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Living Green Is a Lifestyle Choice

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Duncan Reid '10 and Katie Kann '11 pack fluorescent light bulbs into bags in preparation for students to blanket McMinnville asking local residents to install the fluorescent bulbs, which are more energy efficient, in place of incandescent bulbs. The project was in conjunction with McMinnville Water & Light. For every bulb they replaced, Linfield earned a \$2 energy credit that can be applied to the renovation of Northup Hall.

Living green is a lifestyle choice

Duncan Reid '10 treads softly on Mother Earth. But his small footprint is leaving a trail toward a more sustainable lifestyle.

Duncan Reid '10 walks up to a house in McMinnville. He is a slight 21-year-old with a jumble of dreadlocks pulled into a ponytail. Soft spoken and polite, he explains that he is one of several Linfield College students working with McMinnville Water & Light to replace incandescent light bulbs with more energy-efficient compact fluorescents. For every bulb replaced, Linfield will earn a \$2 energy credit that can be applied to the renovation of Northup Hall. The door opens, Reid and a friend enter, replace four bulbs, and head for the next house.

Sustainability doesn't have to mean making huge lifestyle changes, Reid said. Taking small steps can lead to big results.

"Sustainability is being aware of your surroundings, being intentional about your actions and being aware of the consequences of your actions," he said.

Catalyst for change

Reid enrolled at Linfield as an international business major, aiming to build sustainable communities in developing nations. He planned to develop the infrastructure and help communities use local materials for building and renewable sources of energy. His view has changed radically.

"It's easy to go into a less developed nation that has nothing and begin building from scratch," he said. "The real problem is how developed nations allocate resources."

An activist by age 18, Reid began organizing a sustainable movement at Linfield before he started classes. During orientation he asked sociology Professor Rob Gardner how he could organize an environmental advocacy group on campus. Before long, the club was up and running with Gardner as faculty advisor. Reid approached John Hall, then director of facilities, to discuss green projects at the college. By the end of his first year, President Thomas L. Hellie had appointed Reid to the Advisory Committee on the Environment and Sustainability (ACES).

"As a freshman, Duncan built rapport with and inspired both new students and upperclassmen to make changes on campus," Gardner said. "Since he has emerged as a leader, students across campus are working to change campus policies and collaborating with local environmental organizations to make lasting and sustainable changes in the community. Duncan is a major catalyst for this change."

Gardner helped Reid realize that his passion for the environment could become part of an academic experience and ultimately, a career.

"I never thought of it as something I could study, just something that I would do on the side," said Reid, who is now an environmental studies major with an emphasis on environmental policy.

Living green is not a fashion statement for Reid – *it is a lifestyle.*

- He gave up coffee last fall after he lost his mug and refused to use disposable cups.
- Most of his food is organic, coming from a local farmer and grocery store.
- He carefully considers packaging and where the food was grown before he buys.
- He turns lights off when he leaves a room and reduces the "phantom energy load" in his house by connecting small appliances and electronics to power strips that are turned off when they aren't needed.
- His primary mode of transportation is his bicycle.
- He led the effort for the successful student referendum to add a \$10-per-semester student fee that will fund green projects at Linfield.
- He founded Greenfield, the student environmental group.

Issue of his lifetime

Reid's interest is in developing and influencing policy that will improve the environment, promote sustainability and ultimately benefit people. No matter how you frame it, he said, environmental matters are about people.

"All of these issues affect how habitable the world is for humans and that in turn affects how we get along," he said. "The allocation of resources such as water and energy, and the negative impact of pollution dictate how different cultures and nations interact."

Reid was instrumental in organizing Linfield's "Focus the Nation" program last year, in which Linfield faculty joined with about 150 students to discuss and debate the impact of global warming. His biggest reward was watching the reaction of students who realized for the first time that they could inspire people to act on major issues. Reid believes there is no issue too big to tackle, especially if you accentuate the positive.

"When I see a problem, I also see opportunity. For every problem, there's an opportunity to make a change for the better."

That optimism drives everything Reid does.

"Even if there is nothing that we can do, I think my life will be better served trying to change it for the positive instead of just giving up," he said. "If you don't try, nothing will happen."

Marvin Henberg, professor of philosophy and coordinator of the environmental studies program, calls Reid "a force to be reckoned with" on environmental issues, yet also generous and affable.

"He is the kind of student you love to have because he is very motivated and he likes to think in ways that I believe challenge a faculty member," he said. "He is one of those students who see everything in light of that one great cause. He is always refreshing because he thinks things through in ways most people do not."

Reid's learning style doesn't fit the typical curricular mold of college. By working with Linfield professors, he's been able to complete much of his major through independent studies. During spring semester he studied environmental leadership and served as a peer advisor in Henberg's Environmental Problem Solving class, which Reid took as a sophomore. He spent a week in Washington, D.C., meeting with and interviewing environmental leaders in Congress and at various agencies for a research paper.

"Interacting with administrators and faculty outside the classroom has been really beneficial," he said. "Linfield has given me opportunities to design a major that fits my learning style."

Greenfield, the student environmental club, was Reid's brainchild. Student membership has grown, partly because students are attracted to the group's mission, and partly because of Reid's natural charisma.

"I think some people became involved because they were interested in what I was trying to do," he said. "I think they have remained involved because they realize that this is something within their reach. It is possible to make a difference."

Beth Satterwhite '10 said Reid has a vision for what he wants to accomplish and the ability to inspire others to take action on their beliefs.

"He doesn't give up, no matter what obstacles are in his way," she said. "He's a really good leader and can get multiple people to take on leadership roles. I think that's why Greenfield has been so successful. He's not the only leader in that club."

Reid tries to set an example so others will make a commitment to sustainability.

"A lot of people are talking about sustainability because it's hip," he said. "I want to help bring about that shift in attitude so people understand the importance of living in a sustainable way."

— *Mardi Mileham*

Environmental studies traverse the curriculum

The environmental studies major at Linfield College is interdisciplinary with a focus on science or policy.

Environmental studies centers on understanding relationships between humans and the planet's life support systems and seeks to develop a deep awareness of the complex, highly dynamic nature of the world, including interactions among human population, the biological and physical environments, resources, technology, social organization and culture.

The program draws on almost every field in the liberal arts with a curriculum combining science,

human culture and public policy so as to adequately resolve environmental problems. The core of the environmental studies major features cross-disciplinary introductory courses along with requirements in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Students may take an English course that is co-taught by English and biology professors, as well as courses in political science, anthropology, history, the natural and physical sciences, and economics. Environmental studies January Term courses have been held in China, Chile, Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands, South Africa and Australia.