



# Sustainable Seahawks: Eco-Reps at St. Mary's College

Max Beker, ENST 450: Practicum for Sustainability

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## What are Eco-Reps?

Eco-Reps are student educators for sustainability. They are delegated to specific halls and residence buildings and act as representatives for all facets of sustainable practices. They serve both as a way of spreading the Eco-Message, and as a resource for curious students.

## Opportunity

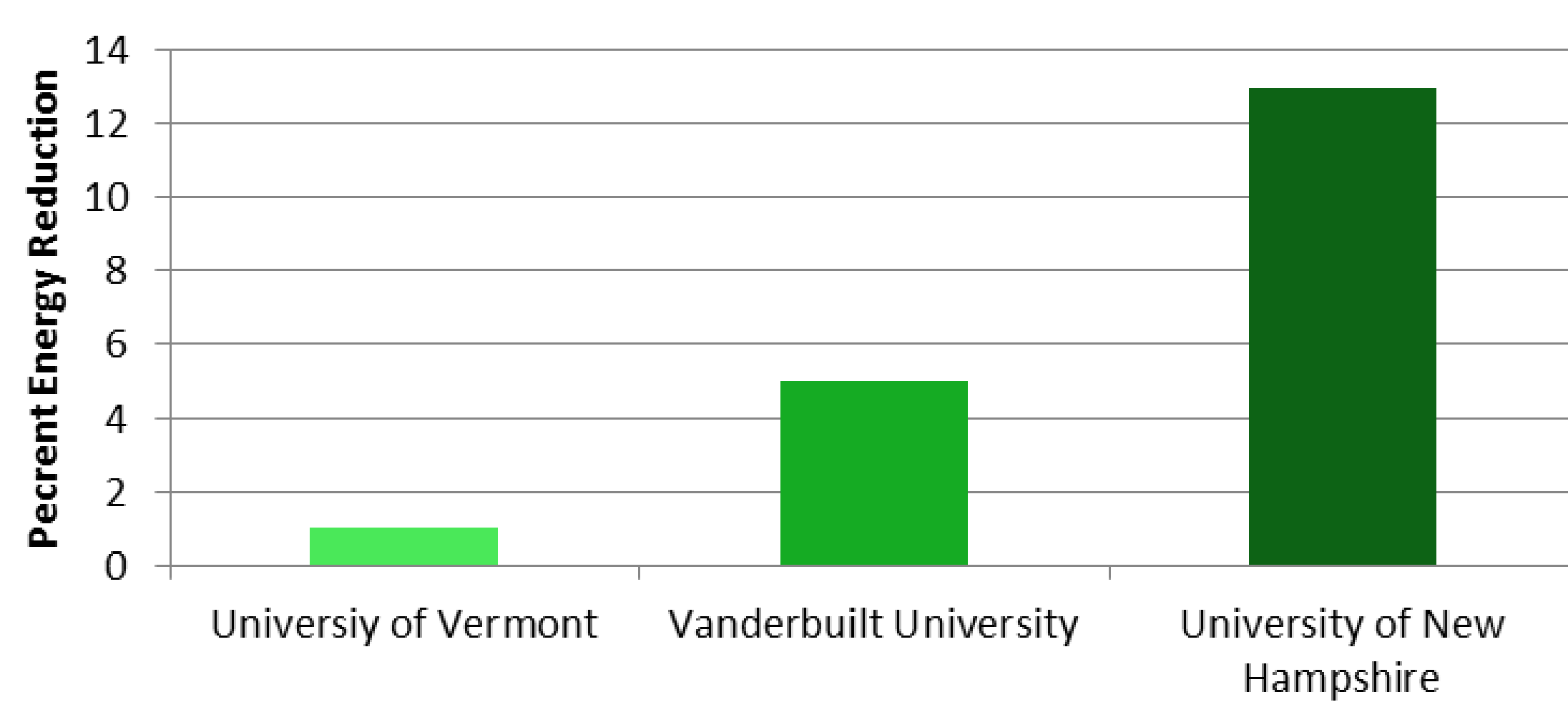
St. Mary's College is trying to become more sustainable, and by introducing an Eco-Reps program, students will have access to interpersonal, one on one, environmental education. This would assure that no student could make it through a four year degree without being exposed to sustainability education.

## What do Eco-Reps do?

- Develop and display informative billboards
- Organize and Promote campus sustainability events
- Serve as forum to students to directly voice concerns and ideas regarding sustainability
- Develop and present lessons to core seminars, or in colloquiums

## Case Studies

Energy Use Reduction Following Introduction of Eco-Reps



After receiving 20 lessons from Eco-Reps, a poll of 319 Elon students showed that:

- 94% of students learned something new from the lesson
- 79% of students believed that they gained a better understanding of sustainability
- 80% of students believed they would use the lessons learned to live more sustainably in the future



*Eco-Reps demonstrate learning in action with a trash sorting in the quad, so that all passing students can see how much of their trash can be spared from a landfill*

## The Eco-Reps Model



*Eco-Reps maintain campus visibility by organizing "Trashion Shows" where contestants make fashion out of waste*

## Benefits to SMCM

- Lessened cost of utilities to the school
- Increased awareness of growing Environmental Studies Major
- Bolster schools reputation as "Green"
- Supplement Environmental and Sustainability education in the core
- Help to promote a more rounded education that ties in all disciplines

## History

In 2009 an all volunteer Eco-Reps program was instituted at SMCM. It only ran one year before losing traction. This program was set up mostly through the Sustainability Office and had limited interaction with the office of Residence Life. Eco-Reps would run for the position at the start of their freshman year.

## Future Implementation

Using the original Eco-Reps program as a case study, the new program will learn from its shortcomings. This Eco-Reps program will pair more closely with Residence Life, potentially through an internship currently being drafted with Derek Young. In addition a proposal has been submitted to the Mellon foundation for civic engagement to potentially attain a grant. This program will also involve paid positions, as these have been shown to be more successful.

## Acknowledgments

This project thus far would not have been possible without the help of my professor, Dr. Barry Muchnick, my fellow classmates of ENST: 450 and Ms. Joanne Goldwater of residence life. I also owe a lot of my success to the gracious community of the Green Schools listserv, who were happy to answer my questions both big and small. Moving forward I also have to thank Derek Young who will help me to propose an internship with Residence Life to keep working on this project in the coming year.

\*References Available Upon Request