

Introduction

Welcome to Week #21 of the Certified Green Lab Program! This week we're covering our last category of Elective Actions, Innovation & Engagement, and this will also happen to be the final week of newsletters for the program! That's right, we've reached our final three Elective Actions!

- 28. Encourage another lab to join the program.
- 29. Have a student volunteer or employee help engage your lab in the program.
- 30. Form a Green Team to share the responsibilities of the Sustainability Ambassador and encourage creativity.

As always, you can find all 20 prior newsletters on our website [here](#). We at the Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment would like to thank you for taking part in the Certified Green Lab Program and all the hard work you've done to make your labs greener. Every little bit counts, and we are looking forward to awarding your certifications!

As a reminder, completion of five Elective Actions beyond the Required Actions will earn you Bronze level certification, completion of ten will earn Silver level certification, and fifteen Elective Actions will earn Gold level certification.

Instructions

Elective Action #28: Encourage another lab to join the program.

There are many of labs on this campus, and as much as we would like to have every single one involved in CGLP, we know that we might not be able to talk every single one into participating ourselves. By spreading the word to other labs you're in contact with, you can both help us grow our network significantly and earn elective points. Let's be honest, for a lab that might not be already predisposed to sustainability initiatives, it is probably a more compelling case to join the program coming from a friends in other labs like your own than receiving an unsolicited email from iSEE.

Once you've recruited a lab, getting your point isn't hard -- just contact us to let us know who you've recruited, and ask the recruited lab to mention yours when they make contact with us. Remember, as we've said before, sustainability is a team effort. So don't be afraid to encourage others to join in!

Elective Action #29: Have a student volunteer or employee help engage your lab in the program.

Students are very enthusiastic to help out, so if you have student workers or volunteers in your lab, take advantage of this enthusiasm! A good starter task would be to have them assign tasks to employees and fill out the [Green Team](#) template.

Other good tasks for students:

- Have them check at the end of each day/week if repeated tasks, like shutting off power strips, are being completed.
- Have them monitor longer term or one-time tasks, for instance:
 - If you want to install a bin for reusable printer paper, have the student make sure the bin has been purchased and make sure it is being used properly.

Keep in mind that a lot of the current student generation was either brought up to be more eco-conscious or just has been exposed to many more eco-friendly ideas. So ask them for ideas on how to go above and beyond in your green lab!

Elective Action #30: Form a Green Team to share the responsibilities of the Sustainability Ambassador and encourage creativity.

While your job as Sustainability Ambassador is very important, the work doesn't all have to be on you! By forming a Green Team to assist in implementing your lab's Actions, not only will you have less work to do, but the lab will become more engaged in your sustainability efforts. The Green Team can be hands on, brainstorming focused, meet every week or just once a semester -- it just depends on what is best for your lab! The point being: find your allies, and give them ways to engage.

Here are some ideas of what your Green Team can do:

- Monitor the lab: find volunteers to make sure the right products are being recycled and thrown away in the right bins, encourage reusable water bottles, or take walks to turn off lights in nearby empty rooms.
 - Designate someone to design reusable water bottles for the lab.
 - Designate a group of people to make sure lights and other devices are turned off at the end of the day (we also have a convenient [template](#) for this!)
- Accomplish the elective actions by committee, perhaps by assigning one action per person. For example:

- Designate someone to purchase your chosen recycled content paper.
- Have someone make labels for your power strips as a reminder to turn them off, and have them encourage other employees to keep power strips on their desks rather than the floor.
- Hold occasional meetings to brainstorm ways to keep greening the lab and reflect on your progress.
- Use our [Green Team template](#) to keep track of your team's duties!

Don't feel limited by these ideas though! Just like most things, sustainability initiatives really benefit through collaboration and creativity. Divide up duties and tasks however you and your colleagues see fit.

Finally, a few tips as you go forth greening your offices:

First, remember that CGLP certification is not permanent! Each certification is a year-long designation, so getting certified this year does not mean you will continue to be certified in coming years. This is because sustainability is a continuous process, and we always have more work to do. As such, we would like to ask that you make sure your lab continues to re-enroll in the coming years for the next certification cycles!

Next, we would love to have a photo gallery of our Certified Green Labs! Please send us photos of your lab staff, Green Team, and/or sustainability improvements around your labs. We can't wait to see the changes you have made and to recognize all of your agents of change!

Lastly, don't forget that there are so many areas of our lives outside of the lab that can also be made substantially more sustainable. Many of the actions we have gone over in our newsletters can also be applied in your personal lives. If you haven't already, please consider doing everything you can to extend the mission of the Certified Green Lab into your own habits and practices, and encourage your colleagues to do the same!