University of Vermont Eco-Reps: Addressing Program Visibility and Awareness on Campus

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UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT ECO-REPS: ADDRESSING PROGRAM VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS ON CAMPUS

A Thesis Presented

by

Winter Heath

to

The Faculty of the Environmental Studies Program

of

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the B.S. Degree in Environmental Studies at the University of Vermont

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ABSTRACT

In the past six years the University of Vermont (UVM) Eco-Reps Program has become well-established among a small group of faculty and students. However, there has been a general consensus among these individuals that the program lacks a strong presence among the on-campus community. Further, recent research by Christina Erickson, a former UVM doctorate student, concluded the UVM Eco-Reps Program suffers from a lack of visibility and awareness.

This thesis builds off of the research of Erickson to identify the awareness challenges the program faces, analyze the relationship between the Eco-Reps Program and the UVM on-campus community, and discover the most effective way for the Eco-Reps Program to enhance on-campus outreach and communications practices. A variety of methods were used including surveys, interviews and focus groups, and an evaluation of Eco-Rep programs across the nation.

This research found a gap between the passion and knowledge of individual Eco-Reps and their ability to communicate messages effectively to the UVM on-campus community, greatly impacting the program’s influence and visibility. This research addressed these issues by redesigning the UVM Eco-Reps logo and creating a comprehensive guidebook that provides future Eco-Reps with the tools and resources needed to effectively connect with their peers.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to recognize a number of individuals who made this thesis possible. The committed work and passion of Christina Erickson, former Eco-Reps Program coordinator and UVM doctorate student, provided the inspiration for this project. Her enthusiasm for sustainability education and her role as a campus leader greatly influenced my decision to become an Eco-Rep for a second year. Christina’s doctoral work motivated me to push the UVM Eco-Reps Program to the next level—a program that I believe will continue to benefit the UVM community for years to come as it grows and develops.

The collective support and passion from the members of UVM’s Office of Sustainability propelled this thesis into motion. Without the direction of Gioia Thompson, Mieko Ozeki, Steve Posner, and former member Kyle Brown this work would not be what it is today. I would also like to acknowledge Erica Spiegel, the Director of the Recycling and Solid Waste Department, whose fervor for and commitment to the Eco-Reps Program played a major role in motivation for this project. In addition, my work would not have been possible without the fantastic support and involvement of the student members of Eco-Reps. I could not have asked for a better group of individuals to work with during this project!

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Peer to peer sustainability education programs such as Eco-Reps are a relatively new concept in higher education. Since the first program in 2000, more than 55 universities and colleges across the nation have discovered the value of programs like Eco-Reps—including the University of Vermont (Tufts Office of Sustainability, 2010b; Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education [AASHE], 2010). These programs engage in a variety of on-campus efforts to encourage environmentally responsible behavior among student peers including events, group activities, and joint projects (Tufts Office of Sustainability, 2010b).

UVM began a pilot Eco-Reps program in 2004; since then the program has become a well-established organization on campus that has made key contributions to the university’s initiatives to become a leader in higher education sustainability (University of Vermont Eco-Reps Program [UVM Eco-Reps], 2006). However, research shows that the UVM Eco-Reps Program is “far from perfect” (Erickson, 2010, p. 306).

Christina Erickson, a former doctorate student at UVM, based her PhD dissertation on the UVM Eco-Reps Program. Her research stated that some of the program’s largest concerns include lack of visibility, awareness, and influence among on-campus students (Erickson, 2010). Another area which requires attention is the connection between UVM’s Residential Life staff and the Eco-Reps Program. Res Life is an important collaborative partner of UVM Eco-Reps due to their financial support and the significant role they play in on-campus living (UVM Eco-Reps, 2010).

A lack of awareness and connection with the UVM community stifles potential for growth and development of the Eco-Reps Program. This, in turn, creates a domino effect: the
individual environmental practices of students on campus are impacted, which then affects UVM’s pledge to be a more sustainable institution as a whole.

Stemming from the original research of Erickson (2010), the purpose of my project was to take the UVM Eco-Reps Program to the next level and confront the challenges mentioned above. The goals of this research were to: 1) identify the awareness challenges the Eco-Reps Program faces among on-campus students, 2) analyze the disconnect between Eco-Reps and UVM Residential Life staff, and 3) discover the most effective way for the Eco-Reps Program to enhance on-campus outreach and communications practices. To ensure the UVM Eco-Reps Program benefits from this research for years to come, I developed a handbook for future Eco-Reps geared toward planning an event. Programming and event planning are critical aspects of the program and confront the peer to peer communications and outreach challenges the program faces. In order to achieve these objectives, a variety of methods were used including surveys, interviews and focus groups, and evaluations of the UVM Eco-Reps Program and other Eco-Rep programs across the nation.

I would like to note that I am a member of UVM Eco-Reps and have been for two years. I have witnessed the potential and inspiration this program holds for making a positive impact on campus sustainability, a factor which has fueled my desire to continue the success of the program. With growing experience in visual communications, and a strong passion for the Eco-Reps Program, this research intended to help strengthen the UVM Eco-Reps Program to ensure its lasting presence on campus.
PART 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Now, more than ever, people of the Earth are receiving a call to environmental duty. According to Anthony Cortese (2003), “We are the first generation capable of determining the habitability of the planet for humans and other species” (p. 15). A change in behavior is needed…and possible. Higher education provides an effective platform for shifting environmental behaviors and paradigms—particularly through peer to peer sustainability education programs, such as the University of Vermont (UVM) Eco-Reps Program. However, research suggests that although many of these programs have the knowledge and passion needed to impact the behaviors of students and faculty alike, they lack an important communications connection with these groups. This can result in a severe impact on the visibility and comprehension of such programs and undermines their lasting impact on university communities. This literature review intends to illuminate the gaps in the UVM Eco-Reps Program and the importance of emphasizing communications and outreach skills in peer to peer sustainability education programs in a number of ways: through observing research on sustainability education and peer education in higher education, exploring the UVM Eco-Reps Program, and expanding on the importance of various communications tools to encourage a stronger connection with members of the on campus community at UVM.

2.1 Peer to Peer Sustainability Education in Higher Education

It was not until the 1970s that sustainability became a common concern among the general public; the natural world was changing due to human impacts on the environment (Clugston & Calder, 1999). Two decades later, efforts to create a sustainable future for all began to appear at the university level at Tufts (Clugston & Calder, 1999).
In 1990 the president of Tufts University organized and hosted a conference in Talloires, France with university officials from all over the world in order to discuss the state of human impact on the natural environment as well as plans for the future of sustainability; this event is referred to as the Talloires Declaration (University Leaders for a Sustainable Future [ULSF], 2008). The leaders present at the Tallories Declaration determined that universities play a critical educational role in the lives of many individuals; this role, then, also acknowledges the heavy responsibility universities hold in raising public awareness on the importance of creating an environmentally sustainable future (ULSF, 2008). The declaration has since been recognized and signed by hundreds of universities across the globe, providing a guiding set of commitments in order to continue moving forward in the growing effort to increase knowledge of environmental issues at these institutions of higher education (Clugston & Calder, 1999). Policies and movements geared toward sustainability education on campuses across the nation, like the Tallores Declaration, are also growing. As Fritjof Capra (2009) notes, this is critical in advancing sustainability practices because “sustainability is not an individual property, but is a property of an entire web of relationships.”

This idea of a community effort to diverge from the traditional academic paradigm and instead encourage sustainability among universities was first put into action in 2000 by a woman at Tufts University named Anja Kollmuss (Tufts Office of Sustainability [Tufts OOS], 2010b). Kollmuss developed a peer to peer sustainability education program known as Eco-Representatives, or Eco-Reps—the first program of its kind in the country (Tufts OOS, 2010a). Peer education is defined as:

…an educational approach that involves identifying, training and supporting members of a given group to pass on accurate information to others…where the desired outcome is
that peer support and the culture of the target group is utilized to effect and sustain a change of behavior. (Ford & Collier, 2006, p. 3)

Behavior change is critical in conservation efforts, according to Raymond De Young (1993). De Young (1993) explains that various frameworks of behavior change techniques engage in persuasive communications, provide incentives and disincentives, model desired behavior, facilitate the implementation of behavior change, and provide follow-up data on whether the change is effective or not. Peer education translates these concepts of behavior change into a variety of principles, some of which include: collaborative learning between peer educator and target group, utilizing methods deemed less threatening than other forms of education, exhibiting peer ownership of the issue (i.e., the peer educator relates to the topic in some way and accepts responsibility for what is discussed or proposed), and—most importantly—actively pursuing the positive change through education, skills, and behavior (Ford & Collier, 2006).

The Tufts Eco-Reps program addressed many of these aspects of behavior change. The program focused on educating first- and second-year students who lived on-campus in the residence halls about environmental issues and took the form of a course combined with a paid internship (Tufts OOS, 2010b). Each week the Eco-Reps met to discuss various topics such as waste management, water, climate change, and food, and then planned projects and events around these topics to encourage students to live in a more sustainable way on-campus (Tufts OOS, 2010b).

The Eco-Reps program designed by Kollmuss in 2000 became a model peer to peer sustainability education program for higher education institutions. The program design has taken universities and colleges across the nation by storm; there are now over 55 campuses which have
a program similar to that of Eco-Reps (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education [AASHE], 2011). In conjunction with this growth in peer to peer sustainability programs on campuses organizations have developed to provide support, such as the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). According to the AASHE (2011) website, the association “was founded in 2005 to help coordinate and strengthen campus sustainability efforts at regional and national levels, and to serve as the first North American professional association for those interested in advancing campus sustainability.”

The Tufts program, in addition to one at Harvard University, found employing an Eco-Rep in each residence hall on-campus reared positive results in promoting environmental issues and sustainable behavior (UVM Eco-Reps, 2006). These two successful programs became the models for the Eco-Reps program at UVM.

2.2 University of Vermont Eco-Reps Program

During the UVM spring 2004 semester the University Recycling/Solid Waste Manager, Erica Spiegel, and the University Environmental Council Coordinator, Gioia Thompson, created a pilot program for Eco-Reps at UVM (UVM Eco-Reps, 2006). The creators explain where the desire to implement the program at UVM derived from originally,

Unfortunately, there was a ‘disconnect’ between the overarching environmental commitment of the institution, and individual student behavior and culture. UVM, as an institution, has pledged to support the greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals of the New England Governors and we have a comprehensive recycling program in place. Yet at the same time, we saw declining recycling rates, and an increase in waste generation and energy consumption on campus. …Without a systematic approach to educate resident students about their connections to UVM’s overall environmental commitment, this disconnect could ultimately damage the school’s ‘green’ reputation. (UVM Eco-Reps Program, 2006, p. 1)

As a result, 26 students were selected out of a number of applicants to be part of the pilot program. The students were trained on various issues related to on-campus living (e.g.,
recycling; composting; energy conservation). The Eco-Reps met bi-weekly to discuss new topics and were given certain tasks and activities to employ in their assigned residence halls; they were also hired through the Department of Residential Life, another important collaborative group of the program, and paid for four hours each week (UVM Eco-Reps, 2006). In addition to their financial support, Residential Life is also a valuable group for Eco-Reps to network with due to their presence and influence in the residence halls. In the end, the pilot project was successful, and many students were interested in and excited to become a part of the program.

In the following academic years the Eco-Reps program developed and grew. In 2004 a graduate student in the Rubenstein School of Environmental and Natural Resources named Deb Perry was hired for the position of the Eco-Reps Coordinator (UVM Eco-Reps, 2006). Perry’s position was succeeded in 2006 when Christina Erickson, a doctoral student in the Rubenstein School, was chosen to move the program out of the pilot phase and to help establish Eco-Reps as a more permanent program on campus (UVM Eco-Reps, 2006).

From 2006 to 2009 Erickson was the UVM Eco-Reps Program Coordinator; during her last semester at UVM Erickson became a Program Co-coordinator with Lydia Menendez, a UVM Program Assistant for Community-University Partnerships and Service Learning (CUPS) (University of Vermont Eco-Reps Program [UVM Eco-Reps], 2010). During these years the program slowly grew. Figure 1 shows the steady increase of Eco-Rep applicants and hires over the years.
The figure above shows the number of Eco-Rep applications received and the number of Eco-Rep hires between the spring 2004 semester when the program was launched and the following fall semesters at UVM up to fall 2010. While fall 2007 had the largest number of applicants (77), the number of Eco-Rep hires reached its highest point during the fall 2010 semester (the program was under new direction in the fall 2010 semester by Kyle Brown, former Fellow at the UVM Office of Sustainability).

Throughout these years of growth the program’s activities and initiatives developed as well. The student Eco-Reps participate in a number of activities: door-to-door residence hall light bulb swaps; organizing and maintaining bulletin boards and compost in their assigned building; a farmers’ market at the UVM Davis Center student center; conducting trash and recycling bin audits/sorts; performing energy audits within their building; touring local facilities such as the Material Recovery Facility; and more (UVM Eco-Reps, 2011a). Eco-Reps are also expected to attend multiple Residence Hall Council meetings and Residential Life staff meetings each semester and co-host at least one Eco-Rep event with either of these groups (UVM Eco-Reps,
The most recent addition is organizing a Community Based Social Marketing (CBSM) project within their residence hall. That is, Eco-Reps target a certain behavior in their building, attempt to change the behavior using various CBSM tools and strategies, and then encourage a more environmental act instead (UVM Eco-Reps, 2011b). CBSM is described in greater detail later on.

During May 2010, Erickson completed her dissertation titled *Peer to Peer Sustainability Outreach Programs: the Interface of Education and Behavior Change*. The dissertation sought to identify peer to peer sustainability outreach programs in the United States and Canada; understand their organization and operations; learn the contributions the programs make to sustainability education; and identify the components of successful programs. At the time Erickson was the Program Coordinator for the UVM Eco-Reps Program, and therefore the UVM program made significant contributions to the research. In general, my work will focus on Erickson’s (2010) findings relevant to the UVM Eco-Reps Program.

In addition to influencing student sustainability behaviors, peer sustainability outreach programs—such as the UVM Eco-Reps Program—have many other benefits. Research suggests that the UVM Eco-Reps Program has had a positive influence on both the Eco-Reps themselves and on on-campus student residents. Benefits have included: an educational impact; an ecological and financial impact for the university; and a cultural change in attitude toward certain environmental issues (Erickson, 2010).

In regard to educational impacts, Erickson’s (2010) findings show that students residing in on campus buildings with an Eco-Rep present exhibited greater knowledge about environmental issues compared to buildings without an Eco-Rep—“especially around recycling and energy conservation (the two main topics of the program)” (p. 289).
As a result of student education and awareness, ecological and financial impacts have followed. According to Erickson (2010),

…utility data showed an increase of electricity usage per capita but a decrease in usage per square footage over the eight years analyzed. Trash showed a decrease and recycling showed an increase, both per capita and per square footage. Reductions in all areas (except recycling) can mean financial savings for the university. (p. 291)

Erickson (2010) also describes a number of cultural impacts on campus as a result of the program. One possible impact includes changing attitudes toward bottled water on campus—a topic which has been receiving growing attention on campus. Although it is difficult to pinpoint Eco-Reps activities (like the One Less Bottle campaign) as the sole act responsible for influencing this gradual transformation, it is reasonable to suggest that the program plays a significant role in the process. In addition, it was also noted that the program helps contribute to the university’s reputation as an “environmental university” (Erickson, 2010, p. 291).

Although there are many benefits from the UVM Eco-Reps Program, there are a number of areas where improvement is needed. Throughout her research, Erickson (2010) found that on-campus visibility, student awareness of the program, a connection with Residential Life staff, and communications and outreach practices are some of the largest problem areas for the program. This became clear in a number of instances.

Although some on-campus students are familiar with the Eco-Reps program, data Erickson (2010) collected strongly suggests the program lacks visibility and influence among students on campus. Only half of the students Erickson surveyed in residential halls across the UVM campus stated they had heard of the program. In addition, although there were some subjects presented by Eco-Reps that students seemed to be very aware of in regard to behavior change, such as energy conservation and recycling, there were also topics that garnered less
enthusiasm like transportation and food waste composting practices. Students also claimed that their busy schedules didn’t allow time to make behavior changes.

