



Tree Campus USA

**TREE CITY USA®
BULLETIN**

No. **50**

Editor: Dr. James R. Fazio • \$3.00



In the spirit of the popular Tree City USA® program, the Arbor Day Foundation initiated the Tree Campus USA® program in 2008. The program reflects a legacy of encouraging tree planting and care through incentives and commendable examples. The program establishes standards, awards campuses that meet the standards, and spotlights those progressive institutions as models for others.

Since 1976, the Tree City USA program has had a major impact on improving the quality of life in municipalities, counties and military bases throughout America. The Tree Campus USA program has the potential to make a similar contribution on the nation's more than 3,500 campuses. Moreover, with some 13.8 million college students studying at these institutions, there is a golden opportunity to add appreciation for trees and knowledge about their care to the education of tomorrow's leaders.

In addition to fostering planting, care and protection of trees on campuses and adding to the knowledge and skills of students, an important component of the program is to develop connectivity with the community beyond the campus boundaries.

"We are not looking to celebrate green islands in the middle of brown cities," says Matt Harris, Chief Executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. "Tree Campus USA is about working together as a community to manage our tree resources. It is about education, but it is also about collaboration and action."

As more and more campuses work toward green or sustainable living — and setting this example for others — Tree Campus USA offers an important component. Like Tree City USA, it provides guidelines and standards by which progress can be measured. We hope that all Friends of Tree City USA will encourage local campuses of all sizes to make Tree Campus USA part of the living and learning experience for its students.

The Tree Campus USA program is designed not only to enhance tree planting, care and protection, but to help make trees and collaborative skills part of every student's educational experience.



Arbor Day Foundation®
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Benefits to Campus and Nearby Communities

Why should a college participate in the Tree Campus USA program, and why should local communities encourage participation? The benefits to both campus and community are many, and here are a few of them.

1. More trees will be planted, and existing trees will receive better care and greater protection from removal. With proper care, trees are healthier and safer. And, of course, more trees mean more practical benefits such as energy savings, rain water retention, air pollution reduction, a countering effect on global climate change, traffic calming, and enhanced social interactions.

2. Students will be made more aware of campus trees, their benefits, and their management needs. This component of their education will yield dividends for society as students graduate and become residents and leaders in communities throughout the nation.

3. There will be greater transparency in decisions about trees and more input from faculty, students and local residents. In turn, this should help reduce controversies that often arise from removals. It is also likely to encourage the use of best management practices when construction or other work is being done near campus trees.

4. Through serving on an advisory committee or planning Arbor Day and other events, or by serving internships, students have an opportunity for real life experiences working outside the classroom with instructors, administrators, grounds personnel, and local residents — all having diverse interests and abilities. The Tree Campus USA program fosters interactions in a positive way with local city officials and residents. At the same time it helps students develop skills in communication and provides first hand knowledge of what is learned in textbooks about political science, sociology, biology, natural resource management, and other subjects.

5. Closer working relationships and mutually beneficial partnerships will be created between “gown and town.”

6. Positive publicity can be generated for the campus. In turn, this helps gain public support, obtain grants, assist with student recruiting, and generally develop good public relations.

7. Campus and community pride will be enhanced through improved tree care and cooperative working relations.

A good education today includes experiential education and service-learning opportunities in the real world. The Tree Campus USA program helps provide these opportunities both on and off campus.



Standards provide the criteria that are used for determining achievement of Tree Campus USA recognition. They are guidelines to action and serve as a minimum checklist for a systematic, continuous, and collaborative program to enhance and protect the tree resource on college campuses. The requirements are doable on any campus — private or public, large or small, rural or urban.

STANDARD 1: CAMPUS TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Communication and input from interested individuals with diverse backgrounds and opinions lead to the best decisions. Sometimes we call these people “stakeholders.” Standard 1 calls for the creation and use of such individuals for discussions and planning related to campus trees. Decisions and professional activities, of course, rest with the campus arborist, landscape architect or designated facilities department, but the committee should assist in developing and updating plans and providing policy guidance. The committee provides connectivity to the community and can take the lead for education of students about the benefits of trees and for planning/conducting an Arbor Day celebration.

When students have the opportunity to interact informally with professors, staff, and community leaders, they gain social skills and experience that cannot be taught in the classroom.

