

THE SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY:

FINAL REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Executive summary 2

Introduction 3

I. Project Components:

1. IUB Summer Sustainability Program Blog 3

2. IU Sustainability Podcast Series 5

3. Developing Web content 5

4. Guide to the 2008 Sustainability Symposium 6

5. Green Q-Project guide 6

II. Media Outreach

1. Producing useful information for media outlets 7

2. Identifying key news outlets in Bloomington 7

3. Building relationships with the media 8

Appendix I: Media Contacts 9

Appendix II: *The IU Task Force on Campus Sustainability: a guide for media outlets 10*

Appendix III: New Web content 11

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IU Sustainability Task Force seeks to advance sustainability by engaging members of the Indiana University community in sustainable practices and initiatives. To that end, the Task Force has strived to develop a communication strategy capable of effectively reaching members of our community with the information necessary to become active participants in the collaborative endeavor to make our campus, local, national, and global communities more sustainable. As an intern for the Task Force this summer, I have worked to develop our communications strategy by building relationships with the media and relevant liaisons, creating and packaging information, and experimenting with new media.

Specifically, I have established an effective working relationship with University Communications, greatly facilitating the process of information dissemination. I produced press releases about the Task Force, which were distributed to media outlets and used as the basis for several radio and newspaper stories. I coordinated and maintained the IUB Summer Sustainability Program blog (<http://iubsummersustainability.wordpress.com>), which began as a place for information-sharing and discussion for program participants, and which we hope to open up to the rest of the IU community this fall. In preparation for the Summer Program in Sustainability Symposium, I designed and compiled a *Guide to the 2008 Summer Program in Sustainability Symposium*, which provided short summaries of the internship projects for attendees, and which is now available to the public online at <https://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/>.

To conclude the summer, I produced and recorded a series of interviews featuring STF interns and mentors, spotlighting their summer projects and contributions to sustainability at IU. These interviews make up most of the IU Sustainability Podcast Series, which was launched at the beginning of the fall of 2008. I also compiled a list of *Green Q-Projects* to provide freshmen at IU's Living-Learning Centers with ideas for their mandatory community-building semester "Q-projects".

Further development of the communication strategy will be a crucial component of the process of advancing sustainability at IU. Subsequent work should focus on assessing the effectiveness of current information channels and working to allocate resources in a way that maximizes the effectiveness of information-distribution. Many specific recommendations are included in the following report.

INTROUCTION

The Indiana University Task Force on Campus Sustainability established the Communications internship in the summer of 2008. The intent of the internship was to provide an IU student with the opportunity to devote part of the summer to developing a communication strategy for the Task Force with the long-term vision of laying the foundations for the communications strategy of the Office of Sustainability. As the communications intern, I sought to develop a strategy capable of effectively reaching members of our community with both, information about the Sustainability Task Force and specific information to help them become active participants in the collaborative endeavor to make our campus, local, national, and global communities more sustainable.

The general goals laid out by the Task Force guided the development of my project:

1. Develop communication strategy/channels for the 'office' of sustainability
2. Develop a set of multimedia 'news' stories/case studies related to sustainability at Indiana University
3. Coordinate with new IU Podcast website and University Marketing

The initiatives I developed based on these guidelines are the featured in the following report. The report contains two main sections. The first section, **PROJECT COMPONENTS**, will be comprised of a detailed report about the most important specific initiatives I undertook over the course of the summer: the management of the IUB Summer Sustainability Program blog, the production of the IU Sustainability Podcast series, the design and compilation of the *Guide to the 2008 Summer Program in Sustainability Symposium*, and the development of the *Green Q-project guide*. The second section, **MEDIA OUTREACH**, is intended primarily as a resource for future communications interns. It includes a brief report on my media-outreach efforts and a list and description of relevant media contacts.