Members of the Residential Life staff commented on the general lack of visibility of Eco-Reps in the residence halls. In some cases, there was little to no evidence an Eco-Rep was assigned to a residence hall beyond the floor on which the Eco-Rep lived (i.e., lack of signs, involvement with residents of the building and the Residential Life staff, etc.). A general consensus among various individuals of the Residential Life staff on areas of improvement for the Eco-Reps program included: more signs for Eco-Reps events and activities in the residence halls and on campus and a stronger effort from individual Eco-Reps to connect and collaborate with Residential Life staff. Erickson (2010) notes that greater outreach to Residential Life staff is “a critical point, as…[the Residential Life staff] can be instrumental in getting the word out to their residents as well as provide useful feedback on individual Eco-Rep performance in their buildings” (p. 292). One Director of Residential Life commented on Eco-Reps as having little recognition as an established leadership position such as Orientation leaders or Residential Advisors. Other UVM faculty commented on the lack of communication between Eco-Reps and the student body. For example, one individual commented that students often associate the UVM Eco-Reps Program with an event they did not participate in or organize on-campus—a sign that there is little clarification about what the program is responsible for on campus.

In many of these challenges UVM is not alone. One prior coordinator of a peer education program at North Carolina State University described similar difficulties in program structure and implementation (Erickson, 2010). For this particular group, social marketing techniques were a reoccurring issue. Some of the largest concerns included what outreach methods are the most effective in capturing the attention of peers and whether students hired for a position as a
peer educator in sustainability should have experience or training in social marketing. To address these issues the former program coordinator recommended training hired students in areas such as social media and other social marketing tactics in order to present their sustainability message in a clear, consistent, effective manner to peers.

2.3 Community-Based Social Marketing

Community-based social marketing (CBSM) is a valuable tool to peer education sustainability programs such as UVM Eco-Reps. But, what is CBSM? Doug McKenzie-Muhr (2008) describes the concept in the following:

Community-based social marketing is an attractive alternative to information intensive campaigns. In contrast to conventional approaches, community-based social marketing has been shown to be very effective at bringing about behavior change. Its effectiveness is due to its pragmatic approach. This approach involves: identifying barriers to a sustainable behavior, designing a strategy that utilizes behavior change tools, piloting the strategy with a small segment of a community, and finally, evaluating the impact of the program once it has been implemented across a community. (p. 5)

Erickson’s (2010) research suggests that there seems to be a gap in how the UVM Eco-Reps Program addresses barriers and behavior change. That is, Eco-Reps appear to have the passion and environmental knowledge but lack the communications skills necessary to connect with students on campus and convey these environmental messages in a lasting manner. In order to address this, many details of the UVM Eco-Reps Program’s outreach practices can be further honed to increase the efficacy and influence of the program. This is where aspects of social marketing come into play.

For example, to solidify sustainable behaviors presented by UVM Eco-Reps—such as consuming less bottled water—it is important to establish norms. People are more likely to make sustainable behavior changes if they see other individuals doing the same (McKenzie-Muhr, 2008). McKenzie-Muhr (2008) notes establishing a sense of group commitment, developing
prompts, and creating effective messages/communications are valuable tools to behavior change. Once motivations and barriers (e.g., confusion and/or intimidation of a certain sustainable behavior, such as composting) to behavior change have been established in a program, the next step is to implement social marketing strategies to make the desired change in behavior (McKenzie-Muhr, 2008).

A common approach used to increase awareness about various topics is media advertising, among other conventional marketing strategies; it is key to acknowledge that tools such as media advertising *alone* increase awareness but have little effect on behavior change (McKenzie-Mohr, 2008). Traditionally, advertising has been intended to promote a product, not a behavior; to change an existing behavior through mass media alone is difficult (Costanza et al., 1986). That is why it is important to pair outreach efforts such as advertising with the interactive quality of peer education sustainability programs, thus creating the basis for social marketing (McKenzie-Muhr, 2008). Social marketing is described by the Social Marketing Institute ([SMI], 2010) as “the planning and implementation of programs designed to bring about social change using concepts from commercial marketing.” SMI (2010) clarifies further when the organization explains some of the core aspects of social marketing: the ultimate goal is to influence action and/or behavior change, the desired audience is the focus, be aware of competition (e.g., norms), and constantly examine the always changing marketplace in order to respond quickly with different strategies.

In order to deliver a clear, effective message it is important to develop and execute a number of steps; this usually takes the form of a campaign. According to Richard Jurin, Donny Roush, and Jeff Danter (2010), key concepts in developing a campaign include: 1) identify the problem, 2) establish a list of goals, 3) gather an understanding of the target audience, 4) develop
a set of specific objectives, 5) formulate a message and assess the most suitable and effective media options for your purpose—as well as alternatives, 6) select media and begin design process, 7) create a project timeline, 8) evaluate the campaign’s effectiveness and progress toward goals throughout the beginning, middle, and end of the process, and 9) establish a project budget.

Jurin et al. (2010) provide a valuable list of “fundamental building blocks” for message media (p. 135). The authors divide effective media into three categories: traditional media, new media, and converged media. Traditional media includes news releases, public service announcements, films, information sheets, and so on. Media that is relatively new in message delivery is comprised of outlets such as the World Wide Web, email, mobile device messages, and social networking (e.g., Facebook). And finally, converged media, or “immersion in mediated messages and unprecedented, widely available technological abilities to add messages to the global flow of information”, consists of viral marketing (such as digital videos), webinars, streaming events, and instantaneous reader responses (Jurin et al., 2010, p. 148). Further clarification of some of these resources follows.

Traditional media remain the continuous “workhorses of communications” (Jurin et al., 2010, p. 136). As long as research has been done, and excellent writing skills and effective graphic design are employed, these techniques are always seen as useful for someone looking to spread a message (Jurin et al., 2010).

New media, such as the Internet, have provided endless options for communication. New media, such as digital advertising, has been around since about 1994 and is used by a growing number of groups all over the world—such as the Obama administration during the US elections (McStay, 2010). Huge brands and companies, such as Coca-Cola, have also tapped into these
valuable resources (Cakim, 2010). There is a lot of value in new media; in fact, it is considered one of the top most trusted sources of information for consumers 18 years and older (Cakim, 2010). Information sources such as Facebook and YouTube help to build online communities where individuals can share and communicate information (McStay, 2010). Idil Cakim (2010) illuminates that aspect of new media when she states, “Web-empowered word of mouth agents go beyond their physical neighborhoods and gain significant visibility by posting to message boards and reaching thousands of people” (p. 8). Also, networking through online media allows for social circles to form; this increases the rate at which information is disseminated and the authority networks gain (Cakim, 2010).

In many of these, graphic arts play a large role in communicating messages. Wendy Jedlicka (2010) notes that considering qualities of the graphic design involved in your message, such as intended message, visual aspects (e.g., shape, color, size), the context in which the graphics appear, and so on impact the delivery and interpretation of the message. Therefore, the design of the media choice is critical and must be considered.

In regard to the communications practices of UVM Eco-Reps, Erickson’s (2010) research provides a number of suggestions and ideas to improve the program. Many of these ideas were provided by members of the university community. A Director of Residential Life commented on Eco-Reps as having little recognition as an established leadership position such as Orientation leaders or Residential Assistants (RAs); the individual proposed an increase in networking and connecting with other groups such as Student Government Association and Student Life. Signs and forwarded emails containing announcements and updates were recognized by one RA as an effective way to remind residents about conservation habits and behaviors. Also, LCD screens—such as the ones present in the Davis Center and Living/Learning building—were specifically
mentioned as a way for Eco-Reps to become more prevalent on campus (Erickson, 2010). Other peer education sustainability programs have found that posters, email, and other various media provide a thought-provoking and effective way to present information and communicate with peers (Duan, 2009). Employing such tools and ideas are crucial steps in addressing the visibility challenges faced by the UVM Eco-Reps Program.
PART 3: METHODOLOGY

The research for this thesis involved a mixed methods approach to learn the thoughts and opinions of UVM students, current Eco-Reps, Residential Life staff and other members of the UVM community. This collaborative effort was important to me because I wanted to make sure that both individuals from the inside and the outside had input in the future of the Eco-Reps Program. The goals of these methods were: 1) collect information for the UVM Eco-Reps Program to strengthen the connection with and visibility among the on-campus community, and 2) inform the design process of the UVM Eco-Reps logo and communications handbook for future Eco-Reps which will be discussed later on in Part 5: UVM Eco-Reps Guidebook and Logo Results.

3.1 Designing the Research

As a member of UVM Eco-Reps for two years, I have been aware of the need for increased awareness of the program on campus; the concern has been voiced by many of my peers and fellow Eco-Rep members. However, Christina Erickson’s (2010) dissertation described this issue in greater detail and solidified the notion. Erickson’s findings fueled my desire to change this aspect of the program, but before I could dive into my thesis project it was necessary to find out which aspects of the Eco-Reps Program in particular needed to be addressed.

My first step was reviewing Christina Erickson’s (2010) dissertation, the foundation of my research. This took place several months before my thesis project began. Erickson’s work guided my research in two ways: 1) her results and findings highlight the gaps and weaknesses of the UVM Eco-Reps Program and 2) I found it appropriate to duplicate many aspects of her methodology in order to compare the results of both of our work.
One of the overarching themes of Erickson’s (2010) findings is the UVM Eco-Reps Program’s lack of communication and connection with on-campus students and Residential Life staff which has resulted in a lack of visibility and awareness across the UVM community—the basis of this thesis. Erickson used a variety of methods to reach this conclusion such as case studies, surveys, focus groups and interviews, and an evaluation of other programs including UVM Eco-Reps. With the exception of the case studies, many of these methods seemed appropriate for my work and as a result were used as part of my research. This will be described in greater detail as this section progresses.

In addition to Erickson’s dissertation, I met with a number of UVM faculty to clarify the current needs of the UVM Eco-Reps Program. In late fall of 2010 Stephanie Kaza, the Director of the Environmental Studies Program, and Jane Petrillo, an Associate Professor at UVM with expertise in visual communication, agreed to be my thesis advisors. Kate Strotmeyer, the Assistant Director for Marketing at the UVM Davis Center, also agreed to guide me in my project to increase the visibility and awareness of the Eco-Reps Program. However, the most influential meetings in this early stage of my thesis were those with former UVM Eco-Reps Program Coordinator Kyle Brown and other members of the Office of Sustainability including Gioia Thompson and Mieko Ozeki. Erica Spiegel, the Supervisor of the Recycling and Solid Waste Department, also appeared at a number of meetings. These initial discussions with the directors of the Eco-Reps Program greatly influenced the direction of my thesis project. There was a lot of enthusiasm and interest in increasing the visibility of the program as well as a general consensus that this was the right time in the development of the Eco-Reps Program to address the awareness issues the program faces.
Throughout these meetings arose a reoccurring theme: interest in having a guidebook designed for future Eco-Reps. There seemed to be a strong desire to provide a more cohesive and clearer explanation of the Eco-Reps Program mission, goals, and activities. A communications guidebook could help address these issues both internally and externally. That is, if individual Eco-Reps are provided with distinct guidelines about the most effective ways to communicate the program’s messages and connect with the UVM community then the issues of visibility and awareness on campus could be addressed. Potential guidebook topics included: ways to market Eco-Reps events and the program itself, and how to effectively deliver messages to and interact with peers when trying to educate them about environmental topics. Members of the Office of Sustainability also expressed interest in strengthening the design of the Eco-Reps logo; the possibility of developing a tagline to clearly display the purpose of the Eco-Reps Program was also mentioned.

Using this feedback, my next question was, What are the most effective ways to increase the visibility and awareness of the Eco-Reps Program on campus? I turned to Strotmeyer who provided a list of suggestions. The value of networking with other groups and organizations on campus was emphasized as well as online tools such as social media and utilizing the Eco-Reps website to its full potential. Cohesiveness and consistency were described as key aspects of making the program more visible. Strotmeyer also stressed the importance of acknowledging the questions, What is best for the Eco-Reps audience? What will catch their attention?

In order to translate this information into a tangible item that can be used by the Eco-Reps Program for years to come I met with Petrillo who assisted me in the guidebook and logo brainstorming process.
To further enhance my understanding of the current needs and issues of the Eco-Reps Program I conducted a variety of methods. I intended to learn the opinions of the current members of the Eco-Reps Program, students living in residence halls across campus, and various members of UVM Residential Life staff. In order to do this I used surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Due to the involvement of human subjects my work needed to be approved by the UVM Institutional Review Board.

3.2 UVM Eco-Reps Surveys

I administered two surveys to the current UVM Eco-Reps. The purpose of the first survey was to learn how current Eco-Reps feel about the public outreach and media practices used by the Eco-Reps Program. The second survey intended to gauge the thoughts of current Eco-Reps on the creation of a guidebook on peer communications and media resources for future Eco-Reps.

3.2.1 UVM Eco-Reps Program Public Outreach and Social Marketing Survey

The questions I intended to answer with this survey included (see Appendix 1):

- Are the current Eco-Reps satisfied with the level of outreach, networking, and media practices used by the Eco-Reps Program?
- Which outreach methods do current Eco-Reps use to communicate with their peers and to what extent do the Eco-Reps think those methods are effective?
- What level of interest do the Eco-Reps have in a “how-to” guidebook on peer communication and outreach strategies for future Eco-Reps?
- What level of interest is there in using specific types of media to increase the visibility of the program?
- Are the Eco-Reps satisfied with the current UVM Eco-Reps logo?
The goal of this survey was to collect information from those directly involved with the outreach and media aspects of the program. The initial feedback greatly assisted in the process of examining the visibility and awareness challenges the program faces.

I then developed the questionnaire which included a mix of open-ended questions and close-ended questions to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. The survey underwent review by several different individuals including peers, advisors, UVM faculty, and a UVM statistician. The questionnaire was pilot-tested by three peers in early January, 2011 before it was administered in late January, 2011. Minimal changes to the document were suggested.

Google Docs, a free, online service, was used to design and administer the survey. The link to the survey on Google Docs was emailed to 32 student members of the Eco-Reps Program via the group’s (ECO-REPS@LIST.UVM.EDU); but before this could happen a “heads up” email was sent to the group in order to limit the chance of accidental deletion of the survey. The warning email explained the purpose of the survey, the estimated time needed to complete the survey, and anonymity of all participants. In addition, the semester’s new Eco-Reps who just joined the program were asked to not participate in the survey due to the lack of experience and familiarity with the program. The email containing the link to the survey followed immediately after. The results of the survey were not made public to the participants. One week later I sent a follow-up email to request any individuals who had not yet participated in the survey to do so by a certain deadline. The survey link was sent out again. This also coincided with a verbal reminder during an Eco-Reps meeting. A few weeks later a final reminder was mentioned during an Eco-Reps meeting followed by the resending of the survey link via email.
3.2.2 UVM Eco-Reps Guidebook Survey

The intent of this survey was to collect additional information from the current Eco-Reps about the guidebook format thought to be most effective and useful. The survey was brief and contained one close-ended question and one open-ended question (Appendix 2). The survey was reviewed by the Eco-Reps Program Coordinator and one of my advisors. The survey was pilot tested by two of my peers. No suggestions were made.

In late March 2011 the survey was administered online using Google Docs. The process followed that described earlier. I sent out a warning email via the Eco-Reps listserv which described the purpose, time commitment and deadline, and intended anonymity of participants. All Eco-Reps were asked to participate. A follow-up email was sent out a few days later as a reminder.

3.3 Returning Eco-Rep Focus Group and Interviews

In order to gather more in-depth qualitative data and feedback from the current Eco-Reps a focus group was organized with individuals who had been part of the Eco-Reps Program for more than one year. Although six individuals in total have returned to the program for the 2010-2011 academic year, only three were able to participate in the focus group. Two Eco-Reps were abroad for the 2011 spring semester and therefore unable to attend, and one Eco-Rep was unable to participate the day of the event. The abroad Eco-Reps were contacted with a list similar to the questions asked in the focus group, described in more detail below. The focus group and interview questions were reviewed by my advisors, multiple peers, and other UVM faculty. Minimal suggestions were made. The document format was based on Erickson’s (2010) focus group and interview questions.
The focus group conversation with the returning Eco-Reps featured semi-structured interview questions and was audio recorded. The meeting took place in a randomly selected location neutral to both the researcher and the interviewees. An email was sent out to organize the focus group meeting time and place. The email explained the intent and process of the focus group, the estimated amount of time needed, and the goal of maintaining anonymity of the participants. Before the focus group began I asked each Eco-Rep to sign an informed consent form. I then gave a brief introduction and assured the group that this conversation was meant to be casual and anonymous; they were told they should feel comfortable to speak freely without any concern of insulting the program.

Using the audio recordings, the focus group and interview were both transcribed. The information was then coded and categorized to discover common patterns.

The returning Eco-Reps who were abroad received a list of the questions structured like those of the focus group (see Appendix 3). The questions were emailed in February, 2011 to each Eco-Rep. The email explained the purpose and intent of my research, a response deadline, and intended anonymity.

