A BRIGHT IDEA FOR SUSTAINABILITY

You don’t have to be a fashionista to know that green is the new black. Everywhere you turn, someone else is “going green” – the automotive industry, homebuilders and designers, city governments, even powerhouses like Wal-Mart are turning green before our very eyes. With the overall goal of sustaining the earth’s natural systems and resources for future generations, the green initiative is one bandwagon we can all get on.

And, with the establishment of its new Sustainability Committee, the College is officially on board!

“I am proud to say that the College is making this important move toward preserving our campus and our environment for generations to come,” says President P. George Benson. “As an institution of higher education, it is crucial that we demonstrate sustainable policies and practices that students can learn from and apply to their own lives.”

Made up of representatives from the departments that have big impacts on the physical campus (e.g., Physical Plant, facilities planning, dining services, residence life and housing) – and of undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty specializing in environmental geosciences and atmospheric physics – the committee is a coordinated effort to institute a campuswide culture of sustainability.

“My sense is that the whole campus is ready for something like this,” says Chairman Burton Callicott, who first approached President Benson about organizing the committee last summer. “Most people agreed that some overarching effort to be environmentally aware and to work toward sustainability was long overdue.”

The committee, which met for the first time last October, immediately set out to determine a baseline for the College’s waste removal and energy and water use. Although it found that some steps had been taken to conserve water and electricity (e.g., in the newer residence halls there are LED light bulbs in the exit signs, tank-less water heaters and low-flow toilets and showers), the effort had been far from comprehensive.

“To make the campus sustainable, we need across-the-board participation – whether it’s due to enthusiasm or built-in safeguards,” says Callicott. “Either way, you have to have guidelines.”

That said, one of the most crucial tasks for the Sustainability Committee is establishing policies – energy policies requiring facilities to adhere to green standards, sustainability policies requiring future construction be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified and purchasing policies requiring vendors comply with certain environmental standards.

It’s not all about rules and regulations, though. It’s also about what the individual can do, like using safer cleaning supplies and recycling as much as possible.

“Recycling is one of the first things people think about when they think of sustainability, and that’s good because it’s one of the easier things for us to do and it’s an area where we have a long way to go,” says Callicott, pointing out that in last fall’s trash audit, students picked up 1,323 pounds of recyclable material out of one day’s worth of trash, selling the paper and cans to local buyers for almost $800. “The more we recycle, the more money we save on waste removal and the more money we make from recyclables. We really have everything to gain.”

It seems like a no-brainer, which is exactly why one of the most important challenges for the committee is education.

“We’re looking for ways we can weave sustainability education into the general campus discussion,” says Callicott. “If we have any hope of meeting the challenges ahead, we have to be aware of the world we live in, of our impact on the environment and of how we can alleviate some of the problems we have created.”

Besides, everybody’s doing it.

For more information about the Sustainability Committee, visit cofc.edu/sustainable.
Leon Lucas didn’t go to the College’s mailroom looking for fame, but that’s exactly where he found it. Or, at least that’s where he found out about it.

“I was pitching the mail, doing my job, and I saw the Billboard magazine in one of the bins,” explains Lucas, a postal clerk who also deejays and writes songs under the stage name Pop Shop. The week before, someone claiming to be from Billboard had left him a voicemail saying that his CD single, “Look Ya,” had made it onto the charts. He’d written the call off as a prank; still, he couldn’t help but be a little curious.

He opened the magazine, turned to the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles Sales chart and stared at his name in disbelief.

“To be honest, I wasn’t ready for anything like that,” he says. “It really took me by surprise. All I did was put my song on a CD and give it to my friend at a local radio station. He gave it a couple spins, and it just took off. People started talking, and it went out of control. It was quite crazy.”

And it just kept getting crazier. Debuting at No. 37 on November 8, 2003, and climbing to No. 9 within two weeks, “Look Ya” spent a total of 21 weeks on the chart, which measures the sales of commercial R&B/hip-hop CD singles.

“I had all these people buying CDs, I couldn’t keep up,” says Lucas. “Remember, this was me, going to Wal-Mart, getting CDs to burn, taking them back, burning them – I got tired of making them.”

Not that he’s complaining.

“It was the opportunity of a lifetime,” says Lucas. “It’s not every day that something like that happens. I don’t know what separates some people and makes them stand out, but when it works for you, you have to go with it.”

And that’s exactly what Lucas did. Still working at the College, deejaying at parties and clubs across the Southeast and burning “Look Ya” CDs, he somehow managed to record several new songs. One of them, “I Go Rep,” appeared on the compilation album, Murder Dog Presents South Carolina, which was produced by the hip-hop magazine Murder Dog, where he was also featured.

“Working with the magazines let me know the real side of music,” says Lucas. “The music industry is real life – it’s coming from people. You put these people on a pedestal, but the truth is, when they walk away from the bright lights and away from all the crowds, they’re just normal, ordinary people.”

