



The Academy for the Environment is an interdisciplinary institute at the University of Nevada, Reno, whose mission is to develop, enhance and coordinate environmental teaching, research and service at the University of Nevada, Reno.

### Survey Says:

# UNAE Programs are good for the UNR Campus

In a survey conducted by the Center for Research Design and Analysis in the spring of 2008, over 100 environmental faculty, graduate students, and staff expressed strong support for Academy for the Environment (UNAE) programs. This survey, sponsored by the Academy, was conducted to determine campus needs and set future directions, revealed widespread awareness of and support for UNAE programs and activities.

Respondents evaluated a number of Academy objectives, missions, current projects and possible future directions. Among UNAE missions and objectives, developing innovative courses and interdisciplinary connections was the most important according to the survey respondents. Over 90% of respondents supported UNAE educational programming, particularly interdisciplinary seminars. The UNAE mini-grant program, which has provided financial support to interdisciplinary research, conference participation, and course development, also received acclaim with over 86% of respondents supporting it. As for future projects, respondents

were asked to rate up to three activities that they thought should be top priorities for future UNAE resource allocation. The most commonly chosen options were interdisciplinary project support (53%), graduate student support (45%), and the Environmental Studies undergraduate double-major program (40%).

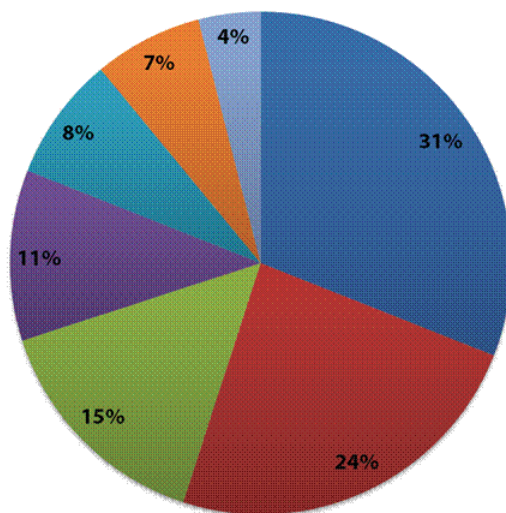
Based on the survey results, the Academy for the Environment administrative staff and steering committee began assessing future directions during a fall retreat, contingent on budget issues. The survey information provides strong indication of the value of UNAE programs to the UNR campus among environmental faculty, and with this support UNAE hopes to continue facilitating high-quality interdisciplinary environmental research, education and outreach programs to our community.

If you're interested in reading the complete survey results, please visit: <http://environment.unr.edu/forms/>

### In This Issue:

- Academy for the Environment Survey Results (p. 1)
- What has UNAE done for you? (p. 2)
- Environmental Studies Students (p. 2)
- Mini Grant Highlight: Avian Life Literary Arts (p.3)
- Mini Grant Awards, 2008 (p. 3)
- Note from the Director (p. 4)
- Fall 2008: Go Green Event Re-cap (p. 4)

Survey Results: Summary of Most Important Priorities for UNAE



- 31%: Develop innovative courses & provide cross-college connections
- 24%: Support the development of interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs
- 15%: Raise the environmental awareness on campus
- 11%: Enhance and expand research & scholarship opportunities for environmental faculty
- 8%: Conduct public outreach activities on the environment in collaboration with other programs
- 7%: Promote environmentally-related programs at the university
- 4%: Link sciences & engineering programs with the arts & humanities



## What Has UNAE Done For You?

Did you know that the Walker Basin Project has generated over \$9,000,000 in collaborative research between the University of Nevada and Desert Research Institute?

To date, over \$5.1M has been allocated directly to various colleges/ departments in support of UNR faculty-led research, and over \$4.5M has been sub-awarded to DRI in support of their contribution. The collaborative effort of our two research institutions to help restore Walker Lake while protecting the agriculture economy of the region makes this effort an unprecedented unique and historic undertaking. It is anticipated that the findings will have local, national and international implications for other arid and high desert regions of the world.

### Do you want to know more?

This complex effort involves faculty, students and staff from many units at both institutions. A total of 24 UNR faculty members (plus their students, post docs, technicians, and staff) from six colleges are involved. In addition to the cutting edge research being conducted, the benefits of this project to UNR have been two-fold: 1) the University community at large has benefited from the F&A generated; and 2) it has provided an opportunity for participating faculty to shore-up college and department infrastructure (e.g., the purchase of cutting edge field and laboratory equipment) during a period of fiscal constraint. Although the Walker Basin Project is nearing completion, we now have the opportunity to take the multi-institutional infrastructure and interdisciplinary capacity we have developed and generate nationally competitive proposals that take advantage of the information now available from this region and the state of Nevada. For more detailed information please visit the Academy web site <http://environment.unr.edu/research/> and the UNR Walker Basin Project site <http://www.nevada.edu/walker/>.