### 3.4 Residence Hall Survey

In March, 2011 I conducted surveys in various residence halls across the UVM campus. The purpose of the survey was to 1) gauge the visibility of the Eco-Reps Program on campus, 2) discover the level of awareness on-campus students have about the program, and 3) assess which media and/or outreach practices would be effective in raising the visibility of the program. I based the questionnaire format and process on Erickson’s (2010) residential hall survey. That is, in addition to similar question format, I also conducted the surveys in the residence halls which
she conducted her surveys: Harris/Millis (688 residents), Marsh/Austin/Tupper (427 residents), Chittenden/Buckham/Wills (394 residents), and Mason/Simpson/Hamilton (465 residents). The only exception was the building Converse. I did not include Converse because it was inefficient to do so given the time and resources I was allotted.

The questionnaire was then reviewed by a UVM statistician, members of the UVM Office of Sustainability, and my advisors (see Appendix 4). Two of my peers pilot tested the questionnaire. Minimal edits were suggested for the document. Many of the questions overlapped with those asked in the Eco-Rep survey. I did this in order to assess the level of connection and understanding about the program students inside the Eco-Reps Program and students outside of the Eco-Reps Program share. The survey contained only close-ended questions in order to make the survey process quick and easy.

I chose to conduct the survey door-to-door in the residence halls—as opposed to email—to increase the chance of collecting the desired number of responses in such a short time frame. The student members of the UVM Eco-Reps Program were asked to help administer the surveys door-to-door in the selected residence halls. Those who participated were able to count the time spent surveying toward their Eco-Rep hours; Eco-Reps are paid an hourly rate for four hours of work each week.

In order to recruit Eco-Reps, a residence hall survey sign-up was arranged online using BaseCamp, an online collaboration tool to which every Eco-Rep has access. The sign-up sheet listed each residential complex and a survey time and date under which Eco-Reps could enter their name. An email was then sent out to the Eco-Reps through the Eco-Reps listserv which requested their help and briefly explained the purpose of the surveys, how to sign-up using BaseCamp, the expected length of each survey session, and the opportunity to earn hours.
Prior to each residential complex’s survey session I sent a reminder email (which contained the meeting location and time) to the individuals who signed-up to administer the surveys that day. The designated meeting location was usually in the lobby of the complex. From there I briefly trained the group on the best way to administer the survey. The following list states the guidelines for administering the survey:

- As part of a random sampling, survey every third room on each floor of the building.
- If the residents do not respond, or if a resident declines to participate, select the next room in line.
- Only one person per room is to be surveyed.
- RAs are not to be surveyed; as part of their job RAs are aware of the Eco-Reps Program which creates the risk of a biased response.
- If a resident answers “No” to question number 1, skip questions 2, 3, and 4.
- Do not hand the survey to the resident; instead read each question aloud to the resident. This helps reduce the resident’s chance of misinterpretation or error when answering each question.

Each Eco-Rep received a clipboard and multiple surveys. When possible, individuals were split into pairs and each pair was assigned a different building in the residential complex to survey. Depending on the number of Eco-Reps involved with the survey process I either 1) participated in the door-to-door survey collection, or 2) remained in the complex’s lobby as a check-in point when Eco-Reps completed surveying their assigned building.

With the help of an online calculator (Creative Research Systems, 2010), I calculated the sample size of the total population of the four residential complexes—approximately 1,974
residents in all. The margin of error was 6% and confidence level was 95%. The recommended sample size was 235.

In total, 211 surveys were collected. Alan Howard, a statistician at UVM, assisted me in conducting both univariate analysis and bivariate analysis of the survey results using the computer program IBM SPSS Statistics version 19. The only variables that were re-coded were the logo options; they were divided into two choices: yes, correct logo choice (i.e., the UVM Eco-Reps logo) or no, not correct logo choice (i.e., the remaining logo selections).

In order to test a number of hypotheses multiple chi-square tests were conducted. My hypotheses included:

- Sophomores would be more likely to report hearing about the UVM Eco-Reps Program prior to the survey versus first-year students due to sophomores’ longer presence on campus.
- First-year students are more likely than sophomores to choose the Outing Club logo rather than the UVM Eco-Reps logo. I hypothesized this is due to the lack of familiarity first-years have with the UVM groups/organizations in general, the prominence of the Outing Club on campus, and the similar logo design between Eco-Reps and the Outing Club (i.e., the mountains).
- Residents who report being aware of the Eco-Reps Program are more likely to select the correct logo than residents who are not aware of the program.
- Residents who report hearing about the program prior to the survey are more likely to be familiar with Eco-Reps events/activities.

A chi-square test was considered significant if its p-value was less than .05 (or p<.05).
3.5 Residential Life Focus Groups

To learn outside opinions and thoughts of the media and outreach practices used by Eco-Reps Program I organized several focus groups with UVM Residential Life staff (i.e., Residential Assistants, Residential Directors, and Assistant Residential Directors). This process mimicked that of Erickson (2010) who conducted multiple focus groups with Residential Life staff due to their status of “being stakeholders of the program” (p. 108). In her research, Erickson (2010) selected the staff of four different residential complexes: Harris/Millis, Marsh/Austin/Tupper, Chittenden/Buckham/Wills/Converse, and Mason/Simpson/Hamilton. These complexes were selected due to the “past and current Eco-Rep placement in those buildings” (Erickson, 2010, p. 109).

For my thesis, I conducted Residential Life staff focus groups in the same buildings mentioned above to ensure findings and results could be easily compared between the two studies. The only exception to my research was the addition of the Residential Life staff of Jeanne Mance/Trinity. During the 2010-2011 academic year Jeanne Mance/Trinity have exhibited the smallest presence of the Eco-Reps Program in their residential complexes compared to the other buildings examined during this research. The only building which has an Eco-Rep is Jeanne Mance, and the Eco-Rep is me. Jeanne Mance/Trinity were included in the focus groups to observe the difference between residential complexes with an Eco-Rep and those without. A slightly different set of questions was asked during the Jeanne Mance/Trinity focus groups; however, the focus still remained the media and outreach practices of the UVM Eco-Reps Program.

The focus groups took place during March and April 2011. The conversations were semi-structured and audio recorded. Meetings took place in the regular weekly meeting location of the
residential life staff. An email was sent out to each Residential Director to organize the focus group meeting time and place. The email explained the intent and process of the focus group, the estimated amount of time needed, and the goal of maintaining anonymity of the participants. Before the focus group began I asked each staff member to sign an informed consent form. I then gave a brief introduction and assured the group that this conversation was meant to be casual and they should feel comfortable to speak freely without any concern of insulting the program. The latter was particularly important during the Jeanne Mance/Trinity focus group due to my position as Jeanne Mance’s Eco-Rep.

Using the audio recordings, the focus group and interview were both transcribed. In order to detect patterns and themes I categorized the information found.

3.6 UVM Eco-Reps Guidebook

In response to a general interest among the UVM Eco-Reps Program directors and leaders, I designed a guidebook for future Eco-Reps. The goal of the guidebook was to provide the Eco-Reps with the tools and resources necessary to put on a successful event and activity—a key aspect of the program’s structure as well as a way to provide a visible, physical presence on campus. After review and feedback from my advisors, members of the Office of Sustainability, the Eco-Reps themselves, and other members of the UVM community, the guidebook was designed to be presented both online (on the Eco-Reps website) and in print.

But before the design process could begin a number of stages had to be completed including researching and collecting the content and selecting a format and style that would be both attractive and practical. It is important to note that this guidebook was not intended to be a brand new resource; the Eco-Reps Program already has access to a number of tips and guides for
event planning, etc (which will be mentioned later on). The intent of this guidebook was to provide a comprehensive, updated resource for Eco-Reps that would be clear, concise, and accessible.

In order to collect valuable and useful information on how to prepare for and execute an Eco-Rep event/activity successfully, I consulted a variety of resources to create a clear and comprehensive document including: the current UVM Eco-Reps manual, the UVM Eco-Reps website, (UVM Eco-Reps, 2008), the UVM Davis Center Student Life website, the UVM Davis Center website, and Kate Strotmeyer, Assistant Director for Marketing at the Davis Center. Each resource helped provide the resources available to Eco-Reps, important contacts, how to market events, and a variety of other tips to ensure a successful event and/or program.

The program chosen to assemble the guidebook was Microsoft Office Word 2007. I chose this program due to its user-friendly nature and the ability to easily edit the document within the program—crucial aspects of the final product if I intend to create a document that can be updated and maintained for future use. For the online version of the guidebook I used a free online service called Issuu which allows individuals to publish print media online. The published online versions of the document(s) can be easily shared with individuals via email and embedded on other websites and blogs (Issuu, 2011).

3.7 UVM Eco-Reps Logo

In addition to a guidebook, I sought to redesign the UVM Eco-Reps logo. To accomplish this I worked with a number of individuals. However, Jane Petrillo, Associate Professor at UVM with expertise in visual communication, was the central guiding voice in this process. Feedback
from my advisors, peers, and members of the Office of Sustainability also assisted me during this process.

In order to find a direction, I conducted several brainstorming sessions (see Appendix 5). I then consulted Professor Petrillo and members of the Office of Sustainability for feedback. This process occurred multiple times in order to design and select the desired logo, a process which will be described in further detail in Part 4: Findings and Analysis.
PART 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

A variety of methods were conducted in order to gather a comprehensive understanding of where the UVM Eco-Reps Program stands in regard to program visibility and awareness on campus. Information was gathered from individuals both within the program and outside of the program in order to strengthen the findings. During this process a number of aspects of the program were evaluated: the outreach and communication strengths and weaknesses of the program and the relationship between the program and Residential Life staff. I also explored the perceived effectiveness and value of a new UVM Eco-Reps logo design and event planning guidebook for future Eco-Reps.

4.1 UVM Eco-Reps Surveys

Two surveys were administered to the student members of the UVM Eco-Reps Program. One focused on the outreach and media practices of the program. The other intended to learn the guidebook format preference of the current Eco-Reps.

4.1.1 UVM Eco-Reps Program Public Outreach and Social Marketing Survey

In January, 2011 a survey was administered to the student members of UVM Eco-Reps. The intent of the survey was to: assess the current Eco-Reps’ level of satisfaction with the program’s outreach and media practices, learn which outreach and media practices they themselves engage in, and gauge their interest in a variety of methods that could be used to increase program visibility.

The total number of UVM Eco-Reps Program in the beginning of the 2011 spring semester was 38 members. Six of those Eco-Reps were not present during the 2010 fall semester and were new additions to the program; the new Eco-Reps were asked to not participate in the survey due to their lack of familiarity and experience with the program. Therefore, 32 Eco-Reps
were asked to participate in the survey. In total, 30 Eco-Reps responded with a variety of experience levels with the program. Figure 2 shows the number of years each Eco-Rep has been part of the program. About 77% of the respondents had been an Eco-Rep for less than one year.

![Number of Years as an Eco-Rep](image)

*(n=30)*

*Figure 2. Number of Years the Respondents had Been an Eco-Rep*

When asked what public outreach and media strengths and weaknesses the Eco-Reps Program exhibits, answers varied. In regard to strengths, many respondents mentioned the program’s ability to reach a lot of people through simply being spread out across various campus locations and being present at large public events (such as the Davis Center farmers’ market). Other Eco-Reps commented on the program’s effective use of outreach methods such as tabling, emailing, the bulletin boards, posters, door-to-door activities, and the selling of sporks on-campus. In many cases, the actual positive personality traits and knowledge of the Eco-Reps themselves were described as outreach strengths. The organization and structure of the program was also appreciated. Other comments included:

- “I think one of our strengths is the dedication each Eco Rep possesses in making a positive change on campus.”
• “It's a very well organized program, and I like the way that it depends on honesty and the good character of the eco-reps themselves.”

• “The program is very proactive about getting students informed about important issues.”

In regard to program outreach and media practices weaknesses, many of the respondents mentioned that a general weakness of the program is that the UVM community is simply not aware of the program. Other responses included not capitalizing on available resources such as Residential Life staff, other campus organizations and groups, and technology and media (e.g., Facebook, listservs, posters, etc.). Many respondents also commented that certain topics are not addressed enough in order to make students more aware of them, such as compost and eating local. Some respondents also stated that Eco-Reps do not provide information and education to the full extent; that is, little explaining as to why a specific behavior is important or little depth to the topics covered. A lack of Eco-Rep presence in every single residential complex on campus was also described as a weakness. One student mentioned the program sometimes” attracts people who don't actually care and end up doing very little or nothing, [and] part of the student body suffers.” Other remarks included:

• “No ‘face-to-name’ action. By this I mean, there are lots of posters/signs but there is no face behind the signs. There's minimal interaction between the residents and the eco-reps.”

• “It has weaknesses in that the word is still not out about Eco-Reps like it should be. They should be just as well known as RAs.”

• “We have the ability and resources to reach out in many ways, which we are great at when we do, [but] I think we can do more!”
“Small budget. I feel like we can't afford a lot of the things that we would like to do.”

Eco-Reps were also asked to provide which outreach methods they used in the 2010 fall semester to communicate to their peers, as seen illustrated in Figure 3.

![Outreach Methods Used by Eco-Reps](image)

Figure 3. Outreach Methods Used by Eco-Reps in 2010 Fall Semester to Communicate to Peers

The number one outreach method was bulletin boards with 97%. Group activities and events followed close behind with 93%. The least popular method used was online social networks such as Facebook and Twitter (30%). Respondents who selected “Other” (7%) listed a “swap box” and listservs.

When asked how effective the abovementioned outreach methods were in communicating with their peers, respondents used a scale ranging from “very effective” to “very ineffective” (with an additional category titled “not applicable” if the student did not use the method). This is shown in Figure 4.

41
The method rated “very effective” most frequently was door-to-door contact (53%). The top “somewhat effective” method was bulletin boards with 80%. Online social networks were rated the most as “somewhat ineffective” with 30%, and respondents rated bulletin boards as the top “very ineffective” method with 7%.

About 83% of Eco-Reps said they would have preferred to do more outreach in their residence halls during the fall 2010 semester. Approximately 17% answered “it was just right,” and no one expressed they wanted to do less outreach.

When asked if the participants think a quick, easy “how-to” guidebook on peer communications and outreach strategies would be helpful for future Eco-Reps about 80% said “yes,” 10% said “no,” and 10% said “not sure.”
For the respondents who answered “yes” to the abovementioned survey question, they were then asked which topics should be covered in the guidebook. The results are represented in Figure 5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest in Guidebook Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to access and use various media (e.g., flat screen T.V.s, campus newspapers) to...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to talk with and educate peers in a clear, fun, approachable manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to make information displays (e.g., posters, bulletin boards) attractive and easy to read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(n=26)                                                             |

0%  20%  40%  60%  80%  100%

*Figure 5. Level of Interest in Potential Guidebook Topics for Future Eco-Reps*

The most frequently selected topic was how to access and use various media (92%). How to talk with and educate peers was next with 85%, and 77% of respondents selected how to make information displays (flyers, bulletin boards, etc.) attractive and easy to read. Of the 12% who selected “Other” a variety of suggestions were provided including a “brief history of Eco-Reps,” examples of information displays, and “good connections to UVM staff and student groups for collaboration.”

Figure 6 displays participants’ answers when asked if the Eco-Reps Program is visible on campus (i.e., beyond the residence halls).
Figure 6. Eco-Rep Opinion on Whether Program is Visible Beyond Residence Halls

About 70% of respondents answered “somewhat” in regard to their opinion to program visibility beyond the residence halls. Approximately 13% said “no,” and a small fraction of the group said “yes” (10%). Roughly 7% responded “not sure.”

A range of interest in implementing various media to increase program visibility was expressed by the respondents, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Eco-Rep Interest in Various Media to Increase Program Visibility
The top two methods chosen under the “very interested” category were a “Text Your Eco-Rep” program and official event flyers and posters; they tied with 53% each (the survey did not define the term “Text Your Eco-Rep” and therefore was left to the Eco-Rep to decide what it meant). The student-run UVM radio station WRUV 90.1 FM was most frequently selected under “somewhat interested” with 60%. However, when both the “very” and “somewhat” interested categories are combined, Eco-Reps stickers and buttons were ranked as number one with 94%, followed close behind by official event flyers/posters and flat screen TVs which tied with 93% each. UVMtv received the least interest—under both “somewhat” and “very” uninterested combined—with 43%.

