



LANEY GRADUATE SCHOOL CLIMATE ACTION PLAN September 2013

Laney Graduate School (LGS) Climate Action Plan Committee (This committee plans to add several new graduate students and faculty this year from LGS graduate programs across the units):
Cathryn Johnson (LGS, Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Professor of Sociology)
Sharon Jordan (LGS, Administrative Assistant)
Sarah Peterson (LGS, Program Coordinator for Student and Academic Affairs)
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The Laney Graduate School (LGS) is a unique unit in that although many of the staff members are located on the second floor of the Administration building, additional staff are in other locations across campus (e.g. English Language Support Program, Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences (GDBBS), Masters in Bioethics, and Masters in Development Practice). In addition, the graduate students enrolled in LGS and faculty they work with are located in 40 doctoral programs and 7 Masters programs across the University campus (e.g., Emory College of Arts and Sciences, Goizueta Business School, School of Medicine, Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, Rollins School of Public Health, Candler School of Theology). As a result, the LGS faces some challenges in measuring impact of efforts, compared to other units that can more easily monitor progress by building unit.

The LGS has identified four main areas, however, to encourage and support sustainability efforts over the next year and beyond: (1) Event Policies; (2) Education and Awareness; (3) Transportation-Related Energy Use; and (4) Building Efforts. These are areas in which we have already put effort and will continue to work. During this academic year, we plan to institute a set of initiatives, create documentation that can be shared in the future with our 47 programs, and solicit the engagement of student ambassadors who can help to initiate efforts in their respective programs over the next three years.

Areas of Focus for Improvement for 2013-2014

Event Policy

The LGS currently seeks caterers who prioritize local food sources and recyclable containers when possible. We request registration for our events, when appropriate, and also ask for to-go containers to reduce food waste. In 2013-2014, LGS will develop a Sustainable Event Planning Guide, informed by the Green Event Certification guidelines, as we incorporate the three policies listed below into our typical event planning procedure. We will aim for this document to be made available to other programs within the LGS in 2014-2015.

- Encourage sustainable practices at all events (e.g. LGS Fellows Reception, Students with Children and Family Picnic) using Certified Green Event Checklist as a guide.
- Provide compostable/recyclable plates, utensils and additional recycling and composting bins (including signs about what goes in each bin).
- Reduce use of single-use items (e.g., cups, bottled water) by providing bulk drink options and encouraging students to bring their own cups to events (when appropriate), informing caterers of policy to ensure they serve to these students.

Education and Awareness

The LGS currently promotes sustainability in three main education initiatives. During first-year orientation the Office of Sustainability makes a formal presentation and speaks informally with students at our orientation fair. Two fellowship programs for LGS graduate students incorporate elements of sustainability training, outreach or curriculum: the Piedmont TATTO Fellows program and the jointly supported Center for Community Partnerships/Office of Sustainability Graduate Fellows Program.¹ In addition, the LGS has moved to a paperless admissions process. All students apply to LGS through an online system, and we ask individual programs to dissuade applicants from sending supplementary materials through the mail. In addition, we administer selective access within the application system to limit printing after applications have been submitted. In 2013-2014, LGS will pilot two additional programs with intent to revise and make annual thereafter.

Eat, Teach, Talk, Run (ETTR)

The LGS will work with organizers to create an ETTR event where students present the ways they incorporate sustainability into classroom practices (e.g. electronic tools, ways to go paperless, etc.) as well as other ways they promote sustainability professionally and personally (e.g. transportation, other campus group efforts, sharing resources, etc.).

¹The first fellowship supports 12-18 graduate students to participate in a one-day workshop to hear from campus experts, and learn and develop creative teaching strategies and materials steeped in sustainability practices. In addition, LGS provides some support to graduate students with fellowships in the Office of Community Partnerships and the Office of Sustainability. These students work on projects that must incorporate sustainability.

LGS Green Ambassadors

This new LGS initiative would create a student organization, recognized by the SGA, of LGS Green Ambassadors. The long-term goal would be to develop a group that includes one student from each graduate program as a sustainability representative who would help disseminate information about sustainability events to other students and also bring issues to the CAP committee. Student representatives would meet once per semester. As the group develops over time, other activities could include:

- Organizing educational events within and sometimes across programs
- Provide resources and signage to encourage sustainable building practices
- Work with other student groups (e.g., REHAC – Rollins’ Environmental group) to organize events such as Bike tour of local community gardens.
- Share and initiate the LGS Sustainable Event Planning Guide in LGS programs

Green Labs Program (still being developed by Office of Sustainability):

Working in conjunction with the Office of Sustainability, the LGS will encourage students, in collaboration with faculty, to use green lab practices. As the program develops, the LGS will consider additional ways to get student and faculty involvement in the program. Possibilities include identifying a student representative to participate in Green Labs Development Team meetings and Laney lab group to pilot a program when developed. Students, in collaboration with faculty, may also recommend that Laney labs take the Green Labs self-assessments.

Transportation-Related Energy Use

Recruiting, Research, and Speaker Series

The LGS encourages the use of technologies such as Skype and video essays to interview potential graduate students. When granting Professional Development Support funding, we have encouraged students traveling for research or conferences to maximize trips to minimize unnecessary return trips. This year, we will add a line in our PDS Procedures document formalizing this recommendation.

A long-term goal is to make it more customary to host meetings with speakers via Skype to reduce transportation related emissions, when appropriate (e.g., a two hour seminar). LGS is very prudent with speakers’ time when visiting campus, but we believe providing opportunities for student engagement and faculty development when speakers visit campus is extremely valuable.

Local Transportation

We are aware that several graduate students have proposed a “Strategy to Promote Alternative Transportation for Laney Graduate Students” but are unclear about its status. LGS will contact representatives of the Graduate Student Council to participate on our committee and to follow through on the status of this report. LGS could assist with a survey or use existing information on where Laney graduate students live to explore alternative commute options for students.

Administration Building Efforts

The main administrative offices for LGS, housed on the second floor of the Administration building, have already instituted several initiatives to decrease our footprint. Recycling and compost bins are stationed throughout our office suites, conferences and break rooms. Personal printers on individual's desks are being phased out in favor of two printer hubs.

In addition, for a number of years LGS has contacted facilities management to examine climate control issues in the administration building (if adequately addressed, it would eliminate the use of personal heaters at desks), but to no avail. We seek support from the Office of Sustainability to help us in this effort and to discuss the possibility of piloting their green offices program once the toolkit is developed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have several short-term action items in the four areas of focus outlined:

- Develop Green Event Planning document
- Work with organizers of Eat, Teach, Talk, Run to inaugurate a sustainability in the classroom event
- Create a LGS Green Ambassadors student group, drawing from LGS programs across Units
- Add a line to our Professional Development Support Funds Procedures document about mindfulness regarding maximizing travel time to reduce need for follow up trips
- Work with Office of Sustainability to contact facilities management to examine climate control issues

While our long-term goals will continue to crystallize, the 2013-2014 goal is to identify policies and/or procedures that can be extended out to LGS programs by our student ambassadors in areas of event planning, teaching, transportation, and building management. Identifying the most effective policies and initiatives, and encouraging program administrators, faculty, and students to put them into action will be the primary work of the 2013-2014 academic year.