

# CAMPUS & COMMUNITY

## Sustainability Club celebrates Earth Week

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Earth Week at UW-Superior was filled with fresh events this year. Earth Week complements Earth Day annually. Encouraging sustainability and nature on campus, Earth Week was filled with fun and educational activities from April 18 to April 24.

A campus clean-up was held to pick up trash revealed after the snow had melted. “We picked up a lot of cigarette butts and nicotine pouches,” says clean-up participant Gigi Boheim. Apparently, chemicals from tobacco and nicotine products leach into soil and are a top source for harm to plants and wildlife.

Landen Reier, sustainability club president, decided to bring newness to the long-standing celebration. “I think it was fun to do new stuff, like potting plants and Kahoot! instead of bingo... fresh things.” A new activity this year included educational tabling

every day of the week. Topics covered were, “There’s what in fish?” discussing mercury in fish, “When does my garbage go away?” and more.

UWS offers a unique edge in sustainability, with three bioswales and a ‘green roof’ on top of the Yellowjacket Union. This is a vegetated roof to assist with water runoff, filtration, insulation, and even aesthetics, as it changes color by the season.

Reier also shared a fact about the Yellowjacket Union rebuilding process. “The original building that was here, they reused a lot of the material from it to build the YU. Hardly any of the building material went to the landfill,” Reier said.

Yet sustainability is not limited to five days a year. Sustainability Club stresses that small-scale actions are just as important as big ones. By slightly altering one’s lifestyle, such as carrying a reusable water bottle rather than plastic, small changes can make a big difference.



Stickers, reusable dishware, reusable shopping bags, sustainable candy, plants and pots to decorate provided by the Sustainability Club during “There’s What in the Fish?” tabling at the YU April 21.

Photo by Elle Evenson | Promethean



Sustainability Club members and officers Gigi Boheim, Vice President (L), and Hannah Milanowski Treasurer (R) on campus clean-up day on April 22.

Photo by Elle Evenson | Promethean



UW-Superior’s solar array on April 28.

Photo by Maison Wiberg | Promethean

## Update on UWS solar array project

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UW-Superior’s solar array is finally up and running. The array was hooked up to the main power substation and fully turned on, marking April 21 as the end to the long wait. Although the project is officially complete, plans continue with campus involvement and sharing with the community.

There were a few bumps in the road to get the array running; one of the biggest challenges was obtaining specific parts that were essential to bring it online. Mark Graves, the facilities director at UWS, spoke about the smaller size of the project compared to other arrays and how that stopped them from getting parts sooner. “450-kW seems like a big array, but in the grand scheme of solar arrays, we’re really, really small. So, we’re competing for those

same parts, like everybody else, and in the grand scheme of things, I think we kind of got put on the back burner compared to those much bigger, like megawatt, and bigger kind of solar arrays,” Graves said.

Originally the array was planned to be a nine-month long project that turned into a two-year long project in total. Graves stated that it’s a huge relief to finally be finished and looks forward to sharing the data of the array’s efficacy with the community.

The intentions of sharing with the community don’t stop there. Depending on different departments and clubs on campus, Graves believes there is value in getting students involved in different aspects of the array. Whether it be sustainability, tracking their energy consumption and reporting it to the student base, or biology, students introducing

animal life and plant life into the controlled fenced-in area to see how different habitats work in that area. Having certain plant life inside the array can help with maintenance as well. “Something low growth, you know, something that we can kind of set it and forget it, not have to mow because if we’re consuming fossil fuels to mow it, it kind of screws up the whole point of having a solar array,” Graves said.

The array is estimated to produce roughly 5% to 15% of the campus total power, which can save around \$40,000 to \$50,000 on energy savings. This would lead to a full payback of the project in about 11 years.

The array’s energy production, as well as the campus energy consumption, is planned to be shared on a digital dashboard with live feedback on the information.



Sustainability Club’s new logo, seen as a sticker given out during tabling.

Photo by Elle Evenson | Promethean



Karli Kramer and Garret Froemke picking up trash outside the MWC on Earth Day, April 22.

Photo by Elle Evenson | Promethean

## Nutrition shop is “empowering” Superior

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A Mario Drink, a special themed drink from Empower Nutrition.

Photo by Baylee Nygard | Promethean

Empower Superior Nutrition is one of few nutrition drink shops in Superior that provide a wide variety of beverage options for the Superior community. From teas to protein drinks, they serve customizable drinks to your liking. “We definitely saw a demand in the area. There were other places like this but not necessarily ran we intended to be ran,” said Alexandra Boucher, owner of establishment. “...there isn’t really any options for like healthy fast food and we supply that demand.”

Marking almost 8 years since opening, Boucher along with her staff, have been able to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment for students, locals, regulars or people just passing by. Their establishment strives for connection with everybody that walks through their doors.

“When people associate the Empower name, they know that they can count on us,” Boucher said. “We are personable, we remember people’s names and orders and cars, dogs’ names, things like that.”

People crave consistency in life and Boucher is proud of the way she runs her business to accommodate that. “When people associate the ‘Empower’ name, they know that they can count on us, which I always have had as a goal to be an operational business here...people can count on us to be open,” said Boucher. Whether it is an everyday run or just an occasional stop, Empower is here for the community. The employees listen to the customer’s wants and needs so they can serve them something that will best align with their goals.

A fun tradition the nutrition

shop does is to incorporate different theme ideas into their calendar. “I try to plan them in months in advance and look at what is relevant...I like themes and people like themes. We try to do a theme each month and see what is going on in the world and in my head,” said Boucher. They decorate the shop and serve different drinks based on the theme at the moment. “We did a whole month of Taylor Swift this past October, so it’s what do we like, what do our customers like, what’s fun,” said Boucher. Themes draw people in out of curiosity and just to experience change.

“We have a lot to offer, if anyone is feeling intimidated or discouraged to like come in for the first time...we are very relatable and promise we are nice,” said Boucher.