The respondents were then asked to name the media which would be most effective in increasing program visibility and why. Some examples of the comments include:

- “Text Your Eco-Rep” sounds like a great idea because the individuals who will actually take the time to text their Eco-Rep might actually want an in-depth answer or explanation to an issue/question/problem that they have.”
- “I think that accessing the TVs in the Davis Center and residence halls would be very effective. I feel like I am always looking at them every day. From eating at Brennan’s, to the checkout at the Marche. When you're standing in line (and probably bored) I think you'd be inclined to check out the monitors.”
- “I think that the combination of a YouTube video and a social online network are the best ideas and that combined together could be VERY effective. I think the key is having many sources and outreach techniques. It must be ‘catchy’, whatever it is, because a student will look into something only if something pulls the trigger for them.”
Every media option—except the WRUV 90.1 FM radio station—was mentioned at least once. The predominant responses were official event flyers/posters and social networking (particularly Facebook). A few respondents entered in additional ideas such as using the campus newspapers and connecting with other UVM groups’ websites to disseminate information.

When asked if the Eco-Reps Program should network and/or collaborate with more groups on campus, nearly all respondents answered “yes”—about 83%. Respondents who answered “not sure” made up the remaining 17%.

Respondents who answered “yes” clarified by listing groups with whom they thought it would be important to connect. Many responses consisted of environmentally-related groups at UVM such as: Slow Food, Bike Users Group (BUG), Campus Kitchens, Students for Peace and Global Justice, Vermont Student Environmental Program (VSTEP), Gardening Club, Feel Good, Student Environmental Educators Doing Service (SEEDS), and Students for True Animal Rights (STAR). Other groups mentioned include the Outing Club, Student Government Association (SGA), Greek Life, Residential Life staff, and the Ski and Snowboard Club. A complete list can be found in (Appendix 6).

When asked if the UVM Eco-Reps logo should be changed/updated in any way, there was a close split between “no” (40%) and “maybe” (43%). About 17% of respondents answered “yes.”

Several respondents described what they like and do not like about the logo (Appendix 7). A few comments were brief and to the point: “more color”; “BORING”; and “More eye-catching! Colors!” One Eco-Rep wrote “I can’t even think of what it looks like at the moment so it must not make that good of an impression.” Other comments included:
• “I like the cleanliness of the logo; it doesn't have too much going on. But it could be a little more in-your-face to get our name out there.”

• “I really like the current design-- I think it's... nice? However, I think it wouldn't be ineffective if it was updated and perhaps made into something bolder and eye-catching; it might improve recognition on campus.”

• “New logos, new statistics, more outreach.”

• “I like it-- it's simple and mountainous!”

One of the final questions asked the respondents to list three words that came to mind when they thought of Eco-Reps (Appendix 8). A variety of words were selected and ranged from “informative” to “fizzling.” Respondents mentioned where Eco-Reps take place (“residence halls”), described the Eco-Reps themselves (“passionate,” “conscious,” “advocates”), and expressed what Eco-Reps is involved with (“outreach,” “peer education,” “awareness”). The most popular words were “sustainability” and “environment.” A handful of words described Eco-Reps in a less positive manner: “elementary,” “repetitive,” “impersonal,” and “unconnected.”

Several Eco-Reps had additional thoughts and comments (Appendix 9). Some respondents commented on how they enjoy the program. Others made recommendations on how the program could improve such as targeting first-year students more during move-in time, working more actively with the Student Government Association (SGA), allowing first-years to be Eco-Reps, and paying Eco-Reps for each hour of work they do to encourage going “above and beyond” instead of allotting a specific number of pay hours. Examples of other feedback are listed below:
“I think this is a big area where Eco-Reps could expand and be more effective. Working with other groups could certainly be a big help though we'd have to be careful since UVM funds us and some of those environmental-focused groups have ‘agendas’ aka things they want the university to change.”

“I feel like the amount of work put in by different people within the program is unequal in the sense that for some people it's just a job and for others it’s really how they hope to improve the UVM community and raise awareness about environmental issues. …I would love to see Eco Reps become more radical and really orient itself around specific goals, ie: the Coke contract, each semester and work with the student body of UVM to get the word out about why these issues are important to address.”

“I have found that a lot of residents in my hall are interested in the Eco-Rep program itself. In that, they want to learn more about what they can do for the environment in day-to-day life. I try to share information from our weekly packets and from the meetings but I feel like there should be some sort of collective meeting for non-'reppin' eco-interested people.”

Summary. The intent of this survey was to gauge how the current Eco-Reps feel about the public outreach and media practices used by the UVM Eco-Reps Program. The data collected can help the program assess its strengths and weaknesses and then move forward to a stronger, more effective approach.

In regard to the level of satisfaction the current Eco-Reps have toward the program’s outreach and media practices, the general opinion was the program could be stronger in these areas. Approximately 70% said the program was “somewhat” visible beyond the residence halls.
In terms of outreach, 83% of the respondents answered that they would have preferred to do more outreach in their assigned residence hall during the previous semester. Respondents reported using a variety of outreach methods to communicate with peers in their assigned residence halls, but bulletin boards and group activities/events were the most popular. Online social networks and surveys were not used as often. However, Facebook was one of the most frequent selections as media that would be most effective in raising awareness of the Eco-Reps Program. Respondents expressed the most interest (both “very” and “somewhat” interested) in UVM Eco-Reps stickers/buttons, official event flyers/posters, flat screen TV advertisements, UVM listservs as ways in which to increase program visibility.

When asked to consider if the creation of a communications guidebook for future Eco-Reps would be helpful, the majority of the respondents said yes. Although interest was expressed in a number of potential guidebook topics, what Eco-Reps seemed to consider most important was how to access and use various media (such as the flat screen TV ads). How to make information displays attractive and easy to read was less popular.

In regard to changing the current UVM Eco-Reps logo, the respondents seemed less enthusiastic. There was a split between “no” and “maybe.” Only 17% said “yes”; suggestions as to how it should change included more colors and more eye-catching. Many respondents commented that they enjoy the clean and simple appearance the logo exhibits.

4.1.2 UVM Eco-Reps Guidebook Survey

During late March, 2011 a brief two-question survey was administered to the current Eco-Reps to further clarify an aspect of a communications guidebook for future Eco-Reps. The survey sought to identify which guidebook format Eco-Reps feel would be most effective and
useful. The options were only online on the Eco-Reps website, only a print version, both, or neither, as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Guidebook Format Preference as Expressed by Eco-Reps Respondents

Of the 37 Eco-Reps the survey was sent to, 34 completed the questionnaire. Approximately 50% selected both an online version and a print version. Below are some of the comments made by the respondents:

- “I definitely understand the concept of online guidebooks saving paper and energy, especially since this is an environmental program, however I am much more likely to read something that is sitting in front of me and won't fry my eyes while I read it.”

- “An online version would definitely be the most ideal, especially with the whole not using paper aspect of the eco-rep program. But I also think a hard copy version would be beneficial in certain circumstances, so I say both versions would be good ideas.”
“I would personally use either, whichever was made available, but I think it makes more sense to have something explaining eco-reps to not be printed out on paper when it is just as easily made available online.”

The most frequently voiced comment was the benefit of an online version due to the few natural resources required to pursue this option. However, many respondents explained they would prefer both a print and online version. In one case, an Eco-Rep questioned the benefit of having a guidebook for future Eco-Reps. The respondent stated, “Maybe if I was an incoming eco-rep as a first year but definitely not as a second year hire. I can't think of what would be in a guidebook that would really make it worth my while to read. I don't even read the weekly readings.” The full list of comments is available in Appendix 10.

**Summary.** The information collected from this brief survey can help inform the design process of a communications guidebook for future Eco-Reps. Approximately 50% of the Eco-Reps surveyed said they would most likely use both a paper and online version of a guidebook, suggesting this presentation combination is most useful and effective. However, a number of the Eco-Reps explained the benefit in having only an online version of the guidebook due to environmental reasons. Some felt having a paper version would contradict what the group represents. Overall, it appeared that current Eco-Reps felt both a paper and online version of a communications guidebook would be most beneficial for the Eco-Reps Program.

**4.2 Returning Eco-Rep Focus Group and Interview**

In order to gather a more in-depth evaluation of the Eco-Reps Program from the Eco-Reps themselves, I turned to returning Eco-Reps (i.e., students who had been members of Eco-Reps for more than one year). I conducted one focus group with three returning Eco-Reps; I also contacted two returning Eco-Reps who were abroad for the 2011 spring semester via email; only
one abroad Eco-Rep responded. Both groups were asked the same questions (see Appendix 3) which focused on their opinions of the program’s public outreach and media practices, the current UVM Eco-Reps logo, and the proposed guidebook for future Eco-Reps about peer communications strategies and media resources.

In regard to the Eco-Reps Program’s public outreach and media practices one participant summed it up as “it definitely needs to be amped up.” The Eco-Rep continued by saying, “It’s pretty minimal the outreach that we do. It’s kind of like bulletin boards, events. I think we could do a lot more with it.” One Eco-Rep voiced, “I think the presence of Eco Reps on campus is strong, people understand why the program exists, but not exactly what we do.” A participant explained that students also tend to confuse certain activities hosted by other groups with those of Eco-Reps and vice versa.

One Eco-Rep commented, “I think other organizations on campus, they have more media presence and we don’t really have that so unless somebody happens to come to event, unless somebody happens to talk to an Eco-Rep like one on one, they don’t really know who we are or what we do.” Along the same train of thought, another participant suggested that the Eco-Reps Program network and collaborate more with other organizations because it currently does not take place that often which affects the visibility of the program.

The Eco-Reps gave positive feedback about the structure of the program when it came to outreach opportunities. One participant commented about how she enjoys being able to be present in the residence halls when students first move in—particularly first-years—because there is that initial contact. Another Eco-Rep stated, “I really like how Eco-Reps are established as a well founded group on campus, like, Sodexo they know that they can come to us and spearhead the Eco-Ware as a pilot, and other groups know that they can rely on us for help. …I
appreciate that we are visible enough for other groups to see us as a resource, but there’s definitely room for improvement.”

However, a participant commented that certain aspects of the program may negatively impact the program’s presence on campus:

I think the biggest problem in this the lack of accountability of its members. It’s way too easy to be an ER and do the bare minimum and then there are so many other things to get done every day it’s easy for ER projects to just never happen to be thrown together in a rush. I think that the program should be more focused on its projects with thoroughly planned out goals and campaigns for each semester voted for by the members and less focused on a way to make money for students.

In regard to Eco-Reps promotional materials such as stickers and buttons, Eco-Reps seemed generally interested in the idea. One student said, “I think it would be very valuable because when we do tabling most people approach the table to get a sticker from us and if the sticker has something to do with Eco-Reps that would probably spread the word a lot more and that we exist.” As one Eco-Rep put it, “Everyone loves a free sticker.” Some of the participants acknowledged that the One Less Bottle and One Less Cup campaign stickers Eco-Reps hands out do not say UVM Eco-Reps on them.

When asked about the UVM Eco-Reps logo, participants generally liked the earth and the mountains because they represent what Eco-Reps care about but commented that the images are pretty general and not UVM-specific. One individual stated, “It needs to be updated. It should be bolder and more eye-catching, but keep its simplistic mentalities.” The letters “UVM” were described as “kind of confusing” and unclear due to the mountains above and thin text. One Eco-Rep said the logo did not reflect the program’s goals, and “Other than the earth in the ‘o’ of ‘Eco’, there’s really no other hint to what the program is here for and what the Eco-Reps actually do.” In response to that comment an Eco-Rep suggested adding a graphic related to UVM. Other
suggestions included showing an image of holding hands, playing with the letters of UVM, and representing what the word sustainability or Eco-Reps stands for through multiple images. When asked if the logo is easily confused with other group logos on campus, one participant answered “Definitely not, but we could be biased because we know it so well. I can’t think of any logos that have anything…that the UVM Eco-Reps Program does.”

In terms of a tagline for the UVM Eco-Reps Program, one Eco-Rep thought a play on the word “Eco-Rep” would be fun such as “UVM, representin’!”; another idea was “campus sustainability starts with you!” Another individual commented on the benefits of simply having a slogan for Eco-Reps: “it’s important for people to understand what the program is working towards. …I think a little slogan for Eco-Reps would be beneficial, just three simple words. Something like Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, but more creative and catered towards the audience of the student body.”

The Eco-Reps suggested several ideas of what to include in a guidebook on peer communications strategies and media resources for future Eco-Reps such as: a list of Eco-Reps resources (i.e., where Eco-Reps can rent media supplies, important contacts, etc.); steps on how to plan for and promote an event; tips on how to communicate with and respond to peers and how to form strong relationships with Res Life staff, Hall Council, and housekeeping; and restating the mission and goal of the Eco-Reps Program. One participant stated that it would be beneficial if the guidebook featured “the basics like…the mission statement and the responsibilities Eco-Reps have because often times people ask Eco-Reps like, ‘What do you do?’ and I think it’s a hard question to answer sometimes. Sometimes you say the activities you do like compost as opposed to the mission of the group. It would be good if we all had something more cohesive and structured to say.” Another Eco-Rep commented,
Yeah, a lot…[the guidebook] seems not necessarily related to the environment because most of us already have a background in the environment but I think the biggest think is getting the Eco-Reps a background in how to navigate the campus, how to be a peer leader, how to navigate certain issues and barriers. That sort of stuff.

Networking with other groups and individuals on campus was highlighted by one individual as “crucial”; the Eco-Rep recommended incorporating a list of who to connect with as an Eco-Rep.

Suggestions for the best guidebook format for future Eco-Reps included: a format which minimizes paper use and/or uses sustainably harvested paper; creating a laminated version of the guidebook with a tracking number so the guidebook can be re-used each year versus printing new guidebooks; and providing an online version that can be easily updated and edited (although one Eco-Rep commented that a print version “would look more professional”). Many of the Eco-Reps liked the idea of a printed guidebook that could be easily inserted into the Eco-Rep three-ring binder. One Eco-Rep stated, “I think it would be a good idea for all the Eco-Reps to have a print copy… but to make it available on the website as well because I feel like it’s a good resource for other organizations that have a similar goal. …I think is part of our duty to help communicate what we do so other people with similar goals can accomplish that.”

Some of the benefits the Eco-Reps described in regards to providing a communications guidebook for future Eco-Reps included having a single, comprehensive source of information for Eco-Reps to access and increasing awareness of what resources are available to Eco-Reps. One student mentioned, “It’s too easy to be a passive Eco-Rep, I think a guidebook on how to better handle these types of situations will be super helpful.”

The Eco-Reps described a number of other methods other than a guidebook that may be beneficial in honing the communications skills of future Eco-Reps. The list included: a video showed during Eco-Rep orientation that can provide a visual version of the guidebook
information; an online version of the guidebook content divided into sections, each with its own informational video clip; and a stronger focus during Eco-Rep orientation on how to be a peer-to-peer educator and the best way to utilize resources such as social media to increase program visibility. In regard to the latter, one Eco-Rep stated,

I really like the idea of a training period because that’s kind of what I was expecting from training at the beginning. I didn’t think it was going to be like Eco-Rep bonding time. I thought it was going to be scenarios of like how to deal with things that could come up in the res halls. I think it would be beneficial for us to act out what happens and what we see happen and how to respond.

One participant expressed interest in the idea of having a media group within the Eco-Reps Program that would focus on promoting the program across campus. She responded by saying,

That’s a great idea. A lot of other clubs or organizations on campus have that sort of distribution of responsibility and I think it’s really useful. We already have a lot of responsibilities getting the basics done so like not having to worry about planning events and organizing that kind of stuff would be a little bit of an extra help. And I think the Campus Coordinators take on a little bit of that responsibility but it would be nice to have a committee or a sub-council sort of.

The incorporation of workshops (such as soap-making, preserving, etc.) and other team-building activities for Eco-Reps (and also the UVM community) was recommended by one Eco-Rep as an effective way to create an atmosphere conducive to honing Eco-Rep communications skills.

Summary. The Eco-Reps commented on a general lack of awareness and confusion among the UVM student body of either what the program is or what it does. There seemed to be a desire to become more involved with the student body than the program currently is. One Eco-Rep commented that “At the events we put on it’s not personal enough I feel, so the outreach isn’t really outreach, it’s just a type of event.” Another individual suggested engaging in more
face-to-face interaction and possibly establishing a once-a-semester requirement that would encourage Eco-Reps to do so.

In regard to strengthening the program’s outreach, there appeared to be an overall interest in further clarifying and establishing the goals of the Eco-Reps Program; this way their message can resound not only through the UVM community but through the program as well. A clearer explanation of how to navigate campus and capitalize on available resources seemed to be topics the Eco-Reps felt the program could benefit from in the future. In order to achieve some of these things many of the participants seemed attracted to the idea of establishing a training period focused specifically on addressing these issues and concerns to better equip Eco-Reps with the necessary tools and knowledge to make a lasting impact on campus. A more eye-catching logo and promotional materials such as stickers and buttons were also supported as another way to increase the program’s visibility on campus.

