



Shippensburg University: InTeGrate Report Fall 2016

Impact 8 Outdoor Sustainability Film Festival

Inspired by the Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge, we developed a 4-day program of outdoor films that were shown Sept. 19 to 22nd, 2016. As part of the social responsibility initiative embedded with the Campus Challenge, we agreed to show a film produced by Keen called Live Monumental. The film documents Keen's corporate-level campaign to help protect and grow public lands across the country including a petition to initiate a national park or public lands campaign to preserve an area not too far away from Shippensburg in West Virginia called the "Birthplace of Rivers" (see: <https://outdoorindustry.org/press-release/keens-live-monumental-campaign-hits-nearly-90-college-campuses-nationwide/>). We decided to host our showing outdoors on the campus academic quad each night at dusk and invited a different community partner to sponsor each night of the film festival. During the afternoon each day, students used a solar cooker to make solar-cooked popcorn as a way of enticing student participation and advertising each night's films. In addition to showing the Keen Live Monumental film, two additional short documentaries including "The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge" and "The World Beneath the Rims" which focused on the Grand Canyon were shown. As with the Community Sustainability Forum and the Sustainability Field Conference, we once again partnered with community and campus organizations to host the films and used the opportunity to showcase their mission and vision statements to students and community members who participated in the film series. In the case of The South Mountain Partnership and PA Parks and Forests Foundation, they selected additional films to showcase both local and commonwealth-wide conservation efforts from a historical perspective. To address national and global case studies of geopolitical topics and grand challenge issues facing our communities and society, we selected two episodes from the "Years of Living Dangerously" series (a National Geographic/Showtime Film Series) and a documentary called "There Once Was an Island" which emphasized the real impact of sea-level rise on island nations in the Pacific.

Whether the emphasis of the film was on climate change, drought impacts and food security, sea-level rise, natural resource conservation in our own backyard and beyond, or social justice topics, the film series provided opportunities each evening to engage students, faculty, and community partners in discussions. Students in several classes participated voluntarily for extra credit (i.e. Conservation of Natural Resources, Introduction to Geology, Environmental Biology) and through course-embedded requirements (i.e. Oceanography) in the film series. Students related to numerous themes and the films and documentaries helped to reiterate lessons they have had in previous classes. In their words it helped them "make connections to multiple topics in a fun way" – i.e. outdoors. Some students said it helped them see "the bigger picture more clearly" and helped them to realize the "complexity of geoenvironmental issues from different discipline's perspectives." Moreover, because the film series was early in the semester and early in the Campus Challenge, it encouraged more students to participate in the challenge. In the weeks that followed, we saw more posts including of students actively engaged in field-based learning activities for various classes (Hydrology students measuring stream discharge, Sedimentary Geology students measuring rock outcrop exposures, Ecology, Botany and Field Biology students collecting data and field observations, etc.) even though posts were not required for their course work. Clearly students were more engaged in the challenge after the film



festival, especially as word-of-mouth spread, but it is not possible to say whether the film festival was the motivating factor in the increased participation. However, it is clear that the film festival brought awareness to groups of students and community members who were moved in some way through the films, their messages, and through discussions with the community partners. As an example, each night of the film festival students were given post cards to sign if they supported the Live Monumental petition to protect several new public lands. Each night nearly every participant completed a petition card. Moreover, on the last night of the film festival another organization was on campus encouraging students to get registered to vote. They stopped by the film festival and afterwards were given a few minutes to talk to the students about the importance of voting and social responsibility. Several students filled out voter registration cards that evening. This suggests that at least some students were motivated toward action, even if it began and ended with registering to vote as a concerned citizen.