I. PROJECT COMPONENTS

I. The IUB Summer Sustainability Program blog:

At the beginning of the summer, James Pierce, Energy Challenge and Web intern, set up the IUB Summer Sustainability Program Blog on wordpress.com: <http://iubsummersustainability.wordpress.com>. This blog was created to provide a medium for discussion and information-sharing for the interns, mentors, and Task Force members. I managed the blog throughout the summer, monitoring posts, encouraging participation, and blogging frequently to maintain momentum. During some periods of the summer, interns blogged frequently and several comments and responses were posted by both, interns and outside parties involved in sustainability. We were very encouraged when the manager of the blog "Pennsylvania for Change" decided to feature us on his blog's homepage:

This entry was posted on June 22, 2008 at 7:32 pm and is filed under [recycling](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

One Response to ““Sea of Trash” New York Times article by Donovan Hohn”

Cats r Flyfishn Says:
June 23, 2008 at 1:08 am [edit](#)



Wow, great article. People don't realize how much plastic and other junk end up in our oceans. I'm going to add a link to your blog on my home page.

Figure I. Response to a blog entry regarding oceanic debris, posted by the manager of the “Pennsylvania for Change” blog.

One of the advantages to maintaining a blog is the opportunity to increase the visibility IUB's sustainability efforts beyond the boundaries of the local community.

Blog activity fluctuated significantly throughout the summer and dwindled in the last month. Thanks to an activity-tracking feature available on wordpress, we are able to see exactly how many times the blog was viewed on a particular day, week, or month. The wordpress graph below tracks weekly blog-views from mid-May through the third week of August:

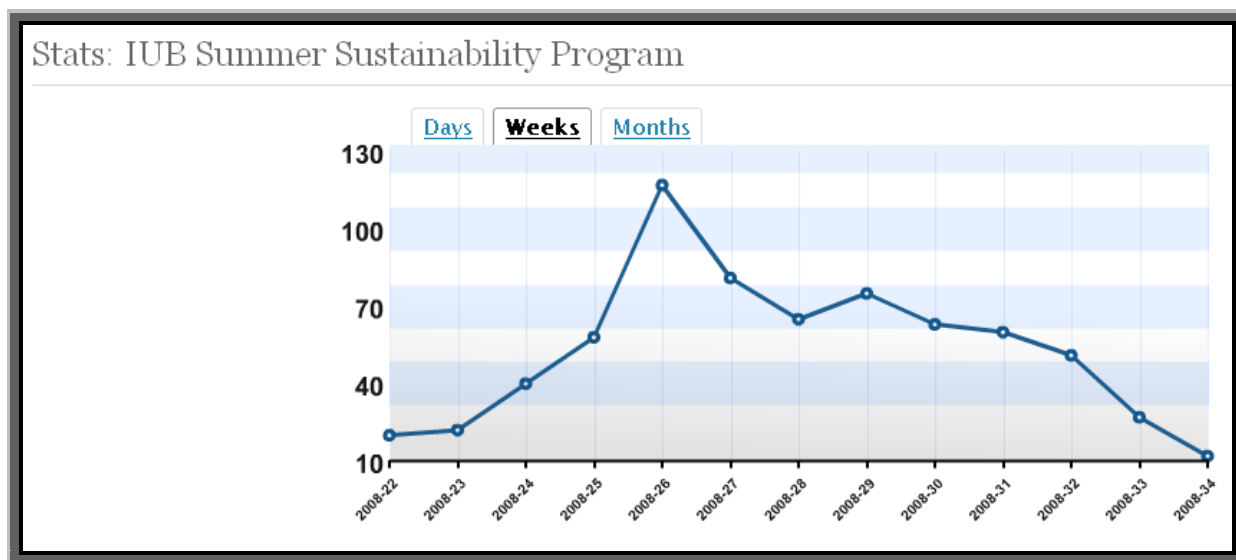


Figure 2. Weekly views of the IUB Summer Sustainability Program blog tracked by wordpress.com

Although the blog saw very little activity some weeks, it is important to note that, at the height of its popularity, it was viewed over 120 times in one week. Considering the fact that we have not publicized the blog outside of the Sustainability Task Force community, it is possible that blog activity could experience significant growth if we chose to invite other members of the IU community to participate.

Recommendations: *In order to transform the blog into a place for discussion and information-exchange for the IU and Bloomington community, the Task Force could change the name of the blog to “IUB Sustainability Community” and include links to the blog on the following Facebook groups: ViS, INPIRG, Students for Sustainable Food, SPROUTS and IU Should Sign the ACUPCC.*

2. *The IU Sustainability Podcast Series:*



Figure 3. IU Podcast website icon for Sustainability Podcast Series

The exploration of new media is essential to an effective communication strategy. The recently-developed Indiana University Podcast website (launched in February, 2008) provides an exciting opportunity to experiment with an increasingly popular information channel that has the potential to reach a large and diverse audience. Many universities have well-developed podcasting sites that provide useful information to the general public in the form of lectures, interviews panel discussions, and audiobooks. Given these precedents, it is easy to envision a dynamic IU Podcast website capable of engaging members of the IU, Bloomington, and global communities in the near future.

