

Westchester Community College's Sustainability Club Works with Local Company to Make a "Green Connection"

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Students in the newly formed Westchester Community College Sustainability Club have been working on a number of levels to improve awareness of issues related to sustainability. Most recently, they worked with a local company in order to form a "green connection" in celebration of Earth Day. The college has been committed to a number of sustainability programs and initiatives in the past, such as the promotion of a new agreement with the 511NY Rideshare Program and the construction of the Gateway Center in 2010. The Gateway Center is a gold-level LEED certified building, the first of its kind owned by Westchester County. The formation of this new student club is the latest effort to improve both sustainability and the awareness of the topic.

Westchester Community College student and Sustainability Club founder Steven Hyland, remarks "It's impressive to see the college's commitment to an environmentally-friendly campus come so far. Our club's mission follows suit, continuing the efforts of our school's administration and bringing the conversation of mitigating climate change to the student level. I see great things in the future for both Sustainability Club and for the college."

Steven notes that the club, although new, has been busy. The club hosted a "Family Feud" game on sustainability issues, is planning to present a discussion on the Environmental Protection Agency, and is scheduling a wide variety of additional speakers who will visit the college in the fall. Additionally, the new club and the college's sustainability program has prompted a collaborative effort with a local industry partner.

Last fall, the college installed an off-grid campus light that is 100% renewably powered by solar and wind. The "Remote Power Unit" (RPU) was donated to the campus by Mount Vernon based Aris Wind LLC (www.ariswind.com). Aris is a renewable energy firm with advanced and unique wind/solar products for off-grid and grid-tied power applications.

The RPU has been operating well since its startup, providing renewable and resilient power for lighting and a USB charging station, while self-powering its own internet connection for monitoring and control.

These two extensions of the college's sustainability work also illustrate the "green connection" between the academic world and the business world. Aris Wind was searching for engineering intern talent to support its growing RPU market launch and hired Steven Hyland from the student club.

Dan Connors, Chief Operating Officer for Aris Wind commented, “Aside from his academic training in mechanical engineering at Westchester Community College, Steven’s founding of the campus Sustainability Club made him a natural fit for the Aris Wind role. Aris Wind, with their sister company DGC Capital Contracting (www.dgccapital.com) will use Steven’s work this summer to help achieve “certified status” as part of our membership in the Westchester Green Business Association.”

The club advisor, Professor Scott Zaluda, says “This new “green connection” starting with the school’s earlier sustainability efforts, with continued support from the county, has helped attract the interest and collaboration of the student body and the business community, contributing towards the overall goal making Westchester County a better place to live and work.”



RPU Operating at Westchester Community College Campus

For further information please contact:

Patrick Hennessey
Director, College-Community Relations
75 Grasslands Road
Valhalla, NY 10595
(914) 606-6716