore.edu/home/more_than_just_veggies.php)

Story on Local Flour at Skidmore College: <http://cms.skidmore.edu/news/news.cfm?passID=3410>