In the summer of 2008 we have taken the first step towards making use of podcasting to raise awareness about sustainability by developing the IU Sustainability Podcast series. So far, the series features eighteen interviews, 2 to 4 minutes long, with members of the Sustainability Task Force, the 2008 spring and summer interns, and STF mentors. The interviews highlight projects that have been carried out to date, as well as projects that will be implemented in the near future. Many interviewees make reference to the STF website, important contacts, and e-mail addresses in order to encourage listeners to take their engagement one step further. The series can be found on the IU Podcast website at: <http://podcast.iu.edu/Portal/>

***Recommendations:** The IU Podcast website provides an invaluable medium for information-dissemination. Given the rising popularity of podcasting, the Task Force should continue to take advantage of this site to spark the interest of community members and raise the profile of IU's sustainability efforts by: 1. Continuing to post brief interviews about STF projects; 2. Working with IU faculty to record and post sustainability-related lectures; 3. Exploring innovative and engaging ways to use video-podcasting (e.g. street-surveys about sustainability-related topics).*

3. *Developing Web Content:*

The Sustainability Task Force Website is currently in the process of being restructured. During the first part of the summer I developed new content to be included in various sections of the site. This content includes an expansion of the STF mission statement, a description of the Summer Internship Program, and a series of "spotlights" on STF members and projects. Appendix III includes an updated version of this content ready to be integrated into the site.

***Recommendations:** In order to ensure consistent maintenance of the STF website, it would be beneficial to assign an intern exclusively to that task or –ideally—to hire a permanent staff person.*

4. Guide to the 2008 Sustainability Symposium:

The *Guide to the 2008 Summer Program in Sustainability Symposium* was designed to be distributed to attendees of the August 15th Symposium that concluded the program. It included a brief summary of each intern's project as well as a description of the internship program. The guide is available online at: <https://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/>. It can be used as a quick reference for those who cannot take the time to read each intern's project report in its entirety. The idea behind the guide was to package important information in a simple, concise and attractive manner so as to maximize the likelihood that this information would be noticed and perused.

5. Green Q-project Guide:

The final component to my project was the *Green Q-Project Guide: Ideas for sustainability-oriented community-building projects for Q199 students*. This one-page guide was distributed to freshmen participating in the Q199 Residential Learning Workshop, a course required of all freshmen residing in IU's Living-Learning Centers. The main component of Q199 is the design and implementation of an open-ended community-building project, referred to as a "Q-Project." By providing students with the "Green Q-Project" ideas, we offered them useful guidance, raised awareness, and stimulated student-engagement in sustainability initiatives at IU.

In addition to project ideas related to energy-conservation, water-conservation, general awareness-raising, and sustainable food, the guide suggests useful resources for Q-students, such as links to the *Indiana Sustainable Student* guide, the Sustainability Task Force website, and the Volunteers in Sustainability website and facebook group.

Recommendations: Projects 4 and 5 are examples of some of the ways that information can be packaged to effectively target specific audiences. However, the development of educational materials for the STF would be much more effectively done by a faculty member or other professional. That said, a collaborative effort between a professional and an intern might be the ideal solution, allowing for both, the benefits of professional guidance and the benefits of professional experience for students.

II. MEDIA OUTREACH

Media outreach is one of the key components of any communications strategy. In order to work with the media, one must:

1. Produce useful information to distribute to news outlets.
2. Identify key news outlets
3. Build relationships with relevant media contacts

1. Producing useful information for media outlets:

Newspapers and radio constitute the most traditional and familiar news-information channels. Press releases and media advisories are the standard way of channeling information to the news-media. They provide the necessary information for each media outlet to write stories and blurbs, make announcements on the air, or seek appropriate contacts for interviews and features.

