Sustainable Libraries Initiative

NEWSLETTER

The latest news and updates from the Sustainable Libraries Initiative

BREAKING NEWS

The Sustainable Libraries Certification Program's nationwide rollout is underway with our first Sustainable Libraries Certification Program enrollee outside of New York State. We are thrilled to announce that San Diego County Library has enrolled in the SLCP and are on the path to become a Certified Sustainable Library.

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONGRATULATIONS, CLARKSON UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES!

The Sustainable Libraries Initiative is celebrating the first Academic Library to complete our one-of-a-kind Certification Program. Clarkson University Libraries has officially completed the rigorous certification process tailor-made for academic libraries. This step-by-step benchmarking program includes categories such as Community Engagement, Social Well Being, and Energy Management. *continued on page 2...*

Sustainable Libraries Initiative

CLARKSON, CONTINUED

The Academic Certification Program, while guiding the institution toward policies and practices that align with triple bottom line sustainability, has Action Items that encourage collaboration with other campus sustainability efforts, taking a close look at materials in the collection for content and format, and reaching out beyond the university to establish the university library as a resource and leader in the resilience of the broader community. Similar to the Public and School Library Certification Programs, this process is designed to be both flexible and reflective. There is flexibility built into the program so that each Academic Library can choose to complete the Action Items that best serve their individual needs. Reflection questions in each category are designed to give each participant an opportunity to describe how their library benefits from the completed actions and how these changes ripple out to educate and inspire students, faculty, and staff. Clarkson University Libraries Dean of Libraries, Michelle Young, and her team undertook the Sustainable Libraries Certification Program after participating in working groups to develop the academic library certification program for the Sustainable Libraries Initiative over the last few years.

Open floor plan at Clarkson University Libraries.

Embarking in the certification process gave her a chance to look inward at the role that the Clarkson University Libraries takes in their own sustainability efforts and how these actions contribute to the broader campus sustainability efforts. The participation of the Dean of Libraries in many University committees over the past several years has helped to position Clarkson University Libraries as a vital agency in the campus sustainability mission. The committee work and willingness to collaborate on grants has elevated the profile of the library among the other departments on campus and has helped increase the visibility of the library among the faculty and students.

Environmental sustainability is at the core of Clarkson University's operations. Their institution has consistently earned Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (AASHE STARS) gold ratings. This University-wide initiative includes the reporting of campus Greenhouse Gas inventories, academic class content that includes sustainability, research, a Green Lab program, planning for construction that includes consideration of environmental sustainability, and a meadow restoration project. Clarkson University Libraries' Mission states: "Consider issues of sustainability in all of our practices." This declaration sets the tone for all faculty and staff to align their decisions, large and small, as they fit in with environmental best practices, consideration of social equity, and fiscal responsibility.

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Sustainable Libraries Initiative

CLARKSON, CONTINUED

Clarkson University's Institute for a Sustainable Environment is an interdisciplinary campus organization that brings together expertise from a variety of different academic departments to support environmental education, campus sustainability actions, and innovative research collaboration. Clarkson University Libraries collaborates with the Institute for a Sustainable Environment on projects such as the student bike rental program. The University Libraries used their cataloging systems to streamline the inventory and checkout processes for students to loan and return the bikes and helmets. Short- or long-term rentals are allowed with bike racks located in several locations around campus. The keys and helmets are checked out at the main campus library circulation desk. This collaboration is an example of how an academic library can leverage their knowledge and practices to advance the campus' sustainability efforts.

With Clarkson's existing commitment to be sustainable in everything they do, many of the libraries' operations consider the best use of resources and materials to minimize the environmental impacts.

Reuse and recycling are the norm on campus, new ways to repurpose items are constantly being adapted and applied. Furniture is used as long as possible and purchased only if necessary items cannot be found elsewhere on campus.

With all facilities on campus working together to reduce waste and finding ways to recycle as much as possible, there is a collaborative and transformational view of sustainability that fosters new ideas.

Newly renovated spaces on campus including the libraries have Energy Star-rated computers and appliances, energy efficient LED lighting and HVAC systems, and low-flow bathroom fixtures. Clarkson University uses the Siemens Tracking System to compile and monitor energy use throughout the campus. There is a 12-acre, 2-megawatt solar field to generate clean energy for the campus.

