

News Release

Seminar Series at the U of M Crookston to focus on implementing Campus Sustainability Plan; First seminar scheduled for Thursday, March 24, 2011, at 5 p.m.

By Itollefs on Tuesday, March 15, 2011

A mini-grant from the University of Minnesota Institute on the Environment will help fund a series of bi-weekly, "sustainability supper seminars" designed to educate the campus and the local community on sustainability applications. In June of 2010, Chancellor Charles Casey approved an Action Plan for Climate Neutrality and Sustainability and this will be the primary focus of the seminars. The plan sets a target date of 2030 to achieve a balance between carbon released (primarily in the form of carbon dioxide) and the amount trapped or not produced; primarily by conserving energy and shifting to renewable sources.

The plan is far reaching and extends not only to energy conservation and efficiency issues directly, but also to transportation, communication, local foods, recycling, and interdisciplinary education approaches. All campuses of the University of Minnesota have or are developing such an action plan which better positions the University to not only model environmental stewardship but also save money through enhanced operation efficiencies. Numerous other campuses across the country are engaged in similar efforts.

Another over-arching goal of the seminar series is to better connect the campus to the community by creating a more functional, "Communiversiety." Hopefully, participants will reach a deeper understanding of the system dynamics approach to problem solving, sustainability and its many applications; to strive toward a more functional "learning community"; and to seek ways for better synergy in the use of common resources.

Dan Svedarsky, professor and director of the Center for Sustainability and Scott Johnson will co-lead discussions and will launch the first seminar on Thursday, March 24, 2011, at 5 p.m. Svedarsky will address, "The broad brush of sustainability, global and local" and Johnson, a systems design consultant from Grand Forks, will outline the application of the systems approach to complex campus-community sustainability initiatives. The session is scheduled for Bede Ballroom on the UMC campus.

A meal from the campus dining buffet line, will allow participants to spend the evening in conversation around a specific topic and engage others in the exploration of ideas relative to sustainability. Interested students, faculty and staff, community leaders, ministers, agency personnel, farmers, and business and industry representatives are welcome to participate by contacting Michael Knudson, Minnesota GreenCorps member, at 218-281-8128 (knud0189@umn.edu) by March 22 for reservations.

Upcoming sessions will include; International dimensions of sustainability (presented by UMC international students and faculty); an Earth Week presentation on April 20 on urban ecosystems; Implementing climate neutrality plans for campuses; Peak oil implications for broad-scale planning; Energy efficiency and renewable energy perspectives; The many values of local food production; and Faith-based approaches to sustainability.

Today the University of Minnesota, Crookston delivers 29 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and more than 40 concentrations, including several online degrees, in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of about 1,400 undergraduates from more than 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.



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