

GCC earns national green award



Greenhouse and Laboratory Technician Anthony Reiber, center, talks with Greenfield Community College President Robert Pura during an open house for the new energy efficient greenhouse at GCC. Recorder/Paul Franz

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Wednesday, October 1, 2014

(Published in print: Thursday, October 2, 2014)

GREENFIELD — Greenfield Community College is one of five community

colleges of 1,200 nationwide that is recognized for its environmentally sustainable practices, programs and job training.

The college is one of five community colleges awarded with an American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Green Genome Award as part of an expanding national effort to support sustainability practices, programs and job training at the nation's community colleges.

Greenfield Community College will be awarded \$7,500 plus a set of state-of-the-art Bahco brand Snap-on tools and horticulture equipment. The awards are sponsored by Snap-on.

The school is recognized for excellence in community engagement, governance, program design and delivery, and strategic partnerships.

Particularly noteworthy are GCC's academic programs in Renewable Energy/ Energy Efficiency and Farm and Food Systems, on-campus photovoltaic solar panels and permaculture garden, campus-wide composting and recycling, collaborations with many community partners, and campus leadership that considers sustainability in its decision making.

“We therefore are most honored and lifted by this recognition. I am so very proud of all of the people in the college and the community who made it possible for AACC to recognize GCC with this award,” GCC President Bob Pura said in a statement. “It is great to get acknowledged for demonstrating best practices by an organization that is so well informed. What this award also does is encourage us to work harder and aspire to even higher standards.”

The Green Genome Awards are created by AACC's Sustainability Education

and Economic Development Center (SEED).

SEED advances sustainability and green workforce development practices at community colleges by sharing innovative models and free resources to increase the capacity of college leaders, faculty and staff to build the green economy.

“As a community college, GCC has been able to serve as facilitator to bring together the remarkable talent and passion from our region and grow sustainable practices from the ground up,” said Teresa Jones, program coordinator for GCC’s Renewable Energy/Energy Efficiency program. “Our programs and activities reflect hundreds of hands, minds and hearts. Our work brings together big-picture ideas and the literal nuts-and-bolts of building energy systems, planting food, working side-by-side with different people toward common goals. I’m thrilled with this acknowledgement of our collective achievement.”

At the The SAGE (Sustainable Agriculture and Green Energy) Education Center at GCC, students are learning climate change, job security and social justice, said Peter Rosnick, director of SAGE.

“We are teaching students how to protect the environment and are helping them get good green jobs,” he said.

The renewable energy program at GCC has been recognized several times this year.

In May, GCC was recognized for its programs in renewable energy by the White House’s Solar Progress Report: Advancing Toward a Clean Energy Future.

In June, Pura and Associate Professor Teresa Jones were invited by the

House Natural Resources Committee to speak at a congressional hearing on energy-related jobs and education in Washington, D.C.

Last year, the college was among 10 recipients of a Leading by Example award from the state department of Energy and Environmental Affairs for its efforts to significantly reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, increased recycling, the use of renewable energy and other clean energy and environmental quality initiatives.