## Environmental Studies Students Show Entrepreneurial Spirit

**Pop Quiz: What do "Trashion" shows, organic farms, vegan soup, automobile emissions and pumpkins all have to do with each other?**

**Answer: Each is connected to a project developed by Environmental Studies undergraduate majors in pursuit of practical learning.**

Stimulated by UNAE 110's semester long "Environmental Citizenship" project, environmental studies students work together in small groups to design and implement small-scale solutions to environmental challenges they identify in the community. The projects encouraged creativity and problem solving. "Creating and developing the [green] café has pushed me outside my comfort zone numerous times," wrote Amy Harris, whose fall 2008 project is working with other students to organize an alternative café on campus. "Surveying people, speaking in front of crowds and channel 4 news TV interviews counter my shy nature." This project requires the students to chose a project they really care about, define its scope and boundaries, identify their own standards for evaluation, and implement their ideas. The end result is that students gain a realistic grasp of what a small group of people can really accomplish.

from 2007 have already grown into campus-wide initiatives, such as the creation of the Environmental Action Team (EnACT) which has hosted two film festivals and successfully started a ¾-acre sustainable farm at the Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station. This year's students hope to create an alternative café on campus and to provide materials to public schools that will encourage parents to stop idling their cars in an effort to reduce air pollution.

Beyond the scope of the UNAE 110 class, Environmental Studies majors

Delia Martinez and Kaitlin Weeks showed their entrepreneurial spirit by attending the *National Communities that Learn for Sustainability* conference, and helped to lead the Youth Leadership workshop for the City of Reno's Green Summit, 2008. Delia Martinez also organized and designed the first EnACT Trashion show, a highlight of the "Go Green with Nevada Blue" Sustainability Festival. The show featured outfits designed by UNR students using materials ranging from potato sacks to wrigley's spearmint gum wrappers to used bicycle tires.



**The Environmental Action Team is open to all UNR students, staff, and faculty. The club meets during every semester on Mondays from 12-1 in CSU 320.**

## New Bird Publication Takes Flight:

### Literary takes of the feathered persuasion populate avian journal



Thanks to an interdisciplinary grant from UNAE, a collection of graduate students in the Department of English has launched a new creative writing publication, The LBJ: Avian Life, Literary Arts. Celebrating “little brown jobs” and other birds in contemporary literature, this biannual journal provides a much-needed venue for quality poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction. Additionally, the first 150-page issue features full-color art and reviews of recent avian-oriented books, all in a 5.5” x 8.5” format just right to carry into the field alongside binoculars.

The LBJ gives birders and lovers of literature a place to share their passions. Poet and contributor Elizabeth Bradfield comments, “A journal about birds? Crazy and wonderful! I was thrilled to hear of it.” Ornithologist Justin Hite notes that the project is a “wonderful idea,” and will allow him to find a place for his creative work.

The first issue of The LBJ was released in October; the second will appear in April 2009 and include a special cluster of work about suburban and urban birds. Over the course of the next year, the staff hopes to take The LBJ farther and wider with the help of a distributor, as well as to devote pages to writing from ornithologists about their studies.

Domestic subscriptions are available to individuals for \$15, or \$25 for two years; institutional and Canadian subscriptions are also available. More information about the journal is available from The LBJ’s website, [www.literarybirdjournal.org](http://www.literarybirdjournal.org). Or contact Nick Neely, Editor-in-Chief, at [editor@literarybirdjournal.org](mailto:editor@literarybirdjournal.org).

## Academy for the Environment: 2008 Mini Grant Program Awards

| Awardee  | Department  | Proposal Name  | Amount  |
|--|---|--|---------|
| Leslie Allen   | Western Area Cooperative Extension                                    | West Street Urban Agriculture Demonstration Garden Physical and Cultural Suitability Study                               | \$4,487 |
| David Fiore  | Family Medicine   | Wilderness Exposure - Educating Children about the Link Between Environmental Health and Personal Health                 | \$4,567 |
| Peter Goin   | Art   | Visual Case Study: Post-Fire Landscape Development (Angora Fire, South Lake Tahoe)                                       | \$5,000 |
| Marcy Kamerath   | Natural Resources and Environmental Science                           | (SAWI) Interdisciplinary Water and Agricultural Management Project, Nkambe, Cameroon                                     | \$5,000 |
| Kyhl Lyndgard, James Bishop, Scott Slovic                                    | English   | Currents of the Universal Being: Exploration in the Literature of Energy   | \$5,000 |
| Donica Mensing   | Reynolds School of Journalism   | Exploring Environmental Issues of the West   | \$1,200 |
| Donica Mensing   | Reynolds School of Journalism   | Environmental Journalism Boot Camp and Society of Environmental Journalists Conference                                   | \$2,655 |
| Nick Neely & Tom Hertweck  | English (Literature and Environment)                                  | The LBJ: Avian Life, Literary Arts   | \$4,000 |
| Chris Pristos  | Nutrition   | Groundwater Contamination From Lead Mining: Impact on Avian Species - Bridge Funding                                     | \$4,782 |
| Shawn Pugh, Rebekah McKenna, Schinthia Islam, Schinria Islam, Claire Shelton | Chemical Engineering, Biochemistry, Economics, Electrical Engineering | The Electron Transport Chain as a Source of Alternative Energy   | \$4,356 |
| Laurel Saito   | Natural Resources and Environmental Science                           | Using Wildlife Guzzlers to Estimate Precipitation and Runoff in Remote catchments in Nevada                              | \$5,000 |
| Paul Starrs  | Geography   | Planning for an Evolving American West: Geographical Views of the Urban-Rural Dynamic (support for 4 speakers, 4 events) | \$3,400 |

