

## Pacific Lutheran University's Green Tray Program Reduces Trash Sent to Landfill by 70 Percent

TACOMA, WASHINGTON

Pacific Lutheran University's commitment to sustainability began in 2004 when student leaders encouraged President Loren Anderson to sign the Talloires Declaration that consisted of a 10-point plan for university sustainability. Since his signature on Earth Day, when he became the first president at any university in the Pacific Northwest to sign the declaration, Pacific Lutheran University has taken strong initiatives toward water and energy conservation and green building.

In July 2006, the Morken Center for Learning and Technology was the first building on campus to receive Gold certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) by the U.S. Green Building Council. Renovations to the University Center achieved LEED Silver certification.

### Renovations Result in Composting

Dining and Culinary Services at Pacific Lutheran University implemented a composting program in 2007 to overcome waste issues associated with renovations to the University Center. During the remodeling, Dining and Culinary Services were forced to move into a much smaller venue that didn't accommodate a commercial-sized dishwasher. As a result, meals had to be served on paper plates. Although contaminated paper products cannot be recycled, they can be composted. Since the University Center has reopened, the composting program continues in the form of the Green Tray Program, which includes efforts to reduce the amount of trash sent to landfills by composting and recycling.



Today, diners are encouraged to leave trash on their tray when they send it to the dishwasher to allow the well-trained staff to properly sort the contents of each tray for composting purposes. All food waste

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is transferred to designated buckets throughout the kitchen and foodservice line. In addition, the university has replaced napkin baskets with napkin dispensers, reducing napkin consumption by 10 percent. As of April 2008, the university composted 74,670 gallons of food waste and reduced the amount of trash sent to the landfill by 70 percent. This measure has resulted in a total saving of \$5,525.

### Future Energy-Efficiency Goals

In order to achieve future goals such as reducing energy use by 25 percent, Pacific Lutheran University has already installed a more energy-efficient warewasher and is currently purchasing 20 percent of their electricity from renewable sources such as wind power. Moreover, the university is part of the Environmental Protection Agency's Green Power Partnership, and Pacific Lutheran University purchases 15 percent of its power through renewable sources.