Overall, it appeared that the returning Eco-Reps felt the program is well-established as an environmental leader on campus, but only among a select audience of other relevant student groups and various members of the UVM community. The participants voiced that the student body as a whole exhibits little awareness and understanding of the program, and then listed several ways Eco-Reps can address these issues that would benefit both the Eco-Reps themselves and the on-campus community.

4.3 Residence Hall Survey

In March, 2011 a survey was administered door-to-door in various residence halls across the UVM campus in order to learn two things: 1) assess the level of on-campus student awareness of the UVM Eco-Reps Program, and 2) discover which outreach methods would help increase the visibility of the program on campus.
4.3.1 Demographic Information

Of the 211 survey participants, 210 provided their academic year. First-years accounted for 51% of the respondents and sophomores accounted for 46% of the respondents. Juniors made up only a small fraction of the total participants with 2%, and .5% of the participants were seniors. Table 1 shows the residence halls of the respondents (n=211).

Table 1. Respondents’ Residence Hall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence Hall</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckham</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chittenden</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millis</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simpson</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tupper</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wills</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.2 Residential Students’ Awareness of the UVM Eco-Reps Program

The main intent of the survey in the residence halls was to gauge the level of awareness about the UVM Eco-Reps Program on-campus students possessed. The results showed a little more than half of the respondents had heard of the program before, as shown in Table 2 (n=211).

Table 2. Residents’ Response to Hearing About the Eco-Reps Program Prior to Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Those who had heard about the program prior to the survey reported a variety of ways how they had heard of the program, as illustrated in Table 3. Due to missing data, the sample size ranged from 124 to 125.

Table 3. Method by Which Residents had Heard of the Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to face interactions with Eco-Rep residence hall</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters, flyers, bulletin boards</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco-Rep events/programs inside residence hall</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco-Rep events/programs outside residence hall</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other students</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via email/listservs</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An overwhelming number of the respondents—about 81% of them—reported posters, flyers, and bulletin boards as the most common way by which they became aware of the program. The most frequent answers for those that provided an additional written response in “Other” included knowing someone who is or was an Eco-Rep and learning about the program from their RA. In addition, many residents explained that the special Eco-Rep event/program they had seen was the light bulb swap. Some examples of “Other” responses residents provided as ways they have heard of the program are listed below:

- Knows someone who is an Eco-Rep
- Announcements during class
- Member of complex’s Hall Council
- Resident Advisor (RA)
- Eco-Rep activities within hall such as bulb swap
- On IRA board
- In one case the resident had been an Eco-Rep before

Figure 9 shows respondents’ answers in regard to program visibility inside and outside of the residence hall. In some cases data was missing; therefore, the sample size ranged from 124 to 125.

![Eco-Rep Program Visibility](image)

**Figure 9. Comparative Visibility of Eco-Reps Program Inside and Outside of the Residence Halls**

The responses suggested that the program is more visible within the residence halls. About 39% of respondents said the program was visible inside of their building, while 27% of respondents said the program was visible outside of their building.

Table 4 illustrates the variety of Eco-Rep events/activities residents claimed they had either seen or heard of before. The sample size ranged from 208 to 209 due to missing data.
Table 4. Eco-Rep Event/Activity Resident had Seen or Heard of Before

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Davis Center waste sort</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis Center farmers’ market</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis Center water taste test</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence hall waste sort</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light bulb swap</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporks campaign</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining hall food waste weigh-in</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compost</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top three most recognized Eco-Rep activities included compost (73% of residents said they had either seen or heard of it before), the Davis Center farmers’ market (66% had seen or heard of it before), and the residence hall bulb swap (50% had seen or heard of it before). It should be noted that the word “compost” was not defined in the survey. Although the word referred to the compost buckets placed by Eco-Reps in the residence halls residents could have associated the Eco-Reps Program with any compost bin located across campus such as the compost bins in the campus dining halls (which are not related to the Eco-Reps Program). Some answers residents provided as Eco-Rep activities/events either seen or heard of before under the “Other” category included:

- Resident participated in field trip to Vermont recycling center; student had heard of the field trip via email and thought it might have been associated with Eco-Reps
- Power Shift
- The UVM bottled water ban
- Surveys
It is important to mention that Power Shift and the UVM bottled water ban are not Eco-Rep activities, although student Eco-Reps may participate in those programs.

4.3.3 Residential Students’ Attitudes Toward Potential Eco-Reps Program Outreach and Media Practices

The following section of the residence hall survey sought to gauge how effective residents thought a variety of outreach and media practices would be in increasing program visibility. Residents were asked to rate the effectiveness of each method using one of these four ranks: very ineffective, somewhat ineffective, somewhat effective, and very effective. The word “effective” was not defined in the survey, leaving the resident to freely decide under which category each method fell. In regard to the outreach method titled “official event flyers and posters”, the word “official” was not defined which also left the resident to decide what the word meant or implied.

In some cases residents rated a method(s) between categories. For example, one resident rated an outreach method half way between the ranks “very effective” and “somewhat effective” on the scale, even though this was not a specified option. Such instances led me to average the two when totaling the total frequencies and percentages. That is, when calculating the frequency and percentages of a method (such as Eco-Rep stickers and buttons) for each rank, I assigned a numerical value to each rank ranging from one to four (i.e., 1=very ineffective and 4=very effective). If a response fell between two categories, like in the abovementioned example, I averaged the two numbers together (e.g., a response that fell between 3 and 4 equated to 3.5). Then when percentages and frequencies of each method were totaled, numbers with .5 were added to their respective numerical value. For instance, the percentage and frequency of a
method ranked as 3.5 was added to the percentage and frequency of methods which ranked as 3.0.

Figure 10 illustrates the effectiveness of various outreach and media practices used by the Eco-Reps Program (due to missing data, the sample size ranged from 205 to 209).

![Effectiveness of Potential Future Outreach/Media Practices](image)

Figure 10. Residents’ Ratings on How Effective Various Outreach and Media Practices Would be in Increasing Program Visibility

The method that was most commonly rated as “very effective” was social media (i.e., Facebook and Twitter) with 52%. Official event flyers and posters followed close behind in the “very effective” category with 47%. However, with “very” and “somewhat” effective combined, official event flyers and posters are number one with 94%. UVM Eco-Reps stickers/buttons and flat screen television advertisements in on-campus buildings (e.g., the Davis Center and the Marche) were rated as the top two methods under “somewhat effective” with 64% and 54%, correspondingly. Finally, UVMtv and the UVM student-run radio station WRUV 90.1 FM were
the top two rated methods in both the “somewhat ineffective” and “very ineffective” categories. With both “somewhat” and “very” ineffective combined, UVMtv was the least popular with 73% while WRUV 90.1 FM followed with 63%, respectively.

Lastly, Table 5 represents respondents’ logo selection when asked to choose the current Eco-Reps logo among four different UVM logos (n=207).

Table 5. Residents’ Logo Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UVM Group Logo</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UVM Outing Club</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVM Eco-Reps</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubenstein School</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSTEP</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a noticeable divide among the responses. Approximately 39% of residents chose the correct logo. The second most popular choice was the UVM Outing Club logo with 35%. The Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources logo and the Vermont Student Environmental Program (VSTEP) fell in the bottom 26%.

**4.3.4 Residence Hall Survey Bivariate Analyses**

As mentioned earlier, I conducted a number of chi-square tests using IBM SPSS Statistics version 19 to analyze my hypotheses. Bivariate analysis of multiple variables was conducted including variables such as resident academic year, awareness of the Eco-Reps Program, logo selection, and a list of Eco-Reps events/activities. A chi-square test was considered significant if its p-value was less than .05 (or p<.05). The chi-square test data are shown in full in Appendix 11. Below are graphs which summarize the data found using the chi-square tests.

Figure 11 (p<.001) illustrates residents’ awareness of the program prior to the survey among first-year and sophomore residents, the two largest groups surveyed. Figure 6 also
illustrates the logo selection of either the Outing Club or UVM Eco-Reps—the two most frequently selected logos—by first-years or sophomores.

**Figure 11.** Program Awareness versus Logo Selection Among First-Year and Sophomore Respondents

In regard to program awareness, the data in Figure 6 shows a higher percentage of sophomores—65%—had heard of the Eco-Reps Program prior to the survey compared to first-year residents. The comparison between logo selections shows little notable difference between the Eco-Reps logo and the Outing Club logo among the two groups (the data was not considered statistically significant).

Figure 12 compares respondents’ prior program awareness to their logo selection (i.e., the Eco-Reps logo versus the remaining incorrect logos).
Figure 12. Prior Awareness of Eco-Reps Program versus Respondents’ Logo Selection

Although the data was not considered statistically significant in the chi-square tests, the numbers do show that a higher number of individuals who had indeed heard of the program prior to the survey also selected the correct Eco-Reps logo (about 42%). Respondents who had not heard of the program prior to the survey were more likely to choose the incorrect logo (about 66%). The results of a crosstabulation of eight Eco-Rep events/activities compared to resident awareness of Eco-Reps Program prior to the survey are shown in Figure 13.
Figure 13. Eco-Rep Events Seen or Heard of Before by Respondent and Program Awareness Prior to Survey

In general, the data shows residents who had heard of the program prior to the survey were much more likely to have heard of the Eco-Rep events/activities than those who were not familiar with the program. The most frequently recognized event/activity by respondents who had heard of the program before was residence hall compost with 86%. The least recognize event/activity by respondents with prior awareness of the program was the Davis Center water taste test with 5%. The Davis Center water taste test was the only event/activity where a greater number of individuals who had not heard of the program prior to the survey were familiar with the event compared to individuals who had heard of the program before. The data also reared statistically significant results, but only for some of the events/activities listed. The four particular programs in which the results were considered statistically significant included: the residence hall bulb swap (recognized by 63% of respondents), the sporks campaign (recognized by 46% of...
respondents), residence hall compost (recognized by 86% of respondents), and the residence hall waste sort (recognized by 36% of respondents). The residence hall waste sort event is considered the most significant due to the disparity between respondents who had and had not heard of the program before (p-value<.05).

**Summary.** The goals of the residence hall survey were to assess on-campus student awareness of the UVM Eco-Reps Program and gauge which outreach methods/practices students felt would increase the visibility of the program both inside and outside of the residence halls. This knowledge can help advance the UVM Eco-Reps Program in regard to awareness and visibility across the UVM campus.

In regard to on-campus student awareness of the program, survey results suggest that there is a noticeable disconnect between general awareness of the program and awareness of what the program is involved with across campus. Survey findings showed that although 41% of respondents had not heard of the program before, those respondents were still familiar with almost every Eco-Rep activity/event listed to at least some extent. Results also showed that residents feel the Eco-Reps Program lacks visibility both inside and outside of the residence halls. Only 39% of respondents said the program was visible inside of the residence halls while 27% said the program was visible outside of the residences halls (i.e., across campus in general). In addition, almost 60% of students who answered yes to hearing about the program prior to the survey also selected the incorrect Eco-Reps logo, which suggests the Eco-Rep logo lacks visibility on campus. When residents were asked how he or she had become aware of the program, posters, flyers, and bulletin boards were the most frequently chosen method, a statistic that coincides with some of Erickson’s (2010) residential survey results from spring 2007.
Erickson’s findings showed that posters were rated by residents as one of the top effective outreach techniques used by the Eco-Reps Program (p. 207).

When residents were asked which outreach and media practices would help increase the visibility of the Eco-Reps Program across campus, findings showed a number of things. When the categories “very effective” and “somewhat effective” were combined the top three methods chosen included: official event flyers and posters, UVM Eco-Rep stickers and buttons, and social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.). The three least popular methods (under both “very ineffective” and “somewhat ineffective”) were UVMtv, UVM’s student-run radio station WRUV 90.1 FM, and a YouTube video clip.

In regard to the four hypotheses I tested with chi-square tests, some of the tests showed little p-value significance among the variables crosstabulated while others showed notable statistical significance. My first hypothesis proposed that sophomores would be more likely to report hearing about the UVM Eco-Reps Program versus first-year students due to sophomores’ longer presence on campus. This was supported, and results showed that indeed more sophomores (about 30% more) reported hearing about program prior to the survey than first-years.

My second hypothesis stated first-year students are more likely than sophomores to choose the Outing Club logo rather than the UVM Eco-Reps logo. Although the data just barely represented this statement, there was no statistical significance for this hypothesis and therefore not supported. Both logos were chosen almost equally.

My third hypothesis stated residents who report being aware of the Eco-Reps Program are more likely to select the correct logo. The chi-square test results did not support this statement. Only 42% of respondents who had heard of the Eco-Reps Program before selected the
correct logo. The reason for this could be that the Eco-Reps Program logo lacks visibility on campus and therefore students are less likely to recognize the logo.

My final hypothesis stated residents who report hearing about the program prior to the survey are more likely to be familiar with Eco-Reps events/activities. Although this was the case for every event listed except one, only four were considered statistically significant: the residence hall waste sort, residence hall light bulb swap, compost, and the sporks. That is, those who had heard of the program prior to the survey appeared to be much more likely to see or hear about the aforementioned events compared to those who had not heard of the program before. The only event that was recognized slightly more frequently by residents who had not heard about the program prior to the survey was the Davis Center water taste test—an event which ranked lowest overall in resident awareness. This could be due to confusion about what the water taste test is by the residents.

In general, the survey results suggested that the UVM Eco-Reps Program is in need of a stronger connection with on-campus students. In many aspects the program lacks visibility and awareness; and although residents were aware of many of the activities and events hosted by Eco-Reps, there seemed to be less understanding that Eco-Reps was the group responsible for the events. These findings can help guide the program in the next steps to bridging these gaps and increasing program awareness across the UVM campus.

4.4 Residential Life Focus Groups

During the months of March and April, 2011 I conducted multiple focus groups with the Residential Life staff at UVM. These meetings took place during the normal location of their weekly staff meetings and lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to one hour. In almost every case all Resident Advisors (RAs), Residence Directors (RDs), and Assistant Residence Directors (ARDs)
were present, although the RDs and ARDs usually did not participate in the conversation. Using an organizational method based on Erickson’s (2010, p. 240) Residential Life staff focus groups, Table 10 presents the organization of each focus group as well as the presence of the Eco-Reps Program in each residential complex. The buildings highlighted in yellow indicate a change in Eco-Rep numbers from the fall 2010 semester to the spring 2011 semester.

Table 6. Organization of Residential Life Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Hall Complex</th>
<th>No. of RAs Present</th>
<th>RD Present</th>
<th>ARD Present</th>
<th>No. of Eco-Reps in Building (Fall Semester)</th>
<th>Eco-Reps in Building (Spring Semester)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C/B/W/C</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chittenden (1) Buckham (1) Wills (1) Converse (1)</td>
<td>Chittenden (1) Buckham (1) Wills (1) Converse (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/S/H/C/R</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mason (1) Simpson (1) Hamilton (1) Coolidge (1) Redstone (1)</td>
<td>Mason (1) Simpson (1) Hamilton (1) Coolidge (1) Redstone (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H/M</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Harris (2) Millis (2)</td>
<td>Harris (2) Millis (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JM/Trinity</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Jeanne Mance (1) McAuley (1) Sichel (1) Mercy (0) Hunt (0) McCann (0) Ready (0) Richardson (0) The Cottages (0)</td>
<td>Jeanne Mance (1) McAuley (0) Sichel (0) Mercy (0) Hunt (0) McCann (0) Ready (0) Richardson (0) The Cottages (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/A/T</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marsh (1) Austin (1) Tupper (1)</td>
<td>Marsh (1) Austin (1) Tupper (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although each complex had an Eco-Rep presence to some extent, Jeanne Mance/Trinity campus had the least presence throughout the year. Due to the lack of experience and interaction the JM/Trinity Residential Life staff—particularly Trinity Campus—had with the Eco-Reps
Program, the focus group questions were altered slightly. However, the questions still focused on the same three topics each focus group touched upon: a general assessment of the UVM Eco-Reps Program visibility including strengths and weaknesses, an evaluation of the visual representation of the program (i.e., the UVM Eco-Reps logo), and the future of the program. The following findings from each focus group will be divided into these categories to better represent the themes which surfaced during each meeting.

**Assessment of the Eco-Reps Program Visibility**

In regard to visibility of the program within the residence halls, the general consensus among each focus group was that the program was not very visible. For the majority of the participants they knew who their Eco-Rep was, or the fact that they had an Eco-Rep in their building, but many commented on the fact that the Eco-Reps Program seemed more “behind the scenes”, as one RA put it. One participant commented,

Yeah, I think… [the program is] there but I don’t think it’s active. I know they empty the compost, and I know they just did a trash sort so I shouldn’t say completely inactive, but there hasn’t been a lot of outreach on the floors. I know that when my Eco-Rep’s on the floor he just kind of shows up and then he takes out the compost but he doesn’t interact with the residents in the lounge or anything like that. So, I guess, kind of like absent but awkwardly present.