The committee must include, at minimum:

- ✓ A student (undergraduate or graduate)
- ✓ A faculty member
- ✓ Someone from the facilities management department
- ✓ Someone from the community such as the city forester, parks director, or member of the tree board

Depending on the campus, there may be other appropriate members of the committee, such as:

- a representative from student government or pertinent organizations
- alumni or an interested professor emeritus
- the sustainability coordinator
- a central administrator



Tree Campus USA Standards (continued)

STANDARD 2: CAMPUS TREE CARE PLAN

Just as a good ordinance protects city trees and guides actions that impact them, a campus tree care plan can help assure the health and preservation of campus trees. Safeguarding campus trees begins with the “institutional will” to do so, and the plan puts this vision and its accompanying goals on paper for all to see. Good policy and clear guidance is especially important for contractors who are on campus for building maintenance or construction, or to install or repair underground pipes. The plan also prevents unexpected tree removals that often result in upset faculty and students.

Like an ordinance, the campus tree care plan should fit the needs and circumstances of the campus it serves. No plan can fit all or serve as a single model, but good examples of how campuses have responded to the need for a plan can be found at arborday.org/TreeCampusUSA by clicking on “Tree Campus USA Standards,” then “Standard 2.”

STANDARD 3: CAMPUS TREE PROGRAM WITH DEDICATED ANNUAL EXPENDITURES

Budget allocations are essential for a continuous, systematic tree care program. While a specific amount is not required to qualify for Tree Campus USA recognition, an expenditure of \$3 per full-time student is recommended. “This is challenging on some campuses,” says Heather White, Manager of the Grounds Department at Kent State University. “However, this standard is needed because of the commitment campuses are being asked to make in order to receive Tree Campus USA recognition.”

A wide range of expenditures can be counted toward this requirement. They include, but are not limited to: staff salaries, the cost of trees for planting, labor and equipment, the value of volunteer labor, professional training and memberships in professional organizations, inventories — including data management — and, perhaps most important of all, tree maintenance.

IN CREATING A PLAN, HERE ARE SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER INCLUDING IN THE DOCUMENT:

- There must be goals set, e.g., tree canopy coverage, inventory completion, etc. — and how they will be measured.
- The establishment of a campus tree advisory committee, including representation, terms of service, etc.
- Who enforces the plan
- How communication about trees will be done
- A step-by-step process for approvals of construction or trenching projects that will affect trees
- Penalties for tree damage; enforcement and appeals process
- Policies for planting, maintenance and removals
- Prohibited species and practices
- Dealing with emergency situations





STANDARD 4: ARBOR DAY OBSERVANCE

The requirement to hold an Arbor Day observance results in an event that is fun and memorable. The fun begins with creative planning, developing a publicity campaign, and working together to make the observance appropriate for the particular campus. The event can be held at any time of the year that best meets the planting needs for the climate, and it can be done in the adjoining community or on campus. For college students who were part of Arbor Day in their youth, the observance will evoke pleasant memories. For others, it is an opportunity to experience the tree planting holiday for the first time. Most importantly, it is the golden opportunity to provide education about the benefits of trees and tree care.

Plenty of ideas and help for planning and conducting Arbor Day observances are available by visiting arborday.org.

ARBOR DAY AT TEXAS TECH

Arbor Day at Texas Tech University serves as a good example for others. Arbor Day has been celebrated regularly on campus since 1938 when horticulture professor O. B. Howell received permission from President Bradford Knapp to hold a tree planting event

Planting flowers and trees is part of the Arbor Day tradition at Texas Tech. Planning and implementing an Arbor Day observance can be the annual highlight of activities at colleges and universities that receive Tree Campus USA recognition.

on the dusty campus. 20,000 trees were planted by students and faculty on that first Arbor Day and the tradition continues to this day.

“Arbor Day is the one time of the year where everyone on campus comes together to celebrate Texas Tech and what a beautiful campus we have,” says Jana Vise, assistant director for Student Union and Activities. “It’s the one occasion where all of the organizations — Greek, academic, multicultural, even (academic) departments — are out planting side by side.”

Today the annual event includes planting flowers and sod, as well as trees. It also builds community and school pride. The observance begins before noon with the band playing, short speeches, and recognition of various campus organizations for their accomplishments during the school year. In addition to the work of planting, there is food served by volunteers, free T-shirts and the opportunity for students, staff, faculty, and town folks to interact informally in an enjoyable and productive way.