This summer I have produced four press releases about the STF, which were used by the IDS, the Herald Times and WFHB to produce stories:

1. *Sustainability task force announces summer internship program:*

<http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/8304.html>

2. *IU Summer Program in Sustainability Symposium to showcase student work:*

<http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/8642.html?emailID=8642>

3. *Students' guide to sustainable living released this week:*

<http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/8716.html?emailID=8716>

4. *Sustainability Task Force launches Podcast Series:*

<https://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/sustainabilityiu/news-items/>

I am currently producing one more press releases about the new Sustainability Advocate for Community Engagement position. Additionally, this summer I developed a *Guide to the Indiana University Task Force on Campus Sustainability* – a resource for media outlets that provides STF contact information and story ideas. I produced this guide based on the advice of Steve Hinnefeld, University Communications Assistant Managing Editor, who pointed out that such a handy resource would encourage media outlets to cover the STF. The guide is included in Appendix II and could be used as a template by future communications interns.

2. Identifying key news outlets in Bloomington:

An effective communication strategy must prioritize the news outlets most effective in distributing information to the target audience. This summer, the Indiana Daily Student and the Herald-Times were identified as the most important newspapers in Bloomington due to the size and characteristics of their readership. The Herald-Times has a daily circulation of about 29,000 copies and reaches members of the Bloomington community outside of IU. The IDS reaches 45,000 people and maintains an online community of more than 150,000.¹ Furthermore,

¹ <http://www.idsnews.com/news/about/default.aspx>

the IDS target-audience is the IU community, which is also the main target of the Sustainability Task Force. The radio stations I chose to target were: 103.9 FM WFIU (Bloomington's NPR station), 91.3 FM WFHB (a community radio station for south-central Indiana), and 99.1 FM WIUX (IU's student radio station).

***Recommendations:** Radio stations due to their perceived popularity, but future interns should seek to determine the size of the audience of other stations and examine the possibility of reaching out to them. Additionally, future communications interns should seek to build relationships with other newspapers, magazines, and online media in Bloomington and beyond. In particular, it alumni publications should be targeted.*

3. Building relationships with the media:

One of the most important lessons I've gleaned from my work this summer is that the first priority of a communications intern should be to quickly build a working-relationship with key members of the media and media-liaisons. My work was greatly facilitated when I met Steve Hinnefeld and Jennifer Piurek, both assistant managing editors in University Communications. With their guidance, we were able to work out a system by which I produced and packaged information and they helped me distribute it to media outlets. We met several times throughout the summer to discuss story-ideas and focus our efforts on the most news-worthy material.

Appendix I includes a list of media contacts I have assembled over the course of the summer. The chart includes the names of the contacts, their affiliation, contact information, and important information for future communications interns to review as a starting-point to their internship.

Appendix I: Media Contacts

MEDIA CONTACTS			
Name	Affiliation	Contact information	Comments
Steve Hinnefeld	University Communications, Assistant Managing Editor/Media Specialist http://newsinfo.iu.edu/web/page/normal/1293.html	slhinnef@indiana.edu 812-856-3488	Steve Hinnefeld and Jennifer Piurek have been immensely helpful in distributing information about the Task Force. They post press releases on the IU Newsroom webpage, distribute the press releases to all relevant media outlets, and have interviewed several interns of the IU Homepages: www.homepages.indiana.edu
Jennifer Piurek	University Communications, Assistant Managing Editor/Media Specialist	jpiurek@indiana.edu 812-856-4886	Meeting with Steve and Jennifer should be the first item on the list for future communication interns.
Dawn Hewitt	Herald Times, Down to Earth Section http://www.heraldtimesonline.com/earth	dte@heraldt.com (Down to Earth) dhewitt@heraldt.com (Dawn's e-mail)	The Down to Earth section is published on Fridays. It is best to e-mail both, Dawn and the dte address two weeks in advance.
Campus and City & State editors	Indiana Daily Student www.idsnews.com	Editorial staff contact information: http://www.idsnews.com/news/about/staff.aspx	The IDS hires new editors every semester. The link provided will have the contact information for the fall 2008 editors when it is posted.
Lauren Taylor	91.3 FM WFHB Producer, Eco-report http://news.wfhb.org/news/newsttopics.php?tid=35	laurenctaylor@gmail.com	Lauren Taylor is an IU alumna. She interviewed David Roedl about the Energy Challenge and the Microsoft Imagine Cup on July 24, 2008.

