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Online 'Green' Course Taps Innovative Partnership

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Now Wachovia employees have a new resource to help you go green at home, at work and even while traveling.

Under the direction of Daria Milburn of Environmental Affairs, a 45-minute Learning Connection course was designed by environmental studies and environmental science students at the University of North Carolina Institute for the Environment in Chapel Hill, N.C.

The launch of the course — *With Wachovia: The Environment & You* (course code PDEV3198) — is part of Green Week At Wachovia, which includes special recognition of Earth Day April 22 and National Arbor Day on April 25. Coverage on Pulse and the daily Take 5 TV show will focus on environmental stewardship by Wachovia and its employees.

Enrollment for the course opens April 22.

Milburn said the new course focuses on the changes employees can make in their daily lives. "The goal is not to tell employees how to help Wachovia, but how they can change their own behavior to have less impact on the environment and to enable change," she said. "The course highlights certain environmental issues, describes their impacts and suggests ways for employees to address them. When we make lifestyle changes at home and sustainability practices become a routine part of everyday life, we'll carry those habits to work."



UNC Partnership

The UNC Institute for the Environment and its Environmental Resource Program had long sought the opportunity to help Wachovia achieve its environmental goals.

Because Wachovia had already begun its own energy efficiency and emissions reduction programs, Milburn suggested to UNC officials that she could use their help instead designing a class for employees.

"The class came about because we wanted to have a way to educate employees on basic environmental issues and how it relates to them,"

Milburn said. "We want employees to understand that the choices they make are what create the circumstances around them."

Milburn and Kathleen Gray, director of the Environmental Resource Program at UNC and the Institute's associate director for outreach and public service, began brainstorming about the course last July. They decided to make it one of the "capstone projects" that environmental studies and environmental science majors have to complete before earning their undergraduate degrees.

The six seniors — Elisabeth Bradner, Henry Colangelo, Jacqueline Knee, Kevin Plotkin, Dana Williams and Christina Wyatt — met Milburn Jan. 18 at the Wachovia Center in Uptown Charlotte to begin their work. Afterward, they met to research, write and develop the course every Tuesday at Miller Hall on the UNC campus. Research associate Elizabeth Shay helped guide the work.

The students delivered the final product two weeks ago to Milburn and Traci Welch in Enterprise Learning. After a few edits to give the self-guided PowerPoint course the "Wachovia look and feel" — and to add Milburn's narration — the course was uploaded to My Learning Connection.

Employees who complete the voluntary course will receive:

- An EcoKit containing three compact fluorescent light bulbs (60-, 75-, and 100-watt equivalents) and a high-efficiency shower head.
- An Energy Conservation Information Wheel providing conservation tips rated as low, medium or high for energy savings.

Milburn said Wachovia hopes to continue to build on the course and offer an interactive version with an assessment. She said, "We're very pleased with the students' work and the energy and excitement they brought to this project."

The students used a subteam approach to produce the PowerPoint and complete its sections on water and energy use, waste and air quality and changes at home, work and during travel.

New Understanding

While they knew more than most people about the topic because of their majors, all of the students said the course produced new insights. "I learned how much thought goes into transmitting scientific information into language the general public can understand," Wyatt said.

Added Bradner, whose father Barry works for Wachovia in the Host Authorization and Settlement Group of Retail Distribution Technology, "We all have some relation with public health, but the project produced several concrete facts that have helped my friends understand why I have such a passion for recycling."

Knee, who teamed with Williams to produce the water quality and recycling portion of the course, didn't expect to find such a wide spectrum of environmental knowledge. "I was surprised so few people knew or cared about environmental issues," she said.

Her roommates don't have the spigot running anymore while washing dishes and use less heating and air conditioning. "I told them our electric bill would be lower if we turned the thermostat up two degrees and they were all for that," she said.

When Colangelo learned that Wachovia was the client, he jumped at the chance to participate in a rare capstone project involving a for-profit company. "This one caught my eye because it involved a corporation with employees around the world and a global impact," Colangelo said. "It's been a great experience giving Wachovia's employees the information they need to make better personal choices."

Looking to the Future

The course hasn't just caught the attention of Wachovia. Gray expects the Vice Chancellor's Sustainability Advisory Committee at the university to draw on the course as it crafts its own environmental education for faculty, staff and students.

"Wachovia has been a great partner to work with and the amount of access they've given students has been wonderful," she said. "It's been a high-impact project for everyone."



(Clockwise from left) Bradner, Williams, Knee, Wyatt, Colangelo and Plotkin on the lawn outside Miller Hall where they met each Tuesday to create the course *With Wachovia: The Environment & You* under the direction of Daria Milburn in Environmental Affairs.

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