MEMBER NEWS

Welcome to our newest SLCP Members: Bay Shore Brightwaters Public Library, Kinderhook Memorial Library, and San Diego County Library. We are excited to share ideas and expand our community of practice with our expanding membership.

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Sustainable Libraries Initiative

CLARKSON, CONTINUED

The libraries purchase paper products with attention to getting the highest recycled content possible and prohibit Styrofoam products. Reusable utensils and dishware are used in the libraries' kitchen.

In addition to environmental sustainability, Clarkson University Libraries' commitment to fiscal responsibility, community engagement, and social wellbeing are essential to meet the full triple bottom line definition used by the SLCP. Both within the library and throughout the campus, there is stated commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. This has been shown in actions such as creating and publicizing an anti-discrimination reading list, Expanding our Worldview, which includes a reading list and multimedia resources to help students to consider new perspectives and challenge themselves to find a broader context in understanding the experiences of others. The libraries offer two undergraduate courses on digital citizenship where students consider inequities in information access, inadequate representation in scholarly research and publications from the global south, and how the legacy of entrenched White, European biases in the library cataloging systems continues to affect information organization and representation. Representatives from Clarkson University Libraries participated in student group meetings coinciding with the Black Lives Matter protests in summer 2020. They took a close look at their collections, diversified their offerings, and worked to expand their core support services. These actions show that the library can be responsive to students' needs and strengthen the libraries' relationship with the students.

*just a bit more... *

Clarkson University Libraries Archives

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION WEBINAR

The Sustainable Libraries Initiative will be holding a webinar: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in a Sustainable Library, on Monday, March 28th at 11am EST. This webinar will include a panel discussion about the importance of continuing DEI work in libraries with the authors of two excellent resources.

VENDOR RESOURCES

Help us grow our Sustainable Vendors List! We will be launching our new interactive Sustainable Vendors List for SLI Members. Please submit your vendor suggestions using this submission form or email: sliadmin@suffolknet.org.

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Don't miss our important news: Please add sli-newsletter@lists.suffolknet.org to your address book to keep our newsletter out of your junk or spam folders!

CLARKSON, CONTINUED

In order to ensure continued access to a wide variety of resources, the library works with University Administration to continually negotiate the price and duration of contracts for electronic resources. Using extensive data analysis, they are able to match the allocation of resources with what is used by Clarkson University faculty, students, and staff. Participation in an interlibrary loan program offers assurance that faculty and students will be able to access resources beyond what the library currently holds. When possible, longer contracts are sought, both to reduce costs and to ensure the stability of the collections.

Recent renovations of the Clarkson University Libraries space have sharpened the focus on their physical space and storage. Creating more study and small group space that is publicly accessible has led to a reduction in storage of 1.25 miles of print journals. With more archives available electronically, the library has maintained access to most of these holdings without the need for physical space. The finite space for print materials is both a challenge and an advantage. The libraries' willingness to try an innovative open floor plan earned them respect from the faculty, colleagues, and university administration and helped to promote the library as a modern institution on campus. The challenge of holding limited print resources has led to marketing and outreach efforts that seek to redefine library services to their campus community.

The libraries participate in campus events that are centered around sustainability. In collaboration with the Institute for a Sustainable Environment, they are planning an Earth Day celebration this year.

This will include publishing a sustainability related research guide on the website, creating an in-library display promoting available electronic resources on these topics, and social media blasts. Staff from the Clarkson University Libraries also take part in "Take It or Leave It Day" each semester. This event encourages students to donate items and 'shop' from items that other students have left.

The Sustainable Libraries Initiative will continue to pilot our Academic Library Certification Program with a full nationwide rollout of the program anticipated later this year.
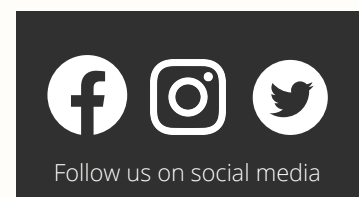
UPCOMING EVENTS

SLCP Member Meetup, Thursday, March 3rd, 11am EST
ALA Core Webinar: Sustainable Thinking Builds Strong Libraries and Resilient Communities. Tuesday, March 15th, 2pm EST
SLI Webinar: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in a Sustainable Library. Monday, March, 28th, 11am EST

CALL FOR ITEMS

Have you created a library policy or program with Sustainability in mind? Share your ideas with our community! Contact sliadmin@suffolknet.org to be featured in our newsletter or on the SLI Website.

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