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Prepared on 8 June 2011 by Sam Hansford for SEAG.

Edinburgh Sustainability Awards 2010/11

Report on Year 1 and a look ahead

Background

The Edinburgh Sustainability Awards were piloted during 2010/11 as a joint project between the University of Edinburgh and Edinburgh University Students' Association. The campaign was run using NUS Services' Green Impact Universities, a UK wide awards / accreditation model working with Universities and Students' Unions to build upon the national Green Impact Students' Unions model, where EUSA have repeatedly reached Gold. The University has committed funding for 3 years from 2010, which is split between EUSA and NUS to deliver the programme.



Heidi Docherty and Uni-tots from the Psychology nursery being presented with the Innovation Award by EUSA Vice-President Services-elect Philippa Faulkner

Aims

The aims of the Edinburgh Sustainability Awards were to promote sustainable and ethical behaviour by all members of the University on campus. This included:

- Turning the University of Edinburgh SRS Strategy into simple, meaningful actions that anyone could complete.
- Getting entries from a wide range of teams, including academic departments, business units and teams made up of management, staff and students.
- Raising awareness of the work the University does around SRS and encouraging 'champions' to further promote and extend this work.
- Enabling students to get involved in volunteering opportunities to audit and accredit department.

Results

11 Teams took part in the main awards, including academic schools, business units and EUSA departments. In 2010/11, 4 teams reached the Silver Standard, four reached the Bronze Standard and a further three were Working towards Accreditation. The overall Gold Award went to Printing Services, who managed to gain the most criteria.

There were also four Special Awards, which comprised of two ideas competitions, organised by Transition Edinburgh University, an award for Innovation on Campus, won by the Uni-Tots Nursery in the School of Psychology, and an award for Outstanding Personal Contributions, jointly won by Janet Philps and Mike Brown.



Janet Dalgarno and Andy Laycock, Printing Services, with their overall Gold Award.

The awards were presented in front of around 100 members of University and EUSA staff and students in the Teviot Debating Hall on 26th May. The awards were presented by EUSA Sabbaticals, as well as key members of University staff. Mary Bownes, Vice Principal Public Engagement and convener of SEAG, welcomed everyone on behalf of the University and presented the Gold Award.

Reflections and Lessons

Overall, the awards have been successful, with teams from across the campus taking part and strong submissions, evidenced by a large number of bronze and silver standard winners. Many of the teams made real changes to their behaviour and practice, from recycling to energy saving, procurement to new staff training. The awards ceremony was well attended and served as a celebration of individuals and teams who had been successful in contributing to the agenda.

We had difficulty in recruiting teams for the first year, given that the awards did not have any profile and that people were busy. We also had difficulty in recruiting volunteers to do the audits, mainly due to the timing during the exam period. Next year we would hope to give more time to supporting the teams taking part and providing mentoring to teams who are not already actively engaged with SRS. We would also hope to more clearly manage the process to ensure that we achieved all of our aims.



The awards ceremony
in Teviot Row House,
26th May.

The Future of the Edinburgh Sustainability Awards

Having had a successful pilot year, we are now looking to improve the awards for 2011/12. We will be:

- Increasing the level of staff support available for teams with a dedicated part-time member of student staff.
- Forming a planning group to meet monthly and ensure that EUSA is meeting the University's objectives and aims through the awards.
- Attempting to double (if not more) the number of teams taking part.
- Encouraging mentoring and peer-support between current teams and new teams.
- Simplifying the process and workbook to make it easier for teams to participate.
- Changing the timescales to match the academic year better and allow more student involvement.



The Charles Stewart
House MOBUG
winning a Silver Award.

Final Thoughts

Setting up the Edinburgh Sustainability Awards had been a challenging process. Whilst the University has run a number of successful Sustainability campaigns, there were still many schools and units who did not feel that it was for them to take part. At the same time, a number of logistical challenges meant that at times it was hard to keep the awards as we had envisaged and create a campaign that would really engage staff and students.

However, I feel that the result has been a number of members of the University community newly excited about sustainability and social responsibility on campus. Those who were already engaged were pleased and excited to have their work recognised by staff and students, and a number of others have only just become

engaged with many of the issues that face the University every day. As I leave office, I am excited about the future of the Edinburgh Sustainability Awards and I hope that in the next few years they will continue to grow, engage and inspire.

Sam Hansford, Vice President Services 2010/11, Edinburgh University Students' Association.



Sam Hansford and Mary Bownes doing a rather excellent job of hosting the awards ceremony.

News item from University website

www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff-bulletin/sustainability-300511

The University's Printing Services has won Gold in the inaugural sustainability awards

The awards are a joint venture between the University of Edinburgh, EUSA and the National Union of Students.

Special recognition

Bronze and Silver awards were also given to seven other University and EUSA teams for their environmentally friendly efforts.

Special recognition was awarded to teams or individuals who developed particularly innovative ways to save energy or reduce personal carbon footprints. Groups working towards accreditation were also noted.

Awards recipients

The full list of award recipients is:

Gold

- Printing Services

Silver

- Chancellor's Court, Pollock Halls
- Corporate Services, Charles Stewart House
- Hugh Robson Building

Bronze

- EUSA Potterrow Office
- EUSA shops
- Public Engagement Team, Darwin Building
- Estates & Buildings, Old College office

Working towards accreditation

- Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre
- Politics and International Relations
- Business School

Special awards:

1. Cutting Personal Carbon Footprints:

- 'Tapswitch', Politics and International Relations

2. Energy Saving on Campus:

- 'Sensor Smart', Public Engagement Team, Darwin Building and
- 'Switched lighting for computer lab', Carbon Management Society, Business School

3. Office Depot Innovation Award:

- Uni-Tots Nursery

4. Outstanding Personal Contribution:

- Janet Philp, Hugh Robson Building and Mike Brown, Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre

"It was fantastic to see staff and students working together from across the University. An exciting variety of projects have improved the way the University runs, reduced our impact on the environment and shown how innovative people make a real difference."

Professor Mary Bownes, Vice-Principal External Engagement