

NEWS RELEASE

April 19, 2007

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University of Saint Mary To Host Environmental Problems Seminar

7 p.m. Thursday, April 26, 2007

(Leavenworth, Kan.)—The University of Saint Mary is hosting an Environmental Problems Seminar, based on the university's service-learning project, Project WaterLINK, at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 26 inside the Mead Hall Walnut Room on the main campus in Leavenworth, Kan.

Project WaterLINK is a collaborative service-learning project between USM, the Kansas Campus Compact, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. USM students from Dr. Melanie Harvey's *Chemistry I & II* classes and Ken Mulliken's *Human Geography* created bioretention cells (commonly known as rain gardens) on campus in front of McGilley Field House in October. The rain garden is designed to help mitigate runoff from the parking lots in an effort to reduce the amount of pollutants entering the Missouri River through storm drainage system.

The Environmental Problems Seminar is part of Caroline Mackintosh's Biology class, *Environmental Problems and Concerns*, and is designed to infuse service-learning back into the classroom, integrating learning from Dr. Harvey's class and Mulliken's class at the same time.

The seminar will consist of student-led presentations, concerning Project WaterLINK, including a research presentations led by Dr. Harvey's chemistry classes. Dr. Harvey's classes originally attempted to test the changes in water before and after it traveled from parking lots through the cells. However, the classes had difficulty gaining a large enough sample from the cells, and instead shifted its focus to sites along Stranger Creek. The classes tested ammonia, chloride, pH, hardness, alkalinity, and nitrite levels in the various creek locations.

Despite Dr. Harvey's decision to shift locations, USM Service-Learning VISTA Melissa Netzer believes the Project WaterLINK bioretention cell project has been a success. Netzer collaborated with Chris Lavergne from Kansas Campus Compact and various members of the USM community to ensure the project flowed smoothly.

"We think service-learning is valuable to everyone, teachers, students and the community" she said. "In addition to getting real-life, hands-on experience, the students learn to work as a team, have the opportunity to network, see the value of their work beyond the classroom, and foster a sense of civic responsibility. Based on what I have seen, Project WaterLINK has been a great success. Now we have a beautiful rain garden on campus, which will be here for years to come."

Call (913) 758-6294 or (913) 758-6112 for more information about the Environmental Problems Seminar. The University of Saint Mary is located at 4100 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan. The Walnut Room is located at second floor of Mead Hall. Admission is free and open to the public.

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