Appendix II: Guide for media outlets

The Indiana University Task Force on Campus Sustainability: A guide for media outlets

For more information, contact Isabel Estevez, Communications Intern for the Sustainability Task Force, at 502 718 6697, or at iestevez5@gmail.com

Sustainability Task Force website:
<https://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/>

Biographies of 2008 Summer Sustainability Task Force interns:
<https://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/sustainabilityiu/summerfellows08/>

Some pertinent press releases at the STF news page: <https://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/sustainabilityiu/news-items/>

For **official statements**, contact co-chairs of the Sustainability Task Force: Professor Michael Hamburger, hamburg@indiana.edu and Deputy Vice President for Administration, Paul Sullivan, psulliva@indiana.edu.

Professor Hamburger has been interviewed on behalf of the Task Force many times in the past, so it might be a better idea to focus on some of the projects being developed by our interns: <https://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/sustainabilityiu/summerfellows08/>

If while browsing through the list of interns and their projects you find one that would be particularly interesting to you, I would be happy to put you in touch with them. These are the interns I particularly recommend for **interviews** due to the nature of their projects:

David Roedl, Energy Challenge, dave.roedl@gmail.com

David has just won the international Microsoft Imagine Cup competition for his Energy Challenge project/website. For press release, visit: <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/8524.html>

Kevin Pozzi, Green Orientation Guide, kpozzi@indiana.edu

Kevin is developing the "Indiana Sustainable Student" guide, which will be released at the beginning of the fall semester. It will draw from the interns' projects to offer advice to IU students on how to lead a sustainable lifestyle. Press release forthcoming.

Jessica Colaluca, Local Food, composting, jescolal@indiana.edu.

Jessica is working with local farmers to incorporate locally grown food into on-campus dining and developing a composting system for IU.

Kristin Hanks, Sustainable Computing, khanks@indiana.edu.

Kristin is developing a set of recommendations to reduce the environmental impact of computing on the IUB campus.

Neil Sahu, Griffy Watershed Intern, sahun@indiana.edu

Neil is working to assess the state of the Griffy watershed and develop recommendations for keeping it free of pollutants.

Melissa Enoch, Green building, menoch@indiana.edu

Melissa is working on revising IU's building standards and performance to incorporate sustainable design practices. Her work includes tracking the LEED certification process for IU's new Multi-Disciplinary Science Building- Phase II as well as work on energy savings projects at a number of IU's regional campuses.

Appendix III: New Web content for the STF site

I. Mission Statement

When you click on the "read more" link that follows the mission statement on the homepage, you are led to a more detailed description of the "seven areas" we focus on, but there isn't much of an introductory paragraph. I suggest developing it a little bit. This is what I came up with:

"The Indiana University Task Force on Campus Sustainability seeks to develop a framework through which Indiana University Bloomington can advance sustainability. The university defines sustainability as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Through this initiative, Indiana University is taking the first steps towards establishing a leadership role, not only in incorporating concepts of sustainability into university practice, but also in the creation, dissemination and application of new areas of academic scholarship in the emerging field of sustainability. The Task Force considers seven specific areas:"

2. Description of the Internship Program and individual introductions for 2007 and 2008:

Indiana University has recently undertaken a major initiative to address issues of environmental sustainability in the Bloomington campus and the community. The Summer Internship Program in Sustainability has been an integral part of this process.

The Bloomington campus provides a rich and complex learning laboratory where students can collectively explore how best to incorporate global concepts of sustainability into local applications in campus operations, university academics and the community. With this in mind, the summer program in sustainability is designed to create a community of learners interested in advancing sustainability at IUB and Bloomington. By combining individualized projects and a collective seminar, the summer program seeks to create an experience that constantly explores the balance between theory and practice as well as the tension between the ideal and the tough realities of implementation. The summer program has provided students with the unique opportunity to apply their skills and pursue their interests while actively participating in laying the foundations for long-term sustainable development at Indiana University.

"The program recognizes the great potential that lies in integrating different entities within IU for the common purpose of addressing sustainability in a manner that is holistic, responsible and far-sighted. This kind of collaborative effort helps students develop the ability to critically address issues to ensure a sustainable future, and it helps the university as a whole to become a better steward of resources."

