Communications:
Student Sustainability Survey Marketing and Promotions

Introduction:
Each semester, every student pays an eight dollar Sustainability fee in addition to their tuition. The eight dollars is divided into three parts in order to distribute money to various parts of the office. 19% of the fee goes toward green jobs, or part-time student employment opportunities in the Office for Sustainability (OfS) including internships and Gibb’s House Fellowships. 24% of the fee is spent on supplemental funding to the OfS. This helps pay for full-time staff and office equipment. The largest portion of the fee, 57%, is used to fund ongoing projects including the annual Student Sustainability Survey implementation. Ongoing projects refers to programs that require continuous funding and have been adopted by the OfS. Current projects include the EcoMug program, the Bike Stable, and an aquaponics system. The annual Student Sustainability Survey (SSS) is a tool developed by Dr. Harold Glasser, Kate Binder, a prior OfS graduate student, and other WMU undergraduate students. Implemented annually since 2010, the survey is a means to receive student perceptions and opinions on WMU’s various sustainability projects. Because student perspectives play an important role in influencing sustainable project implementation, it is critical to get student participation in the SSS. This report will address the methods used to market and promote the Student Sustainability Survey.

Procedures and Results:
The marketing plan began with a timeline and distribution of various tasks amongst the communications team (Appendix 1). Tasks included social media management, poster development and distribution, advertisements on the GoWMU portal, email campaigns to students and faculty, website promotion, a press release, and tabling events to promote participation while the survey was active. My primary responsibilities included social media management, planning and executing promotional events, email creation and distribution as well as coordinating in-class announcements.

To begin on-site promotions, I contacted building coordinators for Brown Hall, Wood Hall, Parkview, and the Bernhard Center with the dates and times we were interested in. We purchased muffins and juice to be given for free with fliers at each site, and cupcakes for our last session outside the office. Some walked by tuning out their surroundings or uninterested, while many were receptive and accepted the fliers. 5% of 1,245 survey participants said they heard about the survey from a poster or flier. Of the 37 participants that chose “other”, 24% of them mentioned tabling in their specification. On-site promotions are important in order to get face-time with participants. This is also an easy way to get people to spread awareness through word of mouth. By offering free...
muffins and handing out fliers, we are able to reach more than just the people we have
direct contact with - we reach those that see or hear what others have gotten from our
interaction.

Email is the most streamlined way to reach a large number of people at one time, it as a valuable resource. According to survey results the most successful form of
communicating to students is through email. 39% of survey participants cited email as
how they heard about the survey. This number is partially due to the 6,000 student email
addresses in our Constant Contact database who were emailed a direct link to the survey
at the survey’s launch. To support the Constant Contact email campaign, I created an
email list of professors arranged by academic department, taking note of professors with
sustainability related courses. I developed an email template explaining the survey and
asking professors to consider promoting the survey to their classes. Out of 409 professors
contacted, we received only 2 negative responses from professors that misunderstood the
original request. An example of this email is archived in the OfS shared drive.
Additionally, I created multiple template emails over the course of the survey for OfS
student-staff to send to classmates and professors. The content of the emails is located in
Appendix 1.

Another form of advertising used for the survey is social media. The social media
plan for marketing the survey included personalized OfS student-staff testimonials. I
gathered five student-staff members representing a diverse sample of the WMU student
population. Each staff person provided a statement on why they took the Student
Sustainability Survey as a call to action for other students. A promotional slide featuring
the student and their statement was made to be published simultaneously on the WMU
Sustainability website, our Facebook page, and Instagram. The reach for each testimonial
could be linked to not only the audience to our main Facebook page, but also to the
individual tagged in the photo, potentially increasing our contact rate. The first photo was
posted the day the survey was opened. It received 19 likes and reached a total of 762
people. The next participant photo (Allie) was posted in the middle of March, reaching a
total of 577 people, and the last photo (Erik) reaching 431. The social media standard is
to promote the survey twice a week on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Samples of our
posts can be found in Appendix 2. This year, I initiated a relationship with MyWMU’s
social media coordinator, Grant Moore. MyWMU shared our Facebook, Instagram, and
Twitter posts. By sharing our posts, we reached another 743 people on Facebook, and
1,406 on Twitter.
38. How did you hear about this survey?

