

April 21, 2008

For Immediate Release:

This past winter, students at the University of Vermont organized one of the top twenty Focus the Nation events in the country. The week-long series of events had a goal of engaging students, faculty, and staff in conversations and actions around climate change. As part of the initiative, the UVM Focus the Nation's steering committee established a student sustainability contest in order to encourage and support creative solutions to create positive change in our community. The goal of this contest was to inspire forward-thinking, systemic solutions in the areas of design, economy, media, governance, education, and/or human behavior, with carbon reduction as a key theme.

This contest was open to both undergraduate and graduate students and needed to include multiple partners, with a minimum of three departments playing a role. At least one partner for each project had to be a UVM faculty or staff member. The steering committee wanted to encourage non-traditional partnerships in working toward a greener UVM and Burlington, with the potential for replicating this work in other locales. The winners of this contest will be granted up to \$2500 for materials and services needed for implementing their project. Contest funding support was made possible by Continuing Education's Institute for Global Sustainability and Seventh Generation.

The steering committee is pleased to announce that the residents of Slade Hall are the winners of this year's contest. With a project titled "A Slade Guide to Innovative, Do-It-Yourself Solutions for Reducing Carbon Footprints" students aim to teach about the carbon footprint through hands-on activities that empower lifestyle changes. Slade Hall residents will experiment with local, organic, and self-sufficient food production, and engage in building local integrated communities. The project will include working with the UVM Garden Club, Common Ground student farm, and professor Roelof Boumans on activities such as planting a fruit and nut tree orchard, establishing a worm-composting site, and practicing food processing techniques such as fermentation and canning. Students will also engage in maintaining their greenhouse to gain solar heating potential, root cellar construction to allow for local food storage, and spinning and knitting wool for cold-weather clothing. The project will also include forming the Slade Hall Cooperative into a non-profit business that will include a carbon offset program to provide an on-campus food cooperative, inter-student banking to stimulate carbon saving enterprises, and an education guidebook and website.

Slade Hall residents recognize that theirs is a long-term project, and its success will depend upon long-term commitment, from students, and from the university and the Burlington community. To be expected is the production of healthy, local food crops that will promote self-sufficiency for the academic year meeting the needs of the 24 students living in Slade Hall, supporting local farms within the bioregion when unable to meet our their needs. Throughout the process, students will place a heavy emphasis on hands-on education for the empowerment of individuals across diverse and varying backgrounds. Already, fermentation projects are underway, a website is being constructed, and partnerships are being formed. The Slade Hall Cooperative, UVM Garden Club, and Common Ground exist and collaboration has begun.

An official announcement of the contest winners will be made during Earth Day celebrations at UVM's Davis Center on Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Slade Hall residents will be expected to give a progress report in the fall semester. For more information on Focus the Nation please see

<http://www.uvm.edu/climatechange/FocustheNation/index.html>