

From the President's Office:

An Open Letter to the University Community

Re: Environmental Stewardship

Environmental stewardship is important to the University because of our unique responsibility to society. Educational institutions like KU exist to serve the common good of people and society. As an institution of higher learning, we are expected to lead the way, not be followers. More pragmatically, we can achieve benefits for the University both in terms of cost and resource reduction through good stewardship, which benefits all our campus constituents as well as society as a whole.

I am proud of Kutztown University's record to date and I look forward to continuing to improve. However, this effort cannot be merely an administrative function. Each and every one of us impacts the environment in some way. Therefore, it is up to each and every one of us as individuals, and members of various groups (educational disciplines, social organizations, family, athletic teams, etc.), to contribute to our stewardship responsibilities. These efforts can range from simply throwing trash away in the proper refuse containers to launching your own grassroots programs both here and at home.

With over 10,000 students and over 1,000 employees, Kutztown University is a large consumer of Commonwealth resources of all types, including environmental, human and fiscal. It is our responsibility to administer those resources to the best of our collective abilities. As good stewards of all our resources we need to establish goals for ourselves as to how we manage those resources. Among the goals I believe we need to focus on are as follows:

- Managing our resources in a fiscally responsible way.
- Managing our resources to be compliant with the society's rules and regulations.
- Managing our resources to provide the facilities to perform our educational mission for the betterment of society.
- Managing our resources in as sustainable a way as possible to help ensure they are available for future generations.

As effective stewards of these Commonwealth resources, it is our job to balance all these goals. One goal can not have an overriding priority at the expense of the others. We cannot be properly sustainable in our operations if it means failing to be fiscally sound, out of compliance with society's competing and sometimes conflicting direction, or not meeting the mission and vision of the University. Neither can we achieve our stewardship goals if we are not aware of our limited natural, human, and fiscal resources. It is a complex task but one which I believe, together, we are up to the challenge of successfully completing. We have little choice. To fail could mean to cease to exist.

Overall, stewardship boils down to the concept of responsibly managing all of our resources for the benefit of present and future generations. As individuals and as an institution, we can always do more to conserve resources. Protecting our natural resources is a tremendous responsibility and I look forward to working with all of you to ensure our collective progress toward a more sustainable University.

Therefore, as an initial step in this direction, I am offering to the University community my statement of commitment to the concept of environmental stewardship. I hope that this commitment can be the springboard for further explorations of ways that all of us can improve our individual and institutional responsibilities in this area.

Kutztown University President's Commitment to Responsible Environmental Stewardship

As President of Kutztown University, I believe that the University community, including all faculty, staff and students, has a responsibility to take a leadership role in conducting activities as responsible stewards of the physical environment and using educational activities to promote environmental awareness, local action and global thinking. In keeping with this vision and to maintain the campus effectively while also working to preserve the rights of future generations, I affirm the University's ongoing commitment to environmental excellence. Kutztown University will work toward the goal of balancing fiscal and environmental responsibility in making decisions and in general University practices. The University acknowledges its role and responsibility to provide educational, social, and financial leadership to achieve the goals of this commitment.

In our university business and administrative functions, Kutztown University will strive to:

- conserve natural resources and support their sustainable use;
- conduct affairs in a manner that safeguards the environmental health and safety of students, faculty, staff and local communities;
- reduce the use of toxic substances and the generation of wastes and to promote strategies to reuse and recycle those wastes that cannot be avoided;
- purchase renewable, reusable, recyclable and recycled materials; and
- conduct our business practices in accordance with this policy.

In our education and research missions, Kutztown University will strive to:

- foster an understanding of and a responsibility for the physical environment;
- ensure that individuals are knowledgeable about the environmental and health issues that affect their discipline;
- encourage environmental research;
- conduct research and teaching in an environmentally responsible way; and
- provide a forum for the open flow of information among governments, international organizations, industry, and academia to discuss and study environmental issues and their relationship to other social issues.

In our student and employee relations, Kutztown University will strive to:

- delineate individual responsibility and guide action for ensuring safety and minimizing adverse environmental impacts in the implementation of this commitment.

Kutztown University will consider full compliance with the law to be the minimally acceptable standard and will exercise whatever control is reasonable and necessary to avoid harm to public health and the environment, whether or not such control is required by regulations.

The University will initiate, promote and conduct programs that fully implement this policy throughout the university.

With appreciation to Tufts University and the University of Michigan for allowing the use of portions of their environmental stewardship statements.