Normal, ordinary people just like Lucas, who started working in the mailroom between semesters at Benedict College back in 1999.

The hours he logged in the mailroom proved to be time well spent.

“I have so many things on my mind, things are always coming to me, but most ideas pop up while I’m sorting mail,” Lucas says. “I keep a pad in my pocket. If you ever see me with my pad out, you’ll know what’s up.”

Besides the inspiration he’s found here, Lucas says the College has been an encouraging force, allowing him to deejay at a few campus functions and to present his poetry at readings. Still, he says, “I don’t want attention. I’m doing it for myself. As long as I’m doing what I love, I’ll be happy.”

And, although it’s nice to have had success on the Billboard charts (“It’s that thing I’ll always have in my back pocket,” he says), it’s not about the fame for him.

“It’s about the music. It’s always been about the music.” \*
DRIVEN
Tommy Baker Provides Roadmaps to Success

With its flat-screen TV, its secret passageway and its view of the Mercedes-Benz showroom, Tommy Baker’s office is not your typical professor’s office. But then, Tommy Baker is not your typical professor.

Best known for his success in Charleston’s luxury car market (Baker Motor Company, anyone?), Baker is a businessman through and through. He started selling cars while he was in The Citadel’s veteran program and opened his first dealership when he was only 27. The easy success that Baker found in that venture was encouraging, and, as his business took off, so did his career.

“It all started with that first dealership in Clinton, N.C.,” says Baker, who now owns six dealerships in Charleston. “Since then, I’ve learned so much – not just about growing and operating a business, but about working with a team and responding to change.”

And it’s that wisdom that Baker has been imparting to students in the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship for 16 years. As the College’s sole entrepreneur-in-residence and the School of Business and Economics Board of Governors’ first chair, Baker established the school’s senior-level Seminar in Entrepreneurship in 1992. Designed to expose students to a variety of business owners and to give them real-world management and entrepreneurial experience, the course is more like a job than a class.

“My classroom is a place of business,” says Baker, who requires his students to wear business attire to class. “They are there to do business, and they have to dress the part.”

They also have to play the part. As a team, the students take on a class project that either establishes a new business, expands an established business or gets a floundering business back on track. From setting up an ad agency to marketing a hockey team to turning around a struggling restaurant – Baker’s students have made the lives of quite a few business owners a little easier over the years.

“We try to help local businesses,” says Baker, adding that many are owned by his former students. “I think it’s important that these kids understand and contribute to the business community early in their careers.”

In addition to participating in the class project, each student is required to create a business plan for his or her own enterprise. At the end of the semester, the students’ plans are graded by their classmates, and they vote for the “Entrepreneur of the Class,” the designation of which gets one lucky student $500.

“We make The Apprentice look like child’s play,” says Baker. “My class has more business sense than what I’ve seen on that show. They are required to come up with more organized, more sophisticated business plans. It becomes very competitive.”

But rising above the competition is exactly what these students will need to do in the real world, and – thanks to Baker – they’re prepared.

“It’s interesting to watch these kids,” Baker says. “They come in wondering how they’re going to pull something like this off. But then you see their confidence grow and grow. It makes you proud.”

Now those are the words of a true professor.
HOMEMAKERS: The College Builds More Than a House for Homecoming

The unfinished projects, the abandoned resolutions, the three-page to-do list: If you’re feeling a little unproductive this year, don’t worry – it’s nothing a little “Blitz Build” can’t fix. Within two weeks, you’ll change the lives of five people and help to strengthen a community, expand the College’s connection to the city, unite campus groups and encourage school spirit. Oh yeah, and you’ll even build a house.

As part of the Cougar Spirit Initiative, the One Pride/One House Blitz Build will take place during Homecoming, February 2–16, when students, faculty and staff will construct a Habitat for Humanity home on North Nassau Street for the Nelsons, a family of five who – despite having consistent income – cannot afford Charleston housing.

“We can all relate to the affordable housing problem,” says Lauren Collier, service learning director in student affairs. “It’s a big issue in this area, so we decided to build a home for Homecoming – it’s a great symbol.”

Beyond the symbolism, of course, are some very tangible benefits.

“The Nelsons will move into a brand-new, three-bedroom home with an affordable, interest-free mortgage and will stop paying rent on a costly apartment,” says Jeremy Browning, executive director of Charleston Habitat for Humanity. “From a community perspective, the upper peninsula is beginning to see lots of development, and it’s critical to ensure affordable housing is part of this revitalization.”

But the College’s involvement here doesn’t just benefit the Nelsons and this particular community. It benefits the College, as well.

“In service learning, you’re looking to make the biggest impact possible, as well as to strengthen your ties to the community,” says Collier. “By bringing the campus and community together to address a real issue that affects us all, I think this project will establish our students, faculty and staff as part of the Charleston community.”