Joshua Hunter, 2008 summer fellow

For further details on the 2007 and 2008 Summer Internship Programs in Sustainability follow the links below:

[2007 Internship Program](#) (Link leads to 2007 internship page, to be prefaced by this description):

In the summer of 2007, the Indiana University Task Force for Campus Sustainability coordinated its first Summer Internship Program in Sustainability, engaging fifteen undergraduate and graduate students in a variety of research projects, which contributed substantially to the [Campus Sustainability Report](#) for Indiana University Bloomington. The report charts a course for IU Bloomington to become a leader in the study and practice of environmental sustainability and makes recommendations for action, including a central proposal for establishing an IU Bloomington Office of Sustainability to provide administrative support and coordination for campus-wide programs.

[2008 Internship Program](#) (Link leads to 2008 Internship page, to be prefaced by this description):

The 2008 IUB Summer Internship Program in Sustainability ran from May 10th to August 15th, 2008. Building upon the work done by their predecessors in the summer of 2007 and throughout the subsequent academic year, the eighteen interns participating in this year's program engaged in research and in the development of plans for the implementation of recommendations made in the Task Force's [Campus Sustainability Report](#). For details on the interns' projects, see their [2008 Internship Reports](#).

3. Sustainability Spotlights: projects and people advancing sustainability at IUB

Jeff Kaden and the Bradford Woods Constructed Wetland Treatment System Replacement Project

Indiana University's chief engineer Jeff Kaden represented Indiana University as the recipient of a national honor for an innovative, environmentally sustainable water treatment system developed at IU's Bradford Woods: The *Bradford Woods Constructed Wetland Treatment System Replacement Project*. The American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) presented the prestigious *National Engineering Excellence Award* to the university this April. Speaking of the project, Kaden says that "the use of a constructed wetland is an increasingly popular chemical-free approach to water treatment that mimics the natural cleansing abilities of a wetland. The application of the technologies incorporated in the wetlands is consistent with the mission of both IU and Bradford Woods."

After receiving a State of Indiana "Award for Excellence" in February of 2008, the project was among only 16 award-winners selected by ACEC in a national competition that included 158 remarkable and prominent landmark projects and structures. The council selected the project in recognition of its design, functionality, and commitment to environmental sustainability.

For more details, follow this link: <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/8128.html>

Picture: <http://www.indiana.edu/~phyplant/images/Jeff-Kaden-2001.jpg>

David Roedl and Microsoft's Imagine Cup Interface Design Competition

Two Indiana University School of Informatics graduates, David Roedl and Will Odom, took a first-place award at the prestigious Imagine Cup, an international competition sponsored by Microsoft Corp. and held this July in Paris, France. The competition challenged participants to "imagine a world where technology enables a sustainable environment". Odom and Roedl, a 2008 summer fellow with the Sustainability Task Force, entered into the competition Roedl's Web site design for the recent "IU Energy Challenge," which pitted dormitories across campus against one another to achieve a significant reduction in electricity and water consumption. The submission earned them an invitation to Paris for the final round, where Roedl and Odom were given an on-site 24-hour design challenge to create an information system for monitoring air quality. The pair was among only 27 winning teams at the final round, which brought together a total of 370 students from 124 teams representing 61 countries. Only two of the winning teams in the competition were from the United States.

For more details, follow this link: <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/8524.html>)

Picture: <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/pub/libs/images/usr/5035.jpg>

"More Art, Less Trash" outdoor recycling project

Indiana University students brought together an innovative mixture of artistic panache and environmental activism to improve the beauty and sustainability of the IU Bloomington campus. During the spring semester of 2008, IU's Volunteers in Sustainability (ViS) coordinated the "More Art, Less Trash" outdoor recycling initiative, which placed artistic recycling bins in high-visibility areas throughout the scenic Bloomington campus. The bins, which showcase winning designs submitted by IU students during a month-long design competition, aim to encourage members of the Indiana University community to step up their recycling efforts. ViS coordinator, Vanessa Caruso, said "ViS has been very happy with the campus enthusiasm for the project. From the committed artists who submitted designs to the operation units that have collaborated on the project—Residential Programs & Services, Campus Architect's Office, Hilltop and the School of Fine Arts—everyone is excited to see art and outdoor recycling come together on the Bloomington campus."

This summer the recycling bins are back on campus, making it a little easier for us keep our recyclables out of landfills and oceans, and to add a little artistic creativity to IU's pastoral campus landscape.

For more details, follow this link:

<http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/7902.html>

Picture: <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/pub/libs/images/usr/4726.jpg>