



MORAIN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

January 27, 2011

To Whom It May Concern,

As an active participant in AASHE, Illinois Campus Sustainability Compact, and Illinois Green Governments Coordinating Council, and as a funded member of the Illinois Community College Sustainability Network (now Illinois Green Economy Network - IGEN), we find the following Moraine Valley Community College (MVCC) initiatives to be innovative and worthy of recognition at the Tier 1 level:

1. **Operations**

MVCC has always had a commitment to making its grounds an inviting space for people and has been recognized for the past 3 years as a recipient of the City of Palos Hills' Beautification Awards. A recent major expansion of buildings and grounds on the college's main campus led to a larger tree canopy: replacing every tree, that had to be removed for construction, with 3 new trees. The campus operations director had the foresight to appreciate and understand that the older trees still had value and was able to relocate most of them, keeping the original older trees. This effort, along with meeting a list of other criteria, led to Moraine Valley Community College becoming the first community college in Illinois to be honored with the Tree Campus USA designation. While the College does not formally prioritize native plants at this time, efforts are being made to encourage more native plantings; during recent renovations and landscape design phases, for the first time biology faculty were invited to review the plans and make recommendations for native and "living lab practical" plants and trees. The new additions are labeled with common and scientific names and are frequently used by faculty for teaching moments.

2. **Education & Research and Planning, Administration & Engagement**

MVCC is one of 12 community colleges chosen to be fully funded by the Illinois Green Economy Network, a state-wide sustainability partnership of all 48 community colleges, and hence employing a full-time sustainability manager to liaise between the Network and the College as well as create and staff a Center for Sustainability, a resource to the campus and community at large. The Center is responsible for managing MVCC's STARS application, the Illinois Campus Sustainability Compact, coordinating the College's Green Team, managing relationships with community members including developing a Mayoral Sustainability Taskforce, representing the College on village and city Green Teams, supporting the faculty Greening Your Curriculum programs, advising on operations policy, communicating the College's commitments to sustainability and engaging the student body, staff and faculty in sustainability initiatives and awareness on campus.

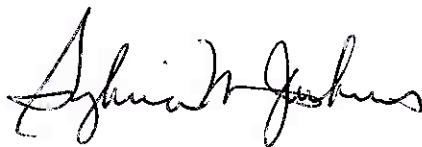
3. **Planning, Administration & Engagement**

MVCC hosted and co-facilitated a 2-day sustainability planning workshop for 12 member institutions of the South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium. The Consortium met an accomplished goal of creating skeleton sustainability strategic plans, building a community of peers and sharing collective knowledge based around sustainability. Over 100 participants from multiple departments of the member institutions came together for 2 days to primarily focus on and strategize sustainability initiatives. Speakers from the State and from a leading community college in Oregon presented to board of trustee members, presidents, executive leaders, staff, faculty and student representatives from each of the 12 member institutions, engaging them all in a call to action for sustainability. Teams from each institution worked using templates, which were based on the STARS model and the Illinois Campus Sustainability Compact, created by the co-facilitators to develop action plans which would support the success of and resulted in asking the college and university presidents to collectively sign and adopt the Illinois Campus Sustainability Compact as a priority for their institutions. All member institutions pledged at Silver level or higher.

4. **Planning, Administration & Engagement**

MVCC's diversity manager and committee developed, coordinated and engaged a district wide Diversity Round-Table dialogue, involving over 50 members of the community (business, faith, residence, executive and political) to discuss how MVCC can help support embracing diversity in the community. The event is to be followed by a second round, further developing action plans for the community and MVCC to work together successfully address and embrace diversity within the 26 villages, towns and cities of the College district.

Sincerely,



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