Compost and the light bulb swap were activities most commonly mentioned in terms of seeing their Eco-Rep in the residence halls. One RA stated, “I associate Eco-Reps with the compost bin in the res halls, and that’s pretty much it. I met a few of them and I remember we ate dinner with them in the beginning of training, but other than that—I know we have an Eco-Rep but I haven’t really seen the other ones around.” In a few cases the compost bins were used as an example of the Eco-Reps program starting off strong in a residence hall but then eventually “went downhill” as the year went on due to lack of attention and effort.
One RA mentioned that he was not sure his residents were even familiar with the program at all. However, in multiple instances participants mentioned that residents in the buildings—including themselves—were more familiar with the actual activities and events the Eco-Reps Program hosted than with the program itself (i.e., the program’s mission, who the actual Eco-Rep members are, the role of Eco-Reps in the residence halls, etc.). As one contributor put it:

If I asked…[my residents] ‘Do you know anything about the Eco-Reps?’ they wouldn’t have any idea except for maybe the [bulletin] board that you see as you come up from the dining hall downstairs, but I feel like if you ask them about specific things like, ‘Have you seen people selling sporks around campus?’ or ‘Do you remember the light bulb swap’, they would be like ‘Oh yeah, I remember that’ but they don’t necessary tie it to the Eco-Rep name and what that stands for.

In another instance a student commented that she had seen the Davis Center farmers’ market before “but I’ve never known it was Eco-Reps. I assumed it was the town of Burlington because they have their farmers’ market downtown.”

There were a few members of the group who mentioned that as RAs they were still unsure of what the program was or did on campus. In one case a RA stated, “I didn’t hear the term [Eco-Reps] until I got here for RA training. And I still don’t really know what they do.” In another instance a RA mentioned, “In my three years here I’ve only met an Eco-Rep once. She came on my floor for a few seconds, and I don’t even remember her name. And I have no idea what you guys do on campus.”

Although the majority of participants agreed the program lacked awareness within the residence halls, one RA felt otherwise:

Maybe I’m ignorant…and maybe it’s because my Eco-Rep this year lives in my hall and is one of my residents and it was the same last year…but I definitely see Eco-Reps more on campus especially …[things like] the little stickers about flipping the switch. I know
last year they did the bulb swap. I mean, the compost and the bulletin boards are the only things I see regularly but I definitely see my Eco-Rep.

In multiple instances individuals commented that the level of activity and general presence of the program within the residence halls usually depends on the effort of the Eco-Rep assigned to that building. Some participants had been RAs in various buildings over the years and commented that some years the program has been very visible while other years it has not.

In terms of program visibility outside of the residence halls, the general reaction from groups was not being aware that the Eco-Reps did campus-wide activities. “I didn’t even know they existed outside the res halls”, as one participant put it. Not until I provided a brief description of some of the campus-wide Eco-Rep activities and events (the Davis Center farmers market, the Davis Center waste sort, the sporks campaign, etc.) did participants realize they indeed had seen the program beyond the residence halls. In almost every focus group individual(s) thought the Eco-Reps Program was responsible for the proposed water bottle ban (the result of another student environmental group on campus) or the Eco-Ware containers (although the program did have a part in promoting the containers, Eco-Reps was not responsible for the campaign itself). The sporks campaign and three-dimensional compost/recycle signs above the Davis Center dining area waste receptacles were commonly mentioned as effective Eco-Reps initiatives due to their visibility and placement in a common student area. One RA said, “I would say… [the sporks campaign] is the most involved I’ve seen Eco-Reps outside of the res halls. And I don’t even know if people understand what that is, like I think that Eco-Reps is like a class or like a club kind of thing. I don’t think people associate Eco-Reps as being a part of Res Life.”
Strengths and Weaknesses of Program Public Outreach and Media Practices

Overall, participants commented that the Eco-Reps do and stand for good things on campus, but the program lacks effective communication and marketing skills. One RA remarked, “They’ve got a good message and they’re trying to do good things, so that’s a good start I guess, but as far as outreach I see none.” Another comment included,

I think… [the Eco-Rep] programs are awesome but I really don’t think they’re advertised well enough. I have never met our Eco-Rep. I don’t even know how many Eco-Reps there is to this complex…and I’m on Res Life staff. If I’m not well-informed, and I’m interested in this kind of stuff, I don’t think that’s saying a lot for their communication skills.

Along the same lines a RA commented that residents do not necessarily make the connection that Eco-Reps are responsible for certain activities due to the lack of awareness about the program.

I think the things Eco-Reps are trying to do are great, but I don’t think they’re recognized for it. Like, it’s great that the compost buckets are there and it’s a great service to have that option for the res halls and I’m sure there are people that appreciate it but I don’t think they realize who’s doing it and who they should be appreciating. I think the mindset is that compost is everywhere, it’s in the DC, it’s in the dining halls…it just makes sense that it’s in the res halls too. They don’t realize that someone is providing that service.

In one group a few individuals suggested that the university’s infrastructure does not support the program’s goals and initiatives. For example, one of the participants referred to the residence hall composting program. He explained that if everyone in the residence halls actually started to compost (like the Eco-Reps would like to see happen) the residence halls would not be able to physically support that sort of demand “unless we start [compost] piles somewhere.”

A few participants commented that when an event or activity does occur there is little advertising and promotion prior to the event which leaves residents and Res Life staff confused about what the event is and who is responsible for it. One RA stated that a follow-up complex-wide email from her Eco-Rep about a recent event was effective in helping connect residents to
the importance and significance of the activity, but the RA also did not realize the event had taken place until the follow-up email was dispersed afterwards. While comments like these were most common, one individual stated that the role of an Eco-Rep and a peer educator is hard:

“They’re also students. Like you have to give some of them credit. I know that I gave my Eco-Rep [a hard time]…to get the compost but part of it was because I expect her to clean up the compost when I want it done but she has a whole other academic life she has to [do].”

In addition, several participants also mentioned that having an Eco-Rep assigned to a complex which the Eco-Rep does not live in greatly affects the level of outreach and presence within that residence hall and is a “huge flaw.” As one member remarked, “Last year my Eco-Rep lived on my floor and that was really helpful because I knew her, I wanted to respect what she was doing, she was able to communicate with us.”

Another common theme among the focus groups was the lack of a relationship members of the Residential Life staff felt with the Eco-Reps themselves. When asked how well the Eco-Reps coordinate and network with Residential Life Staff one group laughed as a participant exclaimed, “They don’t!” In another instance, a RA commented that when Eco-Reps have attended Hall Council meetings in her building they do not seem well-organized and almost confused about why they are at the meeting and what they want to talk about.

In one case an Eco-Rep was part of the group’s Residential Life staff. The Eco-Rep commented that RAs can be intimidating for an Eco-Rep to approach. She described a previous experience as an Eco-Rep:

Even though I knew a lot of the RAs… [in my assigned complex] going to these meetings was like, you and 12 other people and it’s not like something you’re gung ho to do…. But the RAs also don’t reach out to the Eco-Reps. We’ve established that most of us don’t even know who they are, so I think it’s not working on either end.
In response to this participants commented that perhaps the role of the Res Life staff and the role of the Eco-Rep are not clear in their relationship. In almost every focus group individuals explained that having the Eco-Reps be present during RA training and other RA activities and events would strengthen their relationship with each other. One participant commented, “One thing I’ve noticed is that Eco-Reps kind of get invited to the [Res Life staff] meeting but they’re barely introduced. If we have someone else come in there’s like a build up and the RD or the ARD will say who it is and why it’s important so I feel like…[the Eco-Reps are] kind of left out to dry and could get a little more support.” Another member stated, “If we felt like… [Eco-Reps] were a part of our staff, like of the Res Life staff, [our relationship] would be better.”

In one case, an ARD was surprised to learn the Eco-Reps are paid: “I didn’t know it was a paid job. They could do better than what they’re doing if it’s paid, definitely. Because we give them all the resources…and we will help them.” Along the same lines, a RA commented that if the Eco-Reps are being paid it should be their responsibility to reach out to Res Life, not the staff members’ responsibility to reach out to Eco-Reps.

**UVM Eco-Reps Logo Strengths and Weaknesses**

When asked about the UVM Eco-Reps logo, few to none of the participants were able to recall the logo. The most commonly described strength of the logo included the earth as the center of the “o” in “Eco-Reps.” However, most feedback was related to the weaknesses of the logo. Frequent suggestions included more colors, bolder text, and incorporating a slogan or a mascot. One student commented that the logo is “a little busy” while another said “it’s not uniquely Eco-Reps.” Many participants mentioned the recycling sign as an effective image to tie in with the logo because Eco-Reps are often associated with that activity. One RA described recycling as “a huge part of what… [Eco-Reps] do.” Some other images participants described as
effective and relevant to include in the Eco-Reps logo included a catamount paw, campus buildings, a tree, and people holding hands around a globe.

In one case a RA commented on the effectiveness of the logo and its presence on-campus. Shortly after her comment the group was presented an image of the current Eco-Reps Program logo, and she realized she had confused another logo on campus for the Eco-Reps logo and therefore had not been familiar with the logo at all. She was not sure what logo she had mistaken for the Eco-Reps logo.

**The Future of the Eco-Reps Program**

Participants made a number of recommendations and suggestions for the Eco-Reps Program, some of which included having Eco-Reps complete more training on communications and advertising techniques, encouraging a stronger relationship between Eco-Reps and the Residential Life staff and Hall Council (described as “an untapped resource”), and utilizing the resources already available to the Eco-Reps Program. In one case a student mentioned the importance of further clarifying the role of an Eco-Rep for the Eco-Reps themselves which can then translate more clearly to residents and the Res Life staff. Another RA commented that Eco-Reps should be more consistent; for example, doing a presentation every month on the 15th so residents would be able to rely on—and expect—certain events taking place at a certain time.

In addition, nearly every focus group recommended capitalizing on Facebook as a tool to connect with the student body. One RA stated, “It’s so simple to briefly see someone ‘like’ a quote by the Eco-Reps [on Facebook] and you to retain that information… than for someone who is not an environmentalist to go to a program and attend something and get the message across.”
Several comments focused around employing the Eco-Rep bulletin board, posters, and signs more to get the word out about the program and certain events. In many cases participants mentioned the effectiveness of handing out free things with the Eco-Reps name on it such as stickers, shirts, pens, Frisbees, etc. When one RA commented that students love free stickers another RA chimed in, “I have an Outing Club sticker on my laptop and I’m not even in the Outing Club.”

In regard to creating a guidebook for future Eco-Reps on communications and outreach, nearly all of the aforementioned topics were mentioned as useful to include in the guidebook. One RA suggested including a section which clarifies what the Residential Life staff is and their role when collaborating with Eco-Reps. In one instance an individual mentioned a guidebook may not be the most effective thing in helping Eco-Reps hone their outreach and communications skills due to the fact that Eco-Reps might not even bother to read it. In response an RA said, “Yeah, we have a guidebook for being RAs and I have definitely not read it.” The most common suggestion participants recommended to pursue in place of a guidebook included more training on these topics during Eco-Rep orientation. An RD recommended more follow up and monitoring of Eco-Rep activities to ensure the Eco-Rep is doing their job effectively.

Residence hall programming was another common suggestion. Many participants recommended increasing the amount of programs/events Eco-Reps organize in the residence halls, especially if the programs are in partnership with a RA. As one RD put it, “…in order for the Eco-Reps to get buy-ins for the residents they should get to know their RAs.”

Summary. In order to understand the thoughts of individuals about the Eco-Reps Program public outreach practices, I conducted multiple focus groups with various Residential Life staff across the UVM campus. Valuable feedback resulted from these interactions and helped provide
a detailed assessment of where the Eco-Reps Program currently stands in regard to program awareness and visibility among the on-campus community and what direction the program should head in the future.

In terms of the program’s current strengths and weaknesses, members of the Residential Life community seemed to feel Eco-Reps lacked a strong presence both within and outside of the residence halls. This was particularly the case for the latter in many instances. A recurring theme was familiarity with events and activities put on by the Eco-Reps Program but little recognition that those events and activities were associated with Eco-Reps. There appeared to be confusion about the connection and relationship Residential Life staff and the Eco-Reps Program shared, if there was one. One group acknowledged that the Eco-Reps are not the only individuals responsible for fostering a strong relationship with Res Life and that the effort to connect should come from both Res Life and Eco-Reps (although another group commented that if Eco-Reps are being paid, they should be more active in establishing a relationship with Res Life). Greater inclusion of the Eco-Reps in Res Life activities (both during the academic year and during RA training) was frequently suggested. In addition, composting was the most frequently addressed Eco-Rep activity, primarily due to the challenges and problems associated with their presence in the residence halls. Many participants suggested reevaluating the initiative in order to make it more effective.
PART 5: UVM ECO-REPS GUIDEBOOK AND LOGO RESULTS

5.1 UVM Eco-Reps Guidebook

As described earlier, a final goal of my thesis was the creation of a guidebook for future Eco-Reps. The intent of the guidebook was to provide the tools and resources necessary to organize and host a successful Eco-Rep event, a program element which provides the foundation for many of the Eco-Rep initiatives (and greatly impacts the visibility and influence of the program on campus). Using feedback from my advisors, members of the Office of Sustainability, and the Eco-Reps themselves, I designed the guidebook to be presented both online (on the Eco-Reps website) and in print for convenience.

In regard to content presentation and format, I chose to organize the information in a way that would be easy to read, concise, and easily navigated. Simple bullet points and large, clear headings made this possible. The content covered in the guidebook include: resources available to Eco-Reps; important groups and individuals on campus with whom Eco-Reps should network/collaborate; a step-by-step process on how to market an Eco-Rep event/program; and other valuable tools and resources that would assist Eco-Reps in organizing a successful event/program.

For the online version of the document I chose two different formats for online presentation. One included using a program called Issuu, a free online service which allows individuals to easily upload and publish content online in various formats such as brochures, magazine issues, and other print media. I uploaded a PDF version of the guidebook and collected a code which will allow the directors of the Eco-Reps Program to embed the online version of the guidebook on the Eco-Reps website. I also provided the directors of the program with the basic Word document version of the content (free of graphics and other designs) which can be
placed directly within the content of the Eco-Reps website under various headings and subheadings. The way in which the material will be presented on the website itself is up to the directors of the program (i.e., the information could appear under a subheading titled “Eco-Rep Resources” or it could be broken up into multiple subheadings, depending on the website design and layout preference of the directors).

In regard to the print version of the guidebook, a 12 page, 8.5” x 11” portrait document was created in Microsoft Word 2007 (see Appendix 12). I provided the directors with the computer file containing the Word document version of the guidebook. The directors will choose how they will print out the guidebook. For example, they may choose to print on a certain type of paper or use a specific company from which they receive many of their printed materials.

5.2 UVM Eco-Reps Logo

The logo design process involved feedback and support from many individuals including my advisors—particularly Jane Petrillo, Steve Posner, the Eco-Reps Program Coordinator, and Erica Spiegel, the Director of the Recycling and Solid Waste Department at UVM. Together the comments and constructive criticism helped shape the final product for the UVM Eco-Reps Program, in addition to the feedback from the focus groups, interviews, and surveys I conducted.

In regard to the logo design process, the final logo design features a dotted-line circle leading to a green leaf at the bottom of the design and encompassing the “UVM Eco-Reps” text (see Appendix 13). The original Eco-Reps logo featured an outline of mountains, the “UVM Eco-Reps” text, and a globe inside the letter “o” of the word “Eco-Reps.” I decided to eliminate the mountains due to the resemblance to the mountains in the UVM Outing Club logo; many individuals commented that this feature made it hard to differentiate between the two group logos at first glance. I also chose to eliminate the image of the Earth in the “o” in “Eco-Reps” to
make the text easier to read and create a cleaner, more simplistic design. However, I did bring the organic, soft feeling suggested by the shape of the Earth into the shape of the final logo design.

In the final product, a circle encompasses the “UVM Eco-Reps” text. This circle suggests connectivity in addition to the other characteristics mentioned above. The circle was created with a dotted line as opposed to a solid line. The dots increase in size from left to right, eventually leading to a green leaf. The layout and design of the dotted line implies progression, movement, and a sense of lightness. The green leaf at the bottom of the design helps weight the logo and provides an eye-catching contrast to the dotted line above. The leaf also suggests what the group represents even if someone is not familiar with the Eco-Reps Program. The dotted line and leaf encompass the words “UVM Eco-Reps.” I chose to leave these words in lowercase letters to suggest a casual, relaxed feel. The word “Eco-Reps” was slightly bolded to draw the eye to the program name itself (also the center of the logo design). Finally, the colors for the new logo were selected from *The University of Vermont Style Guide* (UVM, 2011) which included “dark green” and “light green.” Figure 14 shows the original Eco-Reps logo and the product I designed as a result of this thesis.

