

# COLGATE UNIVERSITY

## SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE

16-April-2014

In 2012, the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board launched a new program called The Central New York Energy Challenge. The program organized teams of 8-12 homeowners led by a facilitator. The seven-week program is structured into distinct units that educate residents on energy consumption in their households and tangible actions to reduce that consumption. Each new week, homeowners then come together to share their experiences and results before diving into the next lesson.

After facilitating one of these groups and sharing the results with my student interns, we decided to adapt the program for use on a college campus working specifically with fraternity and sorority houses. These houses are owned by the university and notorious for their energy and water consumption and waste production. We thought this would be a fantastic way to engage the students living in those houses.

During the fall semester of 2013, Sustainability Office interns launched the Broad Street Challenge modeled off of the Central New York Energy Challenge but expanded to include water consumption and waste management.

The multi-week program was a great success as it brought together the Sustainability Chairs from each house (eight in total) for a weekly program. During the meetings, they discussed sustainability in their day-to-day living and learned first hand how to implement changes. The Chairs then implemented changes in their houses such as lighting upgrades, using power strips to kill phantom load, change behavior, and implement composting and more robust recycling campaigns. The challenge also brought together students for fun and educational activities such as fireside chats and pizza parties with an environmental theme. Altogether, these activities impacted and engaged a significant numbers of students.

The results were impressive as many houses reduced their energy, water, and waste from their baseline.

This project has the potential to be scaled up to other colleges and universities. In the spring of 2014, two student interns attended the Clinton Global Initiative – Universities summit at Arizona State University to share their results.

We plan on taking lessons learned from this years program and improving it in years ahead.

John Pumilio  
Director of Sustainability  
Colgate University