“The Habitat Blitz Build embodies the values that make the College community special – a sense of social responsibility and the desire to work with our neighbors to improve the city that we live in,” says Whitney Hinds ’08, president of the Student Government Association. “This project makes me truly proud to be a College of Charleston student.”

It’s that kind of pride that the Cougar Spirit Initiative is hoping to see more of as a result of the Blitz Build.

“This is one of those things that pulls different campus groups together to work for a common goal,” says Collier. “It creates a sense of campus unity and builds school pride. This project will build a lot more than just a house.”

What can you accomplish in two weeks? Find out at cofc.edu/blitzbuild.
SAVE THE DATE

DEDICATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MONUMENT
Honor and commemorate the African American cemeteries that once existed adjacent to the Addlestone Library.
When: Thursday, February 7, 4 p.m.
Where: Rivers Green
Fee: None
Contact: Marvin Dulaney, 953.7609, dulaneyw@cofc.edu

HOMECOMING GAMES
Cheer on the women’s basketball team and then join in the tailgating fun. If you don’t have tickets to the men’s game, don’t worry – you can watch it on George Street, live on the big screen!
When: Saturday, February 16, 2 p.m. & 6 p.m.
Where: John Kresse Arena & George Street
Fee: women’s game $5/men’s game sold out, but tailgate for free
Contact: Bethany LaPlante, 953.8122, laplante@cofc.edu

PROS AND CONS: ARE ATHLETES ROLE MODELS?
Join legendary sports journalist Frank Deford as he moderates a panel discussion of this hot topic. Guest panelists will include Olympic Gold medalist and WBA superstar Katrina McClain and others.
When: Tuesday, February 19, 7 p.m.
Where: Sottile Theatre
Fee: None
Contact: Jenny Fowler, 953.6526, fowlerj@cofc.edu

All information is subject to change. Please verify times, places and registration requirements with listed contact.

Miss Piggy, Charlie Brown and Incredible Hulk probably wouldn’t hang out together under any other circumstance. After all – like Elvis, FAO Schwartz, NASCAR, Chicken Little, scuba divers, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and bumblebees – they have very little in common. But, for Jason Overby, all of them have the one thing it takes to land a spot on the state-issued metal bookcase in his office: They’re represented atop a Pez dispenser. “It all started with Tweety Bird,” says the associate professor of chemistry, explaining that his friend jokingly bought the Tweety dispenser in college as a way to initiate conversations with girls. Although Tweety never started any romances, he definitely started something. Now with over 300 dispensers in his collection – including Pez-distributing trucks, rotating belt-clip dispensers and battery-operated “candy handers” – Overby says, “Tweety is still my favorite.”

NEWS BRIEFS: News You Can Use

- Mary Beth Heston, associate professor of art history, was awarded a 2007–2008 Fulbright Scholar grant for her project, “The Book of War: A Commentary on Kingship in the Ramayana Murals, Mattancheri Palace,” which she researched at University of Kerala in Thiruvananthapuram, India.
- Jack DiTullio, associate professor of biology, was awarded a 2007–2008 Fulbright Scholar grant to research Antarctic phytoplankton and global climate change at the Zoological Station of Naples, Italy, until June 2008.
- In its first test run of the CougarAlert emergency notification system, the College sent out 26,475 e-mails, phone calls and text messages, reaching more than 96 percent of the people listed in the database. To update your contact information, log onto CougarTrail and click on “Update CougarAlert.”
- The Liberty Street Fresh Food Company’s staff and faculty dining room now features an all-you-can-eat soup and salad bar, available to College employees for only $5 on weekdays, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Enter and pay at the rear of the building.
- As IT works to improve the performance of the College’s e-mail system, remember to remove attachments from e-mails and to move non-business–related e-mails and any message older than 120 days to a personally created folder. For more information, contact Helpdesk at helpdesk@cofc.edu.
Put on your detective hat!

Thanks to everyone who participated in last month’s photo quiz, and congratulations to Kevin Bourque, instructional technologist in IT, who was the first to guess that the object in question was the bellows of a folding camera. As part of an exhibit honoring World War II veterans who participated in the liberation of German concentration camps, the pictured Kodak Volenda 620 (circa 1934) was loaned to the College by Ethel Jørgensen Stafford, who acquired the camera from a soldier passing by the hospital where she served as a U.S. Army nurse. Its German markings suggest its original owner was German, perhaps a fallen soldier. The exhibit, titled “Through Their Eyes: Concentration Camp Liberation as Seen by American GIs,” is located at the entrance of the special collections department in the Addlestone Library through the end of the month.

Take a look at the picture above. The object can be found on campus. Do you know what it is? The first person to submit the correct answer will win a tasty lunch for two at Liberty Street Fresh Food Company, compliments of ARAMARK. Good luck!

Send your submission to lutza@cofc.edu by Monday, February 18, 2008. The contest is open to all College faculty and staff. One submission per person, please.