- In class announcement: 148 (14%)
- Poster or flier: 56 (5%)
- Facebook: 49 (5%)
- Twitter: 10 (1%)
- Email: 411 (39%)
- Word of mouth: 58 (6%)
- WMU News: 167 (16%)
- Sustainability webpage: 28 (3%)
- GoWMU announcement section: 331 (31%)
- Other, please specify: 37 (4%)

Total Respondents: 1052
(193 skipped this question)

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MyWMU
March 21 at 12:00pm ·

Students, get your voice heard! Also get a chance to win iPad mini or a gift card to the Bronco Bookstore! [http://bit.ly/1SVJ6PT](http://bit.ly/1SVJ6PT)

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Student Sustainability Survey | Sustainability | Western Michigan University

In 2010, after receiving the approval of students and the Board of Trustees, the university began...

WMICH.EDU
Commentary/Reflection, and Next Steps:

As we look at the 2016 Student Sustainability Survey participation, 1,245 respondents represents 6% of the total WMU student population. In 2015 we reached 7%, 2014 - 6%, 2013 - 6%. The percentage of participants has stayed fairly consistent regardless of decreased enrollment.

A contributing factor could be that we had no all-staff meetings during the 4-week duration of the survey. This meant that the only way to to all staff was through email. All student-staff were sent 3 separate emails during the survey to remind them to make announcements in classes, to distribute fliers, and to promote the survey via email to their classmates and WMU friends. In spite of this, no student-staff members volunteered time to help promote the survey this way. I would suggest in the future that supervisors and the leadership team remind student-staff that 10% of all student-staff job requirements includes “to assist in OfS promotions”, otherwise known as, all hands-on-deck activities.

Preparing to promote the survey includes a large list of tasks and major attention to detail. It would be best to plan months ahead in order to have web copy, promotional photos, email distribution, and tabling events planned so that most work time during the survey can be spent having face-time with the student body. Rather than racing to meet deadlines while juggling regular front desk activities, this would allow focused and meaningful internal and external communication.

Networking to promote the SSS can increase engagement dramatically. Implementing proper planning will allow time for increased face-time with students, professors, and others on campus. It is easy to dismiss emails, but face-to-face communication is always valued. If the communications team was able to visit departments to drop of fliers and speak with available professors possible in for office hours, we could see more interest from them and see numbers increase.

Reaching out to other WMU social media accounts to help promote this campus initiative can increase engagement with posts drastically. Those in charge of MyWMU were happy to be receiving content rather than having to search for it, and are open to continuing this relationship we have established. In future years, reaching out to other accounts may bring about positive results as well.

Although we did not fully reach our goal of over 1,600, we matched the previous population sample percentages of 6%, and were able to receive a lot of feedback from students. The Student Sustainability Survey provides us with helpful insight on what projects students want us the OfS to support, and will continue to aid in shaping campus sustainability.
Appendix 1

Promotions Calendar

February 2016

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<td>Submit Ad to Bernhard Center</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>Press Release published</td>
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|        |        | 23      |            | Submit Press Release | Submit GoWMU announcement | 3*
|        |        | 24      |            |          |        |          |
|        |        | 25      | Deliver posters | Website content published |          |          |
|        |        | 26      |            |          |        |          |
|        |        | 27      |            |          |        |          |
|        |        | 28      | Buy tabling items (food) |          |        |          |
|        |        | 29      |            |          |        |          |

* All supporting information/templates see corresponding note in Appendix (i.e. #1, #2, #3)
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Postering
Emailing
Advertising
Social Media
Onsite promotions

* All supporting information/templates see corresponding note in Appendix (i.e. #1, #2, #3)
#1 Email Building Coordinators

Sample Email:

Hello!
My name is Melanie and I am contacting you on behalf of the Office for Sustainability. We are currently planning the promotion of the Annual Student Sustainability Survey. It depends entirely upon student participation, so we are interested in tabling in Floyd Hall (Parkview) to help get the word out. We are looking for a two-hour time slot from 9am to 11am on Wednesday, March 16. Please let me know if we can work something out!

Thank you,
Melanie

Bernhard: mitchell.beare@wmich.edu
Brown: jon.vandermeer@wmich.edu
Floyd (Parkview): charles.overberger@wmich.edu
Wood: pamela.mccartney@wmich.edu

#2 Submit Ad to Bernhard

Email Thomasina Guidry (thomasina.guidry@wmich.edu) and attach submission form with digital banner.

#3 Submit GoWMU announcement

Email Cara Barnes (cara.barnes@wmich.edu) and attach information for SSS announcement.

#4 Email Prof. lists

Dear ENVS Professors,

My name is Mel - some of you may know me from class as I am minoring in ENVS! I also work at the Office for Sustainability here at WMU on the communications team.
I am writing to encourage you to send a short email to your students asking them to participate in the Student Sustainability Survey (possibly extra credit if that is something you allow?).

