

Tri-C TIMES

Sustaining Momentum

**Sustainability
initiatives have deep
roots at Tri-C**

MID-YEAR RESULTS

**Halfway point for three
first-year Tri-C students**

RECORD AND RELEASE

**Recording session at Tommy
LiPuma Center for Creative Arts
reunites two legendary talents**





Keymah Durden holds a handful of "black gold."

SUSTAINING MOMENTUM

Sustainability initiatives have deep roots at Tri-C

Every Saturday morning, Shane Reece loads up a truck with food waste from the Cuyahoga Community College Metropolitan Campus cafeteria. The scraps include fruits and vegetables and other compostable leftovers.

TRI-C GRAD CREATES OASIS IN FOOD DESERT

In the middle of January, an orange tree was bearing fruit inside a Kinsman neighborhood greenhouse. It was the perfect metaphor for the agricultural oasis that Tri-C alum Keymah Durden has helped create at Rid-All Green Partnership.

Durden, with partners Damien Forshe and Randy McShepard, founded Rid-All about four years ago.

“We believe that we can transform a community by helping them improve their diets,” Durden, 49, said. “A healthy resident stock is a healthy community, and particularly in urban areas, health is a big issue because the access to food is very poor. Most people that buy food, they’re buying it from the local mini mart or gas station. You get your lottery tickets, your groceries and your beer all in one stop. We want to offer an alternative.”

The urban farm comprises five greenhouses, a treehouse office, a replica teepee and a big composting operation. Last year, Rid-All sold 1,000 cubic yards of compost.

The farm grows seasonal produce like tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers in summer and mustard greens, cabbage and kale in winter.

Rid-All also raises tilapia using an “aquaponics” set up. Fish waste fertilizes plants that grow above the tanks while plants take nitrates out of the water and return clean water to the fish. It’s a completely self-contained system.

Produce and fish are sold to individuals as well as local restaurants. Rid-All hosts a farmers market in summer, and also offers community garden plots. The non-profit also provides educational programming for students and senior citizens.

The farm accepts food waste from Tri-C’s Metropolitan Campus cafeteria as well as from local restaurants and the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. It uses this waste to produce compost, which it sells. Durden said he was working with Tri-C to start taking food waste from the Eastern Campus, which now runs a composting operation on site.

Durden spends his days working as a mechanical engineer. He earned degrees at Tri-C in mechanical engineering and environmental health and science.

Durden, Forshe and McShepard “all grew up here together on the East Side of Cleveland from like 5 or 6 years old . . . After college and work, we decided to come back together and do something positive for our city,” Durden said.

“I didn’t want to just kind of wing it, so I decided I was going to go back to school, get certified and know the language — know what sustainability really is.”



Chef Ky-wai Wong



James Funai

The Tri-C maintenance worker takes the stuff to Rid-All Green Partnership, an urban farm in Cleveland’s Kinsman neighborhood. There, the waste goes into a large pile and, after about six months, is transformed into “black gold,” what Rid-All co-founder and Tri-C alum Keymah Durden calls the compost the waste becomes.

This is but one example of Tri-C’s commitment to sustainability. It’s also one of the more obvious examples in an effort that encompasses the College as a whole and includes initiatives that go beyond recycling and composting all the way to academics.

“People want to be stewards of the resources of the College,” said David November, Tri-C’s sustainability manager. “The efforts are dependent on the dedication of Tri-C employees.”

Tri-C claims four buildings that are LEED certified, a stamp of approval from the U.S. Green Building



Rid-All's aquaponics system allows tilapia to flourish while their waste fertilizes plants.

Council. But a lot of real work goes on almost behind the scenes, in the planning and details.

Tri-C's sustainability efforts include recycling scrap metal, reusing shipping pallets as kindling for the College's fire training program, composting lawn and food waste, shredding and recycling paper, encouraging energy efficiency and other initiatives.

"Sustainability can be found wherever you look for it," November said.

Waste Not, Want Not

Sustainability as a concept took hold at the College around 2007. That was the year the College hired Dr. Craig Foltin, executive vice president of administration and finance, and he noticed there were no recycling containers in his office. Thus began an assessment of Tri-C's sustainability practices.

This resulted in the College's sustainability plan, which was adopted in 2010. It called for pursuing carbon neutrality, reducing the environmental impact of the College's buildings, waste reduction and more.

That year, assistant professor Ky-wai Wong began a composting initiative at Eastern Campus. With help from James Funai, an assistant professor in the Plant Science and Landscape Technology program, students built four composting bins on campus. Food waste from Café 4250 and cooking labs makes its way to the bins and is eventually used for student landscaping projects on campus as well as a community garden.

"We had so much waste left over. I knew there was something we could do, and this was the right thing to do," Wong said.

In 2014, the Hospitality Management Center of Excellence at Public Square began delivering edible leftovers to St. Herman's House in Ohio City and composting food waste at Maggie's Farm in the Stockyards area of Cleveland.

The College also composts all of its yard waste at the Eastern and Western campuses.

November said waste diversion is a fundamental goal of the College; the aim is to be diverting half of the College's waste from landfills by 2025.

"The logistics are the biggest challenge," November said.

