PALS
PARTNERSHIP for ACTION LEARNING in SUSTAINABILITY

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SSCC, Baltimore, Maryland
“...working closely with Frederick's planning board, planning director, transportation director, built confidence in me that I have real skills now that are marketable and can be put to good use in socially and environmentally progressive projects.” – Student, LARC 642
This project has really helped develop my understanding of the complexity of managing a multi-use recreational region, and the importance of taking into account the feelings and views of various stakeholders” – Student CONS670
“Personally, the connection PALS made to project opportunities and city personnel made a big difference in my ability to communicate important concepts about cultural and ecological design.” – Chris Ellis

“I'd love to make it a regular part of my course. Having a meaningful term project was wonderful, and I liked allowing the students to help it take shape.” - Keryn Gedan
“It’s an incredibly exciting project. It’s just what we should be doing in our teaching.”
– Mary Ann Rankin, Provost of the University of Maryland

“Now that we’ve seen some of the work products from the classes, I think it is some of the best bang for the buck.”
– Kelly Russell, Alderman, Frederick, MD.

“Being able to pull off these fresh ideas, the fresh mindsets and the new information is really valuable for us.”
– Jenny Willoughby, Sustainability Manager, Frederick, MD.
“We are working with a University of Maryland program -- the Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability – to collaborate with Howard Community College and the existing staff within the Office to work on sustainability initiatives. There are resources right here in our community that we can use to benefit our county. That’s sustainability.” – Allan Kittleman, Howard County Executive (Feb. 5th, 2015)
UMD continues to gain recognition for green initiatives
Magazine ranks it as 13th 'coolest school' in the nation

Frederick becomes learning laboratory for U-Md. students

City Notes: College students prepared to spend 50,000-plus hours on city projects

U-Md. turning city of Frederick into big classroom
What is PALS at UMD?
How did we get there? How do we stay there?
The national context: What might this mean to you?
What is PALS at UMD?
Year-long, Campus-wide focus on one community
Innovative, low-cost assistance, customized to a local government’s specific needs
Full access to depth of knowledge and experience of UMD’s faculty
All of UMD’s resources aimed at advancing environmental, economic and social sustainability in Maryland communities.
300 Students and 25 courses from across the campus helping Frederick become a leader in sustainable practices
Investigating and designing green infrastructure solutions for algae growth in Carroll Creek
Project Spotlight

Researching the economical and environmental impacts of municipal composting programs
Examining the **economics benefits** of historic building restoration and preservation
Frederick, Fall 2014 – City Funded

- Golden Mile Outreach
- Airport & Hotel/Conference Center Feasibility Study
- Downtown Architectural Tour
- Neighborhood Identity Analysis
- Route 15 Widening: Traffic/GHG impacts
- Six New Neighborhoods for Frederick
- Algae in Carroll Creek
- Managing Frederick’s Watershed
- Frederick’s Energy and Emissions
- Development Options for Site C-2
- Carroll Creek Wildlife Recreation Area
Frederick, Spring 2015 – City Funded

- Golden Mile Recommendations
- Re-imagining North East Street
- Recreation and Stewardship in the Watershed
- East Frederick and Monocacy Blvd Development
- Feasibility Study for Redevelopment of City Sites
- Composting and Organics Recovery
- Sustainability Plan Enhancements (Summer)
Frederick, Fall & Spring – PALS Funded

- Complete Streets Approach for East Street (thesis)
- Regenerating Biodiversity along Carroll Creek (thesis)
- Video Storytelling
- Feature Writing
- EFR Industrial Redevelopment
- Economics of Historic Preservation
- The Latin Connection
City Funded
  • Improving Solid Waste Management Practices
  • Making Place: Public Art and Design
  • GHG Inventory

PALS Funded
  • College Town: How can UMD enhance the urban life of College Park
PALS Second Year – A Broader Agenda

- Selected Howard County, MD as the 2015/2016 jurisdiction
- Broadened Client projects – include education, public health, social services, corrections etc.
- Broadened Client stakeholders – HCC; Columbia Association (HOA)
- Broadened UMD-CP School involvement for next Fall and also extended to UMB (in Baltimore)
How did we get there?

How do we stay there?
• Director of NCSG goes to Spring SCYP Conference in 2013 at U of O
• Invite several similar Programs around the US to present at UMD launch event in Sept. 2013 (funded by Town Creek Foundation)
• Solicit UMD funding from Provost and Dean of Architecture/Planning
• Provost funding at $100K continued in 2015/2016, then ends
• Staffing by about 1 ½ FTEs: NCSG Director (¼ time) and NCSG staff (Research Prof. ½ time and ½ time GA) and intermittent intern assistance
• Interviewed several jurisdictions for pilot and selected City of Frederick; unsuccessfully tried RFP this year….went back to selection....
• Set up campus-based 14 – person Advisory Committee from several Schools
Nov-Dec-Jan-Feb-Mar-Apr-May-Jun-Jul-Aug-Sep
Solicit interest/Select Place

Develop and Refine projects

Match faculty

LOI

Develop syllabi

MOU

Start

PALS Timeline
Which Colleges have participated in PALS Courses?

- School of Arch., Planning & Preservation: 42%
- College of Ag. & Natural Resources: 27%
- College of Journalism: 11%
- College Park Scholars: 4%
- School of Business: 4%
- School of Public Policy: 4%
- College of Math & Natural Sciences: 4%
- College of Arts & Humanities: 4%
What PALS provides

- Incentive to faculty of $1500 per course
- Cover faculty and student course related expenses
- Logistics support
- Style templates
- Editing of final reports
- Syllabus review and templates
- Presentation events and promotions
What PALS expects

• Faculty participate in one or more sharing and learning events per semester with facilitation by campus teaching excellence staff
• Develop PALS specific syllabi which are part of the UMD/Jurisdiction MOU
• Faculty to sign a letter of understanding with NCSG about course and mutual responsibilities
The national context: What might this mean to you?
PALS in the national context – Various Models

• One city/place at a time - 10
• Several smaller places at a time - 4
• Ongoing relationships - 2
• Grad level “professional” services
• U/grad level “training and contributing”
PALS in the national context – Funding Sources

• Fee for Partnership
• Grants
• Direct funding from the university
• Affiliation with academic department or research institute
Who Houses these 18 Programs?

- Unknown
- Civic Outreach Center
- Other (Non-profit, Legal Initiative)
- Administrative/Educational
- Sustainability/Environmental
- Design/Planning/Architecture
Ingredients for Success (Prioritized)

• Being a large land grant university with a big graduate program and research mission
  • Small colleges with a service ethic can work but at lesser scale
• A core group to initiate and direct it who understand the University and local government
• University support (at least political and administrative, if not financial contributions) at highest levels
Ingredients for Success (Prioritized)

- Consistent funding sources over time
- Enough local governments close by who will want these services
  - Big enough to manage the program (e.g. pop of 25K min. say) Sustainability oriented; politically important to leadership etc.
- Program dissemination networks to recruit faculty
  - Start with outreach oriented programs and faculty
  - Work with on campus sustainability entities with faculty links
  - Active promotion on and off campus
  - Monetary incentives for faculty and student expenses help