![Original UVM Eco-Reps Logo](image1.png) ![New UVM Eco-Reps Logo](image2.png)

*Figure 14. Original Eco-Reps Logo and New 2011 Eco-Reps Logo*
I created multiple formats of the logo in order to ensure the versatility of the logo uses. That is, the logo could appear on stickers, buttons, t-shirts, the Internet, printed materials, and so on. In order to accommodate these potential demands I saved the logo in the following formats: JPEG, EPS, PDF, and as a vector file. Within these formats the logo was saved in grayscale and full color as well as different color models (CMYK and RGB) depending on whether the logo would appear online or in print. These features allow the logo to be presented in various colors, resolutions, and styles.
PART 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This section focuses on the relationship my research shares with the larger realm of peer to peer sustainability education, the limitations of my research, closing thoughts about the Eco-Reps Program communications and outreach findings, and recommendations for the future.

This research was based on Christina Erickson’s (2010) doctoral work which concluded that the UVM Eco-Reps Program lacks visibility and influence among the university community. I attempted to expand on these findings and in the process provide a stepping stone toward greater program awareness on campus. In addition to Erickson’s work, a variety of literature guided my work and help support my findings.

Peer education is the foundation for successful behavior change, especially in conservation efforts (De Young, 1993), and thus the basis for programs like Eco-Reps. Key concepts of behavior change include persuasive communications, incentives and disincentives, modeled desired behavior, the implementation of behavior change, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the change. Although the UVM Eco-Reps Program seeks to address many of these concepts, many of them seem to be neglected due to a gap between student Eco-Reps’ knowledge and their communications skills and abilities. That is, Eco-Reps interact with the on campus community in a number of ways (waste sorts, light bulb swaps, compost, bulletin boards, etc.) but seem to overlook the value of basic marketing strategies to ensure public awareness and understanding about the program. Pairing both of these acts together—social change through public interaction and concepts of conventional marketing—forms the basis for social marketing. The UVM Eco-Reps Program would benefit from pursuing social marketing techniques to not
only encourage behavior change but to increase program awareness and visibility on campus as well.

In regard to marketing strategies, the UVM Eco-Reps Program has access to many media options. Conventional media (posters, television, radio) have merit but new media such as the Internet and various online media (Facebook, YouTube, blogs, etc.) should not be overlooked—especially in a university setting where most individuals gather the majority of their information from online sources (Cakim, 2010). Online media also provides another outlet for social circles to form around groups such as Eco-Reps, thus increasing the opportunity to communicate to greater numbers of people (Cakim, 2010). Using many of these media to communicate messages will also help establish norms and create a sense of group commitment, key aspects of behavior change (McKenzie-Muhr, 2008).

Many of my research findings supported the aforementioned literature. Limitations of my research included my position as an Eco-Rep, which could have influenced feedback from Eco-Reps themselves and other individuals in focus groups and surveys. Also, confusion and miscommunication by the Eco-Reps who administered the residence hall survey door to door could have impacted survey results. For example, there were a series of surveys filled out incorrectly; fortunately the errors did not noticeably impact the data results.

The results of the focus groups, interviews, and surveys seemed to suggest that the Eco-Reps themselves and on-campus students and Residential Life staff members are on the same page in regard to the program’s needs. Although the Eco-Reps take part in a variety of outreach, only a small portion of students said the program was visible on campus (both inside and outside of the residence halls; Eco-Reps felt the same in regard to visibility outside of the residence halls). On-campus students and Residential Life staff members strongly urged for a greater
online presence by the Eco-Reps Program (particularly Facebook), more “freebies” with the Eco-Reps name on it (stickers, buttons, pens, etc.), and official event flyers/posters. The Eco-Reps showed the same level of support for these outreach and media ideas.

However, a few comments from the Eco-Reps suggested that some of the Eco-Reps themselves view the program as more visible on-campus than was perceived by students in the residence halls (given the data collected in the residence hall surveys). One Eco-Rep stated, “Our activities and presence on campus are coupled with good branding techniques. We say things like ‘sponsored by UVM Eco-Reps’ or ‘brought to you by UVM Eco-Reps’ at our events and tables.”

In addition, both students within the residence halls and Residential Life staff members agreed that the Eco-Reps logo was not strong and needed to be changed. In almost every case both groups were not aware of what the logo looked like. The Eco-Reps themselves seemed more hesitant in deciding whether the program needed a new logo or not, but this could be because they were unsure of how the new logo design would look. In addition, all three groups thought an Eco-Rep resource guidebook would be beneficial to the group. However, in many instances—particularly during the Res Life and Eco-Rep focus groups—individuals commented that a stronger Eco-Rep training period in the beginning of the year focused on peer communications and media resources would have a greater impact than a guidebook.

In regard to collaboration and networking with other campus groups, there appeared to be a disconnect between Eco-Reps and Residential Life staff—an important collaborative partner of the program. Even though the majority of Eco-Reps said the program needs to do more outreach and networking/collaboration with other groups and organizations on campus, only one Eco-Rep suggested partnering up with Residential Life staff and Hall Council. The Residential Life staff
focus groups I conducted drew clear conclusions that the Eco-Reps Program is not involved with Res Life enough—despite the crucial leadership role the staff maintains in the residence halls as well as the financial support they provide for the program. Each Res Life group touched upon a number of reoccurring themes: 1) the Eco-Reps do not take advantage of the resources and assistance available to them through Res Life, 2) they lack a strong presence in the Res Life community ranging from co-hosting programs in the residence halls with RAs to simply being present in the building the Eco-Rep is assigned to, and 3) the role of the Eco-Rep within the Res Life community does not seemed clearly defined to both staff members or the Eco-Reps themselves.

However, one Res Life staff group commented that it can sometimes be difficult and intimidating for an Eco-Rep to fully immerse themselves in the Res Life community and form strong relationships. This could be addressed by incorporating Eco-Reps in the RA training allowing a relationship to form early on, as suggested by nearly every Res Life focus group. In addition, almost all of the staff groups suggested requiring Eco-Reps and RAs to partner up for more events and activities. These ideas could help manage many of the issues these two groups have encountered including busy schedules, confusion of the role each group shares in the relationship, and general support and awareness for the Eco-Reps Program.

This leads me into suggestions and recommendations for the future. Although the guidebook I assembled may be a step in the right direction, it has become clear to me that the Eco-Reps Program needs to reevaluate their training process. The orientation in the beginning of the year provides a wonderful opportunity for Eco-Reps to meet one another and gather a general idea of what the program is about, but more attention needs to be directed toward what it means to be an Eco-Rep and how to effectively communicate to peers (using both peer education and
communication/social marketing strategies). These steps could help clarify the role of an Eco-Rep as an on-campus leader and strengthen the presence of the program both inside and outside of the residence halls. The program could also benefit if Residential Life staff and Eco-Reps became more integrated. Incorporating Eco-Reps in the RA training is one way to approach this idea. Another suggestion is not only asking Eco-Reps to co-host more activities with the RAs in their building, but also approaching it from the other end and requesting that RAs be required to co-host an event with Eco-Reps. That way the effort and initiative is not coming from only one side of the relationship.

To conclude, the UVM Eco-Reps Program is a valuable educational resource to the on-campus community and honors the university’s environmental pledge. However, the program’s visibility and awareness challenges negatively affect the influence of the program and require attention. This research indicated that the program’s outreach and communications structure needs to be reevaluated, specifically in regard to Eco-Rep training in social marketing and peer communication. The creation of a new UVM Eco-Reps logo and an event planning guidebook for future Eco-Reps are only the first few steps in addressing these visibility and awareness challenges as the program continues to grow and develop as an essential member of the university community.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

Appendix 1: UVM Eco-Reps Program Public Outreach and Social Marketing Survey

Thank you for your time! Your participation in this survey will help my understanding of how current Eco-Reps feel about public outreach and social marketing techniques used by the UVM Eco-Reps program.

Please Circle Your Response

1) How long have you been an Eco-Rep?
   a. Less than 1 year
   b. 1 year
   c. 2 years
   d. 3 years
   e. 4 years

2) Looking back at this past semester, what particular strengths do you think the Eco-Reps program exhibits? What weaknesses?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3) In this past semester, which outreach methods did you use in your assigned residence hall to communicate to your peers (circle all that apply)?
   a. Bulletin boards
   b. Door-to-door contact with residents in hall
   c. Surveys
   d. Tabling
   e. Posters
   f. Group activities/events
   g. Informational flyers and/or fact sheets
   h. Online social networks such as Facebook or Twitter
   i. Other(s) (please explain) __________________________________________

4) Which outreach methods did you find most effective? Why do you think this is so?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

5) Would you have preferred to do more or less outreach in your assigned residence hall?
   a. More
   b. Less
   c. It was just right
6) In the future, would you be interested in having a quick, easy “how-to” guidebook created for individual Eco-Reps to refer to about how to effectively engage and communicate with peers?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not sure

7) Do you think the Eco-Reps program is visible on campus? (i.e., beyond the residence halls)
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Somewhat
   d. Not sure

8) Please rate your interest in the following social marketing methods for the Eco-Reps program itself to create student awareness about the program (its events, mission, etc.) on campus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Very interested</th>
<th>Somewhat interested</th>
<th>Somewhat interested</th>
<th>Very interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UVM Eco-Reps stickers/buttons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official event flyers/posters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATS Shuttles advertisement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus newspapers (e.g., The Cynic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVMtv WRUV 90.1 FM, UVM student-run radio station</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat Screen T.V. s in the Davis Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube video clip</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVM listservs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Your Eco-Rep program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9) From the list above, which social marketing method(s) do you think would be most effective in raising on-campus student awareness of the Eco-Reps program? Why?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

10) Do you have any additional comments or suggestions to make regarding the public outreach and social marketing methods used by the Eco-Reps program?
    ______________________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________
Appendix 2: UVM Eco-Reps Guidebook Survey

Eco-Reps Guidebook

Thank you for your time! Your participation in this quick survey will help me understand what guidebook format the student members of Eco-Reps would most likely use and prefer. The guidebook will focus on planning and marketing Eco-Rep events/programs; it will also contain details on contacts, resources, etc.

* Required

In your opinion, which guidebook format would you MOST LIKELY use?

- Only a print version of the guidebook
- Only an online version of the guidebook located on the Eco-Reps website
- Both a print and online version
- Neither

Please add any additional thoughts or comments below.

Submit
Appendix 3: Returning Eco-Reps Focus Group and Interview Questions

Returning Eco-Rep Focus Group Questions

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. This focus group is a part of my research on the visibility and awareness of the Eco-Reps program among the UVM community. Today’s conversation will allow me to gather your perspective on the public outreach and media strategies used by the Eco-Reps Program. Following IRB guidelines, my intent in this research is to preserve anonymity. I ask that everyone in the group to not repeat what they have heard others say, but there is always the chance that someone will repeat what you have said. Everything you say will be kept confidential by me (the researcher). Do you understand this and are you willing to participate in this focus group? Also, are you willing for this conversation to be audio-taped for accuracy?

1. What are your opinions on the Eco-Reps Program’s public outreach/media practices? Are there any aspects of the program’s communications and outreach structure you would change? Keep?
2. Do you think the addition of Eco-Reps stickers and buttons would be effective in raising awareness and visibility of the program? What images/words would make them effective?
3. Ask participants to sketch the logo as an exercise to see which aspects are memorable and which aren’t. What aspect(s) of the logo do you feel strongly about?
4. In what ways could the Eco-Rep logo better serve/represent the program? Do you think the logo reflects the program’s goals?
5. If a tagline was developed to increase the recall of the Eco-Reps logo and the program itself, what would it say?
6. Do you think the logo is easily confused with other group logos on campus?
7. I plan on developing a guidebook for future Eco-Reps on peer communications strategies and media resources. What topics should the guidebook definitely contain? Networking options, available media resources/contacts? Other?
8. How do you think a guidebook on communications and outreach will benefit future Eco-Reps?
9. Do you think something other than a guidebook would be more effective in increasing the communications skills of future Eco-Reps? A training period? A media forum on the website? A media group?
10. In your opinion, what guidebook format would be best for future Eco-Reps?
   - Made for the binder (and Xeroxable); a separate, small paper manual; laminated/reusable so it’s able to be returned at the end of the year; a certain type of paper (recycled, etc.)? Other thoughts?
Appendix 4: Residence Hall Survey

Residential Student Survey

On-Campus Student Awareness of UVM Eco-Reps Program and Media Preference

Hi, my name is __________. I’m conducting a short survey to learn about on-campus student awareness of the UVM Eco-Reps Program. Do you mind participating? The survey will take no more than 5 minutes of your time. Thank you!

Residence Hall: ___________________________ Floor #: __________

1) Prior to this survey, had you heard of the Eco-Reps Program?
   a. Yes  b. No

2) If you answered “yes”, how did you hear about the program? Check all that apply.
   __ Face to face interactions with the Eco-Rep in your residence hall
   __ Posters, flyers, and bulletin boards
   __ Special events/programs hosted by Eco-Reps in your residence hall
   __ Special events/programs hosted by Eco-Reps outside of your residence hall
   __ Other students
   __ Via email/listservs
   __ Other: ____________________________________________

3) Do you think the Eco-Reps Program is visible inside of your residence hall?
   a. Yes  b. No  c. Somewhat

4) Do you think the Eco-Reps Program is visible outside of your residence hall?
   a. Yes  b. No  c. Somewhat

5) Which Eco-Reps events/activities have you either seen or heard of before? Check all that apply.
   __ Davis Center waste sort
   __ Davis Center farmers’ market
   __ Water taste test in Davis Center
   __ Residence hall waste sort
   __ Light bulb swap
   __ Sporks campaign
   __ Dining hall food waste weigh-in
   __ Compost buckets in residence halls
   __ Other: ____________________________

96
6) Please rate how effective you think each outreach method below would be in increasing the visibility of the UVM Eco-Reps Program on campus (both in and out of the res halls).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
<th>Somewhat ineffective</th>
<th>Very ineffective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UVM Eco-Reps stickers/buttons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official event flyers/posters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATS Shuttle advertisements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus newspapers (e.g., The Cynic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UVMtv</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRUV 90.1 FM, UVM radio station</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flat Screen T.V. ads in the Davis Center/Marche</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>YouTube video clip</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVM listservs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Text Your Eco-Rep” program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7) Which logo is the current UVM Eco-Reps logo?

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3
- Option 4

8) What class year are you?

a. First-year
b. Sophomore
c. Junior
d. Senior
e. Other: _____________________

Thank you! If you have any questions please email Winter Heath at wheath@uvm.edu
Appendix 5: UVM Eco-Reps Logo Brainstorming Process
dorm
athletic campus
halls/doors
small living spaces - community
big buildings
windows

eco-reps
peer leaders/educators
environment
green
leaved trees
outreach
network
recycle
3 Rs
Circle

UVM
eco-reps

UVM
eco-reps

eco-reps

UVM
eco-reps

UVM
eco-reps

UVM
eco-reps
### Appendix 6: Eco-Rep Feedback on Potential Collaborative Partners

| Slow Food, IRA, Bike Users Group, Campus Kitchens, Students for Peace and Global Justice, UPB |
| VSTEP |
| Outing Club, ENVS people |
| ski and snowboard, engineering |
| VSTEP |
| Any club |
| SGA!!! |
| all environmental programs |
| Not sure |
| Gardening club, outdoor club |
| awareness groups (slow food, feel good, etc) |
| Other env. related groups |
| VSTEP, SEEDS, Garden Club |
| greek life |
| Outing Club? |
| VSTEP, RAs, Hall Council |
| Other environmental clubs |
| VSTEP, Slow Food, Garden Club, others I don't know about that are probably related somehow. |
| Slade, GreenHouse |
| SGA |
| SGA |
| Anyone we don't already. |
| All, but especially other environmentally-minded groups, ie: Slow Food, Outing Club, STAR (animal rights group) |
## Appendix 7: Eco-Rep Survey Feedback on UVM Eco-Reps Logo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The simplicity says it all!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More interaction with EcoReps from other areas of campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can't even think of what it looks like at the moment so it must not make that good of an impression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it just needs more outreach. Composting and recycling is obviously important, but I think a bigger point of the program is to reach other students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like it-- it's simple and mountainous!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New logos, new statistics, more outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BORING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really like the current design-- I think it's... nice? however, I think it wouldn't be ineffective if it was updated and perhaps made into something bolder and eye-catching; it might improve recognition on campus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More eye-catching! Colors!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the cleanliness of the logo; it doesn't have too much going on. But it could be a little more in-your-face to get our name out there.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 8: Eco-Rep Survey Feedback on Three Words That Described Eco-Reps

| Informative, enthusiastic, concerned |
| Environmentally-friendly, student run, friendly |
| Environment, peers, leaders |
| Earth loving students |
| Compost, posters, events |
| Sustainability, Outreach, Friends |
| Environment, Learning, Fun |
| Leaders, Environment, Responsibility |
| Student-to-student, elementary, repetitive |
| Green, enthusiastic, informed |
| Reduce Reuse Recycle |
| Caring, informative, busy |
| Conscious, passionate, earthy |
| Awareness, peer education, environment |
| Dorms, recycling, compost |
| Coordinated, active, impersonal |
| Environment, recycle, compost |
| Movement, positive, network |
| Students, Inspiration, outreach |
| Sustainability, compost, res-halls |
| Passionate, patient, advocates |
| Sustainability, student activism, responsibility |
| Energetic, motivated, fun |
| Sustainability, collective, education |
| Compost, recycling, "green" |
| Dedicated, Informative, Passionate |
| Sustainable, knowledgeable, motivated |
| Environment, unconnected, fizzling |
| Sustainability, residence halls, composting |
| Educate, an attempt, advisor |
Appendix 9: Eco-Rep Survey Additional Comments

The Eco-Reps program is wonderful!

