

Case Study: The University of Winnipeg

Bottled Water Alternatives, University Edition
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Campaign Summary

- **Canadian Federation of Students**
 - Canada's National Student Organisation
 - Representing roughly one-half million students nation-wide
 - Issues: Post-secondary education accessibility, social justice, environment
- **National Campaign: Bottled Water on Campus (brief timeline)**



-May 2008, national student body votes to take on campaign, joined Polaris Institute, Sierra Youth Coalition and others

-October 2008, national campaign brings Maude Barlow and David Suzuki to campuses across the country

-January 2009, University of Winnipeg Students' Association takes on campaign at UW following presentation from Tony Clarke, author of *The Human Footprint*

-March 2009, following the student-led campaign and student referendum, the University of Winnipeg bans bottled water free campus

Students Lead the Way

- Student initiated campaign
- Students met with national and provincial environmental organisations to build a local coalition
- Students participated in workshops, began to take action on local municipal water issues
- Student organisers developed campaign materials, began informing peers on the issue through on-campus tabling, classroom presentations and posters/handbills
- Other organisations' support provided research, credibility to student campaign
- **Students became engaged**



Meetings with Administration

- Student organisers approached the **Campus Sustainability Office (SCO)**
 - Administrative Function of the University
 - Initiates research and development for on-campus sustainability initiatives (such as Energy Management, Resource Conservation, Air Quality and Water management, Green Procurement and Sustainable Transportation)
- SCO endorsed campaign and provided input.
Discussed potential barriers and issues, such as Pepsi Exclusivity contract, existing water quality issues, existing water access issues.
- SCO developed a brief report to the President outlining these issues, as well as analysis of previous campus water quality reports.

Shared this information with student organisers.



Meetings with Administration

- Student organisers arranged a meeting with the President of the University of Winnipeg, Dr. Lloyd Axworthy
 - Dr. Axworthy was once Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister Responsible for the Environment. He is known for his work in the United Nations on human security issues (such as the right to access potable water)
- Dr. Axworthy invited members of the Senior Administration, including the Vice-President Human Resources, Sustainability and Audit as well as key staff
- Students discussed environmental impact of bottled water, cost for students, and water as a human right
- Students outlined that the University would be a national leader in sustainability initiatives, and the important profile of the University.
- A water safety audit was established with a leading professor (Canada Research Chair on Water Toxicity)
- President asked level of student support. A general student referendum was initiated by the student union. The student body voted in 75% in favour of the *"progressive elimination of bottled water on campus"*.

Challenges

For Administration

- Pepsi Contract
- Water Quality
- Water Upgrades
- Costs
 - loss of revenue from Pepsi
 - costs of upgrades

For Students

- Student Awareness
- Student Referendum
- Student Concerns
 - health
 - consumer choice
 - access
 - timeline of bottled water ban



Water Fountain Upgrades



Upgrades



Conclusion

"We have to examine every decision we make through the lens of how it contributes to a sustainable environment,

"We have a responsibility as a university to show the way and give our students facilities that walk the talk. We're not just teaching it, we're living it,"

"The initiative shown by our students to reduce needless plastics on campus is consistent with that policy. We are proud to support this student-led initiative."

Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, President, University of Winnipeg. March 22nd, 2009.

Bottled Water Free Campus Press Conference.



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Thank You!