

THE GREEN ISSUE

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The
drive
to be
green

The Old Dominion adapts
to a new consensus on
protecting the environment



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Longwood initiative helping it reach environmental goals

by Heather B. Hayes

Longwood University has a history of commitment to environmental issues. It was one of the early signers of the Talloires Declaration, a document drawn up in 1990 at the Tufts University campus in Talloires, France, committing universities around the world to educate the public about practices that help the environment.

Two years ago, Longwood began its GreenCampus initiative, a wide-ranging program aimed at reducing energy use, promoting recycling, and conserving natural resources. The program now is beginning to show tangible results. A good example is Longwood's new Health and Fitness Center, designed by Moseley Architects. In mid-February, the facility received gold certification from the Leadership for Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System. Among other features, the

building includes reclaimed materials and waterless urinals. Its design is expected to save the university \$60,000 a year in energy expenses.

Even during construction, the university was able to apply green practice. A concerted recycling effort kept 98 percent of waste — including thousands of tons of asphalt, bricks, cardboard, metal, and other materials — out of the landfill.

"There are lots of pieces of a puzzle here, and we're looking at all of them and applying what works," says Dick Bratcher, the university's vice president of facilities management and public safety. He says all of Longwood's new buildings will be built to LEED specifications and the school will seek ways to modify existing buildings to improve energy efficiency.

With the GreenCampus effort, Longwood is encouraging students, faculty, and staff

to do their part to help the environment. Longwood provides recycling programs for old computers and other electronic devices as well as paper, plastic, and aluminum. The school also has a composting site and recommends the use of paperless, electronic communication whenever possible.

Longwood also is using an alternative fuel for heat. Ninety percent of residence halls are heated using sawdust collected from the region's forest products industry. Bratcher says using sawdust rather than fossil fuels saves the university \$350,000 to \$500,000 annually.

In addition to reducing waster and saving energy, the GreenCampus initiative is designed to educate students and the community on sustainability issues. Beginning this fall, sustainability will be a two-year academic theme across all departments.