At an institution of higher learning, paper also presents a problem. Tri-C recycles roughly 80 tons of paper per year. Faculty and staff are encouraged to think twice before hitting the print button, and when printing is necessary, using both sides of the paper is standard practice. Double-sided printing has saved the College roughly 5 million pages in the last year.

Last year the College began offering its course catalog exclusively online, also saving a significant amount of paper.

November said controlling the use of paper on campus was still a big deal and that he would like to see greater strides made. But the critical element is that people think about it now, where they might not have in the past.

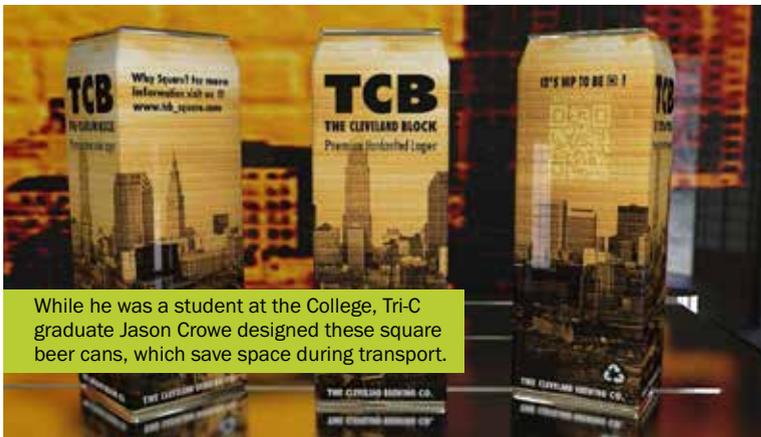
Eastern Campus has a 28,000-gallon cistern that captures runoff for irrigation. Other sustainability initiatives include an increased focus on online marketing, powering down computers at night instead of turning them off and using energy-efficient lighting.

November said that this all fits in with one of Tri-C President Alex Johnson's top priorities: to make the most effective use of resources for the benefit of students. But there is another reason to act in an environmentally responsible way.

"In many cases, it's saving us money. In others it's not costing us more. And it's the right thing to do," November said.

Teaching Sustainability

Composting food waste is but a starting point for sustainability. Sustainability is a mindset, and some of the most interesting sustainability initiatives at Tri-C are happening in the classroom.



percent increase from the previous year, according to a commuting survey by the College. But there is a sustainability component to the program, too. Riding the bus or rapid helps reduce carbon emissions.

This is a good example of how sustainability works at the College today. It's not an idea that is forced on new initiatives; it's a natural part of any move the College makes.

November said he is interested in supporting faculty who want to integrate sustainability into their curriculum, but he has discovered many are taking the initiative on their own.

Michael Wilkins, associate professor of mathematics at Metro, incorporates sustainability into his spring Statistics II course. Inspired by Earth Week, Wilkins asks students to formulate a question related to sustainability — paper versus plastic, hybrid cars versus traditional cars, nuclear power versus coal, even leaving a PlayStation on all the time versus turning it on and off — and then dig deep into the numbers that underlie it.

"It strengthens their statistical skills and their analytical skills, but it's also making them aware about the environment," Wilkins said. "There are so many problems with the environment that blend well with statistics."

In her package design course, assistant professor Suzanne Meola encourages students to think about the environment. They design shampoo containers that are refillable at the store and reusable takeout containers, for example.

"Most of the time packaging is discarded into the municipal solid waste system, and it takes up one-third of our municipal solid waste system," Meola said. "So, with that being said, how can we practice product stewardship when we are designing packaging to actually create things that can be reused or repurposed or packaging that is greener and built with material reduction?"

One of her students designed a square, aluminum beer can called the Cleveland Block. It minimizes wasted space during transport.

"I thought this would be over [students'] heads, that it would be too much. That was not the case. They loved it. They thought; they were challenged," Meola said. "It changes them."

The Big Picture

Last year, the College introduced its U-Pass program, which offers students free use of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. This makes getting to and from school easier — or even possible. More than one out of four Tri-C students used public transportation to reach class during fall semester 2014 — a 50

"As a community college, we are key members of the community and part of the progress Cleveland and Northeast Ohio are making toward becoming more sustainable," November said.

November will tell you that sustainability can be part of any conversation, that there is a social justice component to sustainability (food security, for example). It's a tricky concept to get your head around, but it speaks to a greater truth. You can talk about sustainability when you talk about anything at all.

"It's gone from being practiced by people interested in it to being part of the culture," he said.

While November would like to see the College's paper waste decrease even further, he also has his sights on some of the more nuanced aspects of sustainability. He said he would like to work with students more. He would like to see sustainability as part of College-wide curricula — across disciplines — so students leave Tri-C with sustainability as part of their worldview.

"It's a journey to a societal shift," he said. "The trick is getting people to see how social, economic and environmental systems interact and depend on one another."

SUSTAINABILITY FACTS

Cuyahoga Community College has realized many benefits from its sustainability efforts. Here are a few.

- More than \$32 million in cumulative energy and operational savings since starting energy efficiency upgrades in 2001
- Four LEED certifications (three Gold, one Silver)
- 4.8 million sheets of paper saved in 2014 due to double-sided printing and copying, saving \$37,000 in paper costs and 450 trees
- More than 300 tons of waste diverted from the landfill annually through reuse, recycling, or composting — a 30 percent diversion rate