



News Release

Contact:
Jason Parent
Development and
College Relations Office
33 Edgemont Drive
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone: (207) 768-2808
Fax: (207) 760-1101
jparent@nmcc.edu

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NMCC to launch “Go! Green!” energy challenge; top student team to win free tuition for semester

Aroostook County - Green, it’s a familiar site on the Northern Maine Community College campus as the school’s official color, but green is about to take on a whole new meaning at NMCC, as “Go! Green!”, an energy challenge engaging students, is launched in the coming weeks.

The contest will require students to work in teams to develop unique and creative solutions for energy efficiency. It will also generate some additional green – in the form of savings for both the College, which would see a cut in its energy costs, and for the winning student team, which will receive the equivalent of two full-time student tuition waivers for a semester.

“The challenge of meeting energy demands at NMCC will require a commitment from the entire campus community. Reducing our electrical costs and our heating oil consumption, as well as helping students and staff find less costly ways to come to campus, are important challenges,” said NMCC President Timothy Crowley.

To help meet this challenge, an energy task force comprised of faculty and staff was formed last spring. The group was charged with addressing both short term and long term energy needs on the campus.

Over the summer, the task force developed a comprehensive purpose statement to guide its work. In addition to committing the group to “the study, initiation, implementation and on-going support of measures to promote reduced energy consumption,” the statement goes on to read: “We are dedicated to the engagement and education of all members of the campus community to encourage innovation and participation in attaining the goal of a ‘greener’ Northern Maine Community College.”

Toward that end, the task force this fall proposed the concept of a student energy challenge and laid the framework to roll out the contest, complete with the fitting “Go! Green!” name.

“The ultimate goal is to get students aware and thinking about the importance of energy conservation. Obviously the cost savings will have an impact on the campus over the long run, but we want to engage students in that process from the onset. I hope that students will see something we are missing,” said Heidi Broad-Smith, early childhood education instructor and member of the energy task force.

Broad-Smith, along with fellow committee member Charles Kelley, electrical construction and maintenance instructor, have taken the lead on developing the parameters of the “Go! Green!” competition. Plans are to formally launch the contest on campus in early November. Students would then have until just before Thanksgiving break to officially enter their teams in the competition.

Once the teams are formed, students will work on their original written proposals and prepare oral presentations to go before a panel of judges comprised of campus and community members. Broad-Smith and Kelley expect the teams will have through early February to develop their plans.

“We are looking for proposals for an energy conservation measure that will result in a financial savings and awareness building without sacrificing productivity, comfort or the well-being of students and staff. Projects should also have a positive effect on campus facilities,” said Kelley. “Examples of areas that we anticipate projects will cover include weatherization, facility improvements, electrical energy reduction, procedural changes, and energy awareness campaigns.”

Broad-Smith has worked to develop guidelines for evaluating the projects, which will be made available to the student teams participating in the contest. Proposals will be judged on cost effectiveness, creativity and originality, sustainability, written presentation and visual presentation.

“We really want to engage all students. A group of business students may decide to join forces to develop an awareness and marketing plan. A team of trade and technical occupation students might come together to propose new energy efficiency measures. It would be nice to see students representing different academic departments come together and for a multi-disciplinary team to look at the challenge comprehensively,” said Broad-Smith.

To encourage campus-wide student participation, the College will offer the top team of students, as determined by the panel of judges, the equivalent of two full-time (15 credit hours) student tuition waivers.

“The challenges concerning energy and related costs are the greatest we face as a campus community today. We are committed to taking the necessary and important measures to not only help control costs, but to work collaboratively with students to ensure we are doing whatever we can to help lessen their burdens in areas such as transportation to and from the College. We are looking at this comprehensively and look forward to receiving the student proposals. We expect the tuition waiver will serve as an incentive,” said Crowley.

In addition to the “Go! Green!” energy challenge, a number of awareness and efficiency initiatives have been launched on campus since the start of the academic year. Campus-wide correspondence on the importance of conserving electricity and heat have been circulated, and measures, including closing doors that separate corridors in hallways on campus that were previously left ajar, have been closed to better control heating systems.

In the past week, an interactive exhibit coordinated by three of Kelley’s electrical construction and maintenance students, accompanied by informational signage completed by students enrolled in Broad-Smith’s early childhood education program, has been placed on display in the main lobby of the Christie building. The exhibit features several demonstrations, including the difference in energy consumption between newer compact fluorescent light bulbs and the older incandescent bulbs, electronic photographs of campus buildings taken with infrared camera technology to demonstrate heat loss, and statistics on how much it costs to run electronic devices such as computers when not in use, rather than to turn them off.

NMCC is also in the process of undergoing a detailed energy audit that will provide data to assist the College in laying out plans for the possible use of alternative energy sources, including biomass, wind power, solar and geothermal.

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NMCC electrical construction and maintenance students (left to right) David Riopelle of Mars Hill, Ryan Corrigan of Caribou and Amber Libby of Hollis, along with instructor Charles Kelley, developed an informative energy consumption display for the main lobby at the College to help raise awareness among fellow students, college employees and members of the community.