This is a student-led survey hosted by the Office for Sustainability in order for us to receive feedback from students on sustainable efforts across campus. By taking the survey, students can directly influence how sustainability fee funds are spent - aligning the sustainability fee directly with students’ priorities while promoting a culture of campus sustainability that has the potential to benefit all WMU students.

Its success depends entirely upon student participation. Your assistance would increase our numbers drastically. Please consider forwarding the following to your students (both Undergraduate AND Graduate) urging them to take the survey some time between March 1st and March 31st. Thank you in advance for your assistance in this project!

The survey will go live on March 1st.
Link to survey: https://survey.wmich.edu/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=865Km56

Sincerely,
Mel

#5 Email hall directors

Hello all!

My name is Melanie - I am a student here at WMU, and also work on the communications team at the Office for Sustainability.

As you may know, all students pay a sustainability fee every semester. We are currently holding the Student Sustainability Survey for students to give us feedback on where they would like their money spent in order to implement effective, eco-friendly ideas across campus. This survey depends entirely upon student participation.

Please take a moment to forward this email to your RA's, to then send the message along to their students. Students will have a chance to win an iPad or $250 to the bookstore!

The survey is available here: https://survey.wmich.edu/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=865Km56

Thank you so much for your help,
Mel, on behalf of the OfS Communications Team
Email Prof. to attend lecture

Hello Professor Gillespie!

My name is Melanie - I took a geology class with you last spring. I currently work at the Office for Sustainability here at WMU on the communications team, and we are currently running our annual Student Sustainability Survey. This survey allows us to get feedback from students on where we spend their money from the sustainability fee that they pay in their tuition. This survey depends entirely upon student participation, so we were curious as to if we could make a quick announcement in the beginning of your 2 p.m. Thursday Ocean Systems class. Please let me know! If this does not work with your schedule, we would like to strongly encourage you to tell your student about the survey (located on GoWMU campus announcements section). We chose your class as one of the participating classes because of the large number of students.

Thank you so much!
Melanie

Follow up Prof email (thank you)

Hello Professor Hastings!

On behalf of the Office for Sustainability, I would like to thank you for your help promoting the Student Sustainability Survey to your classes. Whether it is extra credit or passing along the information - we know that you are very busy and we appreciate any help that we can get!

If you still have yet to do so, this is the link to the survey: https://survey.wmich.edu/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=865Km56

Once again, thank you for your extra help toward sustainability across campus!

Melanie
Appendix 2

Facebook

Western Michigan University students: now is the time to tell us YOUR thoughts about the Student Sustainability Fee! Learn about the projects and initiatives your Student Sustainability Fee supports! Take the annual Student Sustainability Survey now until March 31st and you will be entered into a drawing for an iPad Mini! Go to: https://survey.wmich.edu/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=865Km56

We look forward to hearing from YOU!

“I took the Student Sustainability Survey because I wanted to contribute to sustainability efforts in higher education. It’s important that I know what projects the Student Sustainability Fee is going toward.”
- Laura D.
Senior, Behavioral Science

763 people reached

Like · Comment · Share

WMU Office for Sustainability, Teodora Vecerdi, Heidi Jimenez and 16 others

Write a comment...
WMU Office for Sustainability
Published by Melanie Apsey · March 18 ·

Meet Allie - a Western Michigan University student who took the Student Sustainability Survey in order for her VOICE to be HEARD.

We want to hear from you! Take the survey to help shape sustainability at WMU. Also, be entered to win either an iPad or a $250 gift card to the Bronco bookstore!


“I took the Student Sustainability Survey so that my ideas can be implemented across campus and my voice can be heard.” — Allie M.
Sophomore, PR and Environmental & Sustainability

581 people reached

Like Comment Share

Jennifer Lyon, Allie Moskal and 4 others

Write a comment...
Erik took the Student Sustainability Survey and used his voice to shape sustainability across campus.

YOU can do the same, and be entered to win an iPad or $250 to the bookstore! We need YOUR feedback on where to spend YOUR money! https://survey.wmich.edu/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=865Km56

“I took the Student Sustainability Survey to contribute to the efforts of the Office for Sustainability by providing feedback on where my money should be spent.” — Erik N. Graduate Student, I/O Behavior Management
wesustainwmu
Bernhard Center, Student Cent...
wesustainwmu Visit us on the first floor of Brown Hall to hear about the Student Sustainability Survey (and get FREE muffins!) Click on the link in our bio to take the survey and be entered to win an iPad (while supplies last).