STANDARD 5: SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT

Service learning takes students beyond the classroom and into the real world. According to the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, this part of education is “a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.” With advantages to both the student and the community, a service-learning project matches perfectly with the spirit of Tree Campus USA.

For a service-learning project to meet the requirements for Tree Campus USA recognition, it must be related to trees, be done on a voluntary basis, and be completed during the year the application is submitted. Some examples of projects include:

- Tree planting and/or maintenance
- Assisting with a tree inventory
- Establishing a Nature Explore Classroom
- Students leading an effort to have a community designated as a Tree City USA
- Coordinating internships with a local urban forestry or parks department
- Assisting with Project Learning Tree
- Developing partnerships with the state forester’s office to help with regional projects
- Landscaping at a Habitat for Humanity project or elderly care facility

Students at Johnson C. Smith University plant trees after being selected for a Campus Tree Tour. Hands-on learning is an important component of the Tree Campus USA program.

HOW TO APPLY

Applying for Tree Campus USA recognition is fast and easy once the standards are met. Any campus representative may apply online at arborday.org/TreeCampusUSA and click on the “Apply” button. Annually, the application deadline is December 31. In addition to supplying information requested on the application form, you will be asked to submit:

- ✓ A copy of the campus tree care plan
- ✓ A breakdown of campus tree program expenditures
- ✓ Documentation of an Arbor Day observance and implementation of service-learning activities (this may be in the form of media coverage).

THE TEXAS A&M AND VIRGINIA TECH EXAMPLES

They do things big in Texas, so it is not surprising that Texas A&M University holds the distinction of sponsoring the largest one-day service project in history. “The Big Event,” as it is called, began in 1982 and by 2008 included 10,600 students. Armed with shovels, rakes, weed whackers and other tools, students assist the residents of College Station, Texas, in projects ranging from raking and bagging leaves to moving a compost pile. “It’s our way of saying thank-you to the community for supporting the college,” volunteer event organizer Anna Rush was quoted as saying in an issue of American Profile.

Texas A&M has been so successful in service-learning that it now sponsors a conference to help other colleges learn how to plan and conduct massive projects.

Virginia Tech is another school that takes the challenge seriously. In 2008, 3,600 students completed 425 jobs for the residents of Blacksburg, Virginia, during its Big Event day in April. While some of the projects were work like cleaning gutters or washing fire trucks, they also included planting trees, spreading mulch and improving the landscape.

During the fall semester at Virginia Tech, Sustainability Week dominates the service-learning calendar. For an entire week in October, students learn

about “meeting today’s needs without compromising the ability to meet needs in the future.” Films, speakers, recycling drives and tree planting are among the activities that are both educational and provide service to the campus and community.

An important feature of Sustainability Week is the cooperation it takes to make it successful. Students learn to work together in planning and doing – excellent preparation for the interdisciplinary nature of today’s working world. In addition to the thousands of students involved, some of the cooperating organizations providing leadership are:

- Virginia Tech Forestry Club
- Xi Sigma Pi (Forestry Honor Society)
- Campus Arboretum Committee
- Virginia Tech Facilities Department
- The Virginia Tech Horticulture Club
- Campus Environmental Coalition
- Sustainable Blacksburg
- The Energy and Sustainability Committee

Eager students ready to work. A hallmark of the annual service-learning projects at Virginia Tech is the exemplary cooperation between organizations on and off campus.



What You Can Find Online

Special webpages have been created at **arborday.org/TreeCampusUSA** to serve as an information center where college students can download the Tree Campus USA toolkit, see what other schools are doing across the country, and discover the benefits of being a Tree Campus USA.

Information about the world of service learning is best accessed through a website maintained by the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at **gsn.nylc.org**.

A cornucopia for helpful information about tree planting and care can be found at the frequently updated site of **arborday.org**. Here are a few of the features that could be useful to anyone involved with Tree Campus USA:

- User forum and Arbor Day Blog
- Hardiness zones
- Tree City USA and Tree Campus USA support materials
- The Tree Store
- Tree Guide and “Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place”
- Conferences and Seminars
- Tree City USA Bulletins
- Pruning Guide
- What Tree Is That? (Identification key)
- Tree-related books
- ... and much, much more!

Connecting young people with nature and engaging them in the stewardship of trees and the natural environment are at the heart of Tree Campus USA.



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