I think that the word could get out better if, in the beginning of the year when people move in, kids could get something with their room key that would be like "Oh and here's you Eco-Rep, where he lives, room number, etc...."

I think it is a great program that will keep improving

if we did more with SGA we could actually make some legislative, lasting changes on this campus!!!

getting paid 4 hours a week no matter what you do means that no one goes above and beyond... at all. you should get paid for how much work you do or get extra hours for doing extra work.

freshman should be allowed to be ecoreps so the group isn't new every year because then no progress is made.

I think this is a big area where Eco-Reps could expand and be more effective. Working with other groups could certainly be a big help though we'd have to be careful since UVM funds us and some of those environmental-focused groups have "agendas" aka things they want the university to change.

I have found that a lot of residents in my hall are interested in the Eco-rep program itself. In that, they want to learn more about what they can do for the environment ion day-to-day life. I try to share information from out weekly packets and from the meetings but I feel like there should be some sort of collective meeting for non -"reppin" eco-interested people. (the tuesday movie nights are a great beginning, perhaps it use a 'workshop' element to go along with it)

I feel like the amount of work put in by different people within the program is unequal in the sense that for some people it's just a job and for others its really how they hope to improve the UVM community and raise awareness about environmental issues. It sometimes feels like a band-aid to covering up greater issues within the deep confines of our world and UVM presidential board. I would love to see Eco Reps become more radical and really orient itself around specific goals, ie: the Coke contract, each semester and work with the study body of UVM to get the word out about why these issues are important to address. I think this would be a better use of time towards real, positive change.
## Appendix 10: Eco-Reps Guidebook Survey Additional Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think that a hard-copy is good for concrete advertisement in certain cases, but when using primarily for Eco-Reps use I would like to see a paperless option - namely, an online version! maybe if i was an incoming eco-rep as a first year but definitely not as a second year hire. i can't think of what would be in a guidebook that would really make it worth my while to read. i don't even read the weekly readings. pictures!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would personally use either, whichever was made available, but I think it makes more sense to have something explaining eco-reps to not be printed out on paper when it is just as easily made available online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would obviously prefer an online version because it would cut down on paper but I'm still more of a book over eBook person, if you know what I mean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i definitely understand the concept of online guidebooks saving paper and energy, especially since this is an environmental program, however i am much more likely to read something that is sitting in front of me and won't fry my eyes while i read it. you know what i mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There should be a way to have additional comments pertaining to particular dorms if there is something pertinent to say. Like if a certain project is difficult in a certain res hall, and how to adapt it. online=environmentally friendly saave treeez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website and a pdf that we could save on our own computers would be useful, don't care too much about having print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An online version would definitely be the most ideal, especially with the whole not using paper aspect of the eco-rep program. But I also think a hard copy version would be beneficial in certain circumstances, so I say both versions would be good ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think a hard copy kept in a local and easy to access safe place is key. it might be helpful for there to be a way for people to comment on and post suggestions on things that have already been created. a way for people to comment on and post suggestions on things that have already been created. Maybe the guidebook could be instead of (or in addition to) the binder we currently use? Or, if it's really long, to save paper it could be purely online.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 11: Complete Results of Residence Hall Survey Chi-Square Tests

Crosstabulation of Academic Year and Awareness of Eco-Reps Program Prior to Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Heard of Eco-Reps?</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Heard of Eco-Reps?</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Heard of Eco-Reps?</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Crosstabulation of Academic Year and Outing Club or Eco-Reps Logo Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Outing Club</th>
<th>Eco-Rep</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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Crosstabulation of Correct Logo Choice and Prior Awareness of Eco-Reps Program

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105
### Eco-Rep Events Seen or Heard of Before and Resident Awareness of Program Prior to Survey

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Appendix 12: UVM Eco-Reps Guidebook

**How to Plan an Eco-Rep Event**

**And Other Resources**
Mission statement: The UVM Eco-Reps Program trains student leaders who model and promote environmentally responsible behaviors in the residence halls and other university facilities by educating their peers.
INTRO

Welcome! This guidebook has been designed to help the Eco-Reps Program become more visible on campus. One approach to this is effective programming—a key aspect of the Eco-Reps Program. In order to create an effective event or program that will have a lasting impact on the University of Vermont community student Eco-Reps should follow three steps: know your resources, network, and market your event. This guide plans to address these topics and more. Enjoy!

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Additional Resources and Tips............................................................................................................................ 10
PLANNING YOUR EVENT

You have your topic
You’ve done your research
Now what?

STEP 1: KNOW YOUR RESOURCES
There are TONS of things available to you as an Eco-Rep to create and organize an event.

ART SUPPLIES

- First try to REUSE MATERIALS found around your residence hall if at all possible.

- RA PROJECT ROOMS – These rooms are chock-full of art supplies...just make sure to ask your RA or RD before accessing them! A key to the room is often located at the front desk of the residence hall.

- OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY – Ask within the O.o.S. for a key to a supply cabinet located in Billings Hall. There you will find colored paper, markers, paints, stencils, and other bulletin board goods!

- OSCAR (OFFICE SUPPLY COLLECTION AND REUSE) CLOSET – The OSCAR closet was created to collect and redistribute resusable office supplies among campus offices, departments and student groups. OSCAR is located in the basement of Billings Hall, Room I-112 which is near the MLK Lounge and down the hall from the HR Training and Development classroom.

PHOTO COPIES/PRINTING

- OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY – Ask the Eco-Reps Program Coordinator if you need a few copies. If you have a larger project, or specialty printing (like a brochure), then go to UVM Print and Mail Center (located in the basement of Waterman). You can charge to the UVM Office of Sustainability budget with advanced approval.
MEDIA RESOURCES

- **BAILEY/HOWE LIBRARY**—Need DVDs, a camera, projector, projector screen, speakers? You can find these and more at the Bailey/Howe Library.
  - For media equipment either stop by Media Resources on the ground floor of the library or call the Media Equipment Scheduling line at (802) 656-1944.
  - To check on the availability of a DVD or video, call Media Collections at 656-1947
  - For a complete list of DVDs go to: [http://library.uvm.edu/media/collections/index.php](http://library.uvm.edu/media/collections/index.php)

- **DAVIS CENTER FLAT SCREENS**—To upload slides to the Davis Center flat screens, you will need a login and password to the "Visix" system.
  - For instructions on how to do this, contact Kate Strotmeyer, Marketing Coordinator for the Davis Center [katherine.strotmeyer@uvm.edu](mailto:katherine.strotmeyer@uvm.edu)
  - For more Davis Center resources such as bulletin boards, banner, and more contact FM Munoz, Student Life Event Coordinator [FM.Munoz@uvm.edu](mailto:FM.Munoz@uvm.edu)

- **WRUV-FM**—Drop off an event poster/blurb at WRUV-FM (on the first floor of the Davis Center) and they will read it on the air.
  - Email: wruvpr@gmail.com  Phone: (802) 656-4399

- **UVMtv**—Contact UVMtv about airing a commercial on their channels at designated times. UVMtv can create a commercial for you, for an extra fee.
  - Contact: [uvmtv@uvm.edu](mailto:uvmtv@uvm.edu)
  - Contact Person: Jeremy Baras (jbaras@uvm.edu)
  - Cost: [http://uvmtv.net/advertise-with-us/](http://uvmtv.net/advertise-with-us/)

- **THE CYNIC**—For information on how to advertise in this newspaper refer to the contact information below.
  - Contact: [cynic@uvm.edu](mailto:cynic@uvm.edu)
  - Cynic ads: [ycads@uvm.edu](mailto:ycads@uvm.edu)

- **THE WATERTOWER**—For information on how to advertise in this newspaper refer to the contact information below.
  - Contact: [watertowernews@gmail.com](mailto:watertowernews@gmail.com)
STEP 2: NETWORK

Working with other people and groups on campus is a great way to make your event more visible. You can increase attendance, make connections with outside groups, and receive more support.

RESIDENTIAL LIFE STAFF

It is important to understand the organization of Residential Life staff—they are one of your most important collaborative partners! Here’s the breakdown:

- Each floor has an Resident Advisor (RA)
- Each complex has an Residence Director (RD) to whom RAs report
- Each complex has an Assistant Residence Director
- Each complex front desk has an Office Manager
- Each complex has a Custodial Supervisor (who custodians report to)

HALL COUNCIL

Each complex has a Residence Hall Council (RHC) which consists of residents. The RHC has a budget for activities from which Eco-Reps can request funding for events. Eco-Reps are expected to co-sponsor one event per semester with their RHC.

In addition, each RHC sends a representative to the Inter Residence Association (IRA) – another source of funding!

FIND A UVM GROUP TO TEAM UP WITH!

- ALANA
- Health Promotion Services
- Students for Peace and Global Justice
- Bike Users Group (BUG)
- Campus Kitchens & Food Project
- Common Ground Student Farm
- Feel Good Club
- Slow Food Club
- Students for True Animal Rights (STAR)
- VSTEP
- SEEDS

The list goes on! Find more at http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmsga/?Page=directory/default.html&SM=d_menu.html
**STEP 3: MARKET YOUR EVENT**

Now it’s time to advertise your event. This is a key aspect of planning your event because if no one knows about it than no one will come!

### 6 WEEKS BEFORE

- Reserve a space: [http://resource25.uvm.edu/wv3](http://resource25.uvm.edu/wv3)
  - Refer to Eco-Reps Program Coordinator for the chart string (budget) number
- Reserve table in Davis Center Atrium: [http://resource25.uvm.edu/wv3](http://resource25.uvm.edu/wv3)
- Reserve chalking space for week of event: [http://resource25.uvm.edu/wv3](http://resource25.uvm.edu/wv3)
  - Under General Interest Areas and then scroll down to UVM Sidewalks
- Reserve bus signs for a small fee (Mike Altman: 802 656 0795 or [Michael.Altman@uvm.edu](mailto:Michael.Altman@uvm.edu))
- Design bus signs

### 5 WEEKS BEFORE

- Print bus signs at UVM Print and Mail Center (dimensions 11"X14" landscape format). Have them delivered to Transportation & Parking Services at 38 Fletcher Place, Burlington, VT 05405

### 4 WEEKS BEFORE

- Reserve information outlets at the Davis Center (banners, table tents, display case in tunnel, etc.)
  - Call 802 656 2060
  - Or stop by Student Life, Rm 310
- Reserve bathroom signs in Davis Center (Call Davis Center Marketing Coordinator 802 656 2060)

### 3 WEEKS BEFORE

- Make a flyer and post it to:
  - the Lynx ([http://thelynx.collegiatelink.net/](http://thelynx.collegiatelink.net/))
  - Davis Center flat screens (Kate Strotmeyer, Katherine.Strotmeyer@uvm.edu)
- Submit event to SGA Weekly by Monday (email SGA president, see [http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmsga/](http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmsga/))
Submit event to bored@uvm.edu by Wednesday at noon

Submit event to This Week @ UVM (Broadcast.center@uvm.edu) by Thursday at noon

Submit event to the cynic (cynic@uvm.edu)

Promote event via environmental campus listservs (GreenUVM@list.uvm.edu & env-talk@list.uvm.edu)

More listservs at www.uvm.edu/~slife/marketing/?Page=listservs.html

2 WEEKS BEFORE

Submit advertisement to the cynic (), water tower (watertowernews@gmail.com), and UVMtv (uvmtv@uvm.edu)

Create a Facebook event

Print and distribute posters
  o For Davis Center bathroom signs (dimensions 8.5"X11") contact Kate Strotmeyer, Katherine.Strotmeyer@uvm.edu

1 WEEK BEFORE

Make announcements in class

Write on classroom chalkboards

Facebook/Twitter the event

Distribute posters/flyers

Email listservs

Chalk (if space reserved)

Go door-to-door in assigned residence hall

**OTHER THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND**

**EVENT POSTERS**
When creating an event poster include

- Event name/type
- Date/time
- Location
- Contact info
- Display the official Eco-Reps logo

*Keep it simple and clear*

*Use eye-catching colors and graphics*

*Be creative! Use humor and make it fun*

**MAKE A CONNECTION!**
Make sure people know Eco-Reps is the group putting on the event. Put the UVM Eco-Reps logo everywhere: posters, flyers, compost buckets, wherever! Don’t forget to wear your Eco-Reps shirt, too!

**BE FRIENDLY**
See the UVM Eco-Reps Manual on steps for successful peer communication

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

**Food safety**
If you purchase food for an event (using funding from Hall Council 😊) be aware of the risk of food allergies. Make sure participants are aware of food ingredients. Need to keep food cold? Ask the Program Coordinator for the Eco-Reps cooler! If your event requires a catering service, refer to the Eco-Reps Program Coordinator for assistance.

**Driving**
If for any reason you need UVM transportation for an event please visit this site for UVM policies and requirements: [http://www.uvm.edu/~riskmgmt/?Page=driver_train/index.html](http://www.uvm.edu/~riskmgmt/?Page=driver_train/index.html)

**Weather**
If you’re planning an outdoor event prepare an indoor area to relocate to in case of poor weather OR prepare to reschedule the event completely
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND TIPS

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

UVM’s Office of Sustainability  www.uvm.edu/sustainability
Gioia Thompson, Director, Gioia.Thompson@uvm.edu, 656-3803
Mieko Ozeki, Projects Coordinator, Mieko.ozeki@uvm.edu, 656-0906 Office of Sustainability

UVM’s Recycling Program
 www.uvm.edu/recycle
Erica Spiegel, UVM Recycling, Erica.Spiegel@uvm.edu, 656-4191
Corey Berman, UVM Recycling Program Assistant, Corey.Berman@uvm.edu, 656-5731

Energy Conservation
 www.uvm.edu/energy
Rich Wolbch, Office of Energy Management, Richard.Wolbch@uvm.edu, 656-2186

Co-Sponsoring Events with Health Promotions Services
Sarah Hoffert, Sarah.Hoffert@uvm.edu, 656-0364

Holding an Event in a Residence Hall Event
Prior to the event, you should contact the front desk as well as the Resident Director for the building

Hosting breakfast at the ALANA Center
Monique Swaby, Monique.Swaby@uvm.edu
Hold a zero waste event

When you are hosting an event, try to reduce the amount of waste created using these tips:

- Remind people to bring their own cup or plate, and utensils
- Set up recycle bins and compost bins at your event
- If food is purchased, avoid food with excessive packaging
- Provide beverages in bulk: use pitchers or punch bowls. Avoid bottled beverages
- Avoid excessive paper consumption for signs, etc.

Make it fun!

Make your event memorable with some of these great ideas:

- **Light bulb bike**—Show peers how much energy it takes to power different types of light bulbs (including a CFL, incandescent, and more)! Refer to Program Coordinator for access to the Eco-Reps’ light bulb bike

- **Smoothie bike**—Make fresh, organic smoothies at your event with City Market’s smoothie bike. Contact Meg Klepack for details (mklepack@citymarket.coop)

- **Dress up for the occasion**—Ask your Program Coordinator about our carrot costume and Eco-Reps cape! Want UVM’s mascot, Rally, to attend your event? Contact Krista Balogh, Athletics Marketing Director Krista.Balogh@uvm.edu or (802) 656-1744
Appendix 13: UVM Eco-Reps New 2011 Logo