## Contact Us

### Academy for the Environment

1664 N. Virginia Street, Mail Stop 436  
Mackay Science Building, Room 108  
Reno, NV 89557-0436

Phone: 775-784-8262; Fax : 775-784-8261

Email: [environment@unr.edu](mailto:environment@unr.edu)

Web: <http://environment.unr.edu>

Mail To:

## Letter from the Director, Mike Collopy

Welcome to the first issue of the Academy for the Environment's newsletter. I hope that the information presented here and in the future will raise your awareness of the campus' new and ongoing academic, research and outreach environmental programs, and encourage you to become more involved in those programs and activities with which you are most interested.

Some of you may not have heard that last year President Glick signed the American College & University President's Climate Commitment, committing UNR to achieve climate neutrality as soon as possible (<http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org> for details). Currently, UNR's Sustainability Committee is working with faculty, staff and students to develop strategies to make UNR more sustainable and to address global warming by reducing our production of greenhouse gases. Four working groups have been formed that will be focusing on issues associated with Campus Life, Food & Campus Operations; Commuting & Transportation; Curriculum & Education; and Energy, Electricity & Thermal. A UNR Sustainability Website will be launched soon and will provide information on current programs, progress being made by the Sustainability



Mike Collopy

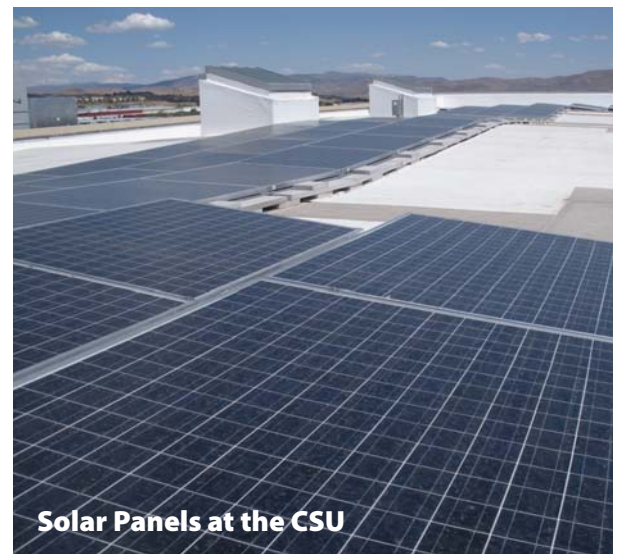
Committee (and how you can get involved), and information resources for those interested in taking personal action. I strongly encourage you look for this website in the near future (a link will be provided on the UNAE website) and contact this committee with your ideas on how our campus can become more sustainable.

It is more important than ever that each of us look for ways to conserve our limited resources and become better stewards of our environment. Through this newsletter and programs supported by the Academy for the Environment, we will try to provide information that will assist you in learning more about what is going on at UNR and how you can get involved.

Visit us online at <http://environment.unr.edu>

## Go Green with Nevada Blue: Our Sustainable Campus Starts with You! *"A Stunning Success"*

In October, the Academy for the Environment, together with Joe Crowley Student Union "CSU," the Environmental Action Team, and the Child and Family Research Center hosted the second annual sustainability festival on the UNR campus. "Go Green" grew out of the Fall 2007 farmer's market organized by UNAE 110 students to raise awareness about the importance of local food. "Rethink-Reduce-Reuse-Recycle" was an important theme of this year's event, with the Trashion Show and the children's art show on exhibit in the CSU. The festival also included the dedication of the solar panels installed at the CSU by Black Rock Solar, an open-air market featuring UNR programs and local businesses, and a film festival. Thanks to the UNR community for helping make this event a success!



Solar Panels at the CSU