

March 15, 2005

New York Times project benefits school district

Last year the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP) embarked on a new campuswide civic engagement endeavor called The American Democracy Project (ADP), a collaboration between The New York Times and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU).

Thanks in large measure to seven paper science students (listed below), the ADP is about to link up with UWSP's growing sustainability initiative begun about three years ago, and, in the process, benefit the Stevens Point Area Public School District. These seven seniors were assigned a senior capstone project, "Recycling the NY Times." The students are enrolled in Paper Science 486, a senior-level class in which students work as a team on a design project from start to finish. Karyn Biasca is the professor.

The project's initial goal is to separate the NY Times newspapers from the rest of the campus recycled paper stream. This project includes recycling bins to separate the Times from other newspapers and products currently recycled within the campus' existing program. The goal is to use the newspaper to create and manufacture a new product utilizing paper science's fully operational paper machine. The students will then donate the newly produced paper product to the Stevens Point School District as art paper stock for the district's arts classes.

Neenah Paper, Inc. Whiting Mill will donate their expertise to cut the paper rolls to the sizes needed by the district. The preliminary test run on UWSP's paper machine is planned for April 5 with the first actual production run scheduled for May 3. District art teachers and other project partners will be invited to attend.

According to Biasca, this is an engineering design project that is a required part of Paper Science 486 where the assignment is to establish whether or not the recycling of the NY Times is feasible on campus equipment, how the process should be configured to accomplish the task, and how the economics of the project work out. The class assignment was designed to be a service learning project for the students in the course, with benefit to the school district as one of the outcomes.

"This gives our seniors a chance to see the entire loop from the original project idea to implementation, as well as bringing value and service back to the community," said

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Biasca. “It’s proving to be a wonderful experience for our students and faculty as this collaboration stretches from the New York Times to Neenah Paper, and from our students to the greater regional community. Paper science students themselves will enter district classrooms to see how students will use the paper product.”

To date, nearly 1,000 UWSP students and faculty are participating in the ADP and related civic engagement activities. The three-year multicampus initiative “seeks to create an intellectual and experiential understanding of civic engagement in the United States in the 21st century.” Undergraduates enrolled at AACSC institutions, of which UWSP is one, are taking part in a myriad of activities all targeting an increase of civic participation at all levels of society. UWSP is one of seven UW System comprehensive campuses taking part. This initiative has quickly become a key component for students to internalize the benefits and responsibilities of life-long civic engagement.

Many general degree requirement courses at UWSP now utilize the availability of the NY Times daily newspaper. From the sciences to the liberal arts, and now in paper science, faculty members and their students are finding creative ways to augment the classroom experience of exploring a world-class daily newspaper. Now the ADP project becomes linked to UWSP’s larger sustainability mission begun when the Student Government Association worked with faculty, staff and administrators to approve the Talloires Declaration, a document that calls for increased awareness of environmentally sustainable development and the creation of an institutional culture of sustainability.

Students (all seniors majoring in paper science) taking part in the project are:

Antigo:	Nathaniel Koeppel, 1016 6 th Ave., '98 graduate of Antigo Senior High School
Florence:	Jeffrey Osterberg, 4099 Bloom Helgren Road, '00 graduate of Florence High School
Junction City:	Alison StPeter, 645 County Road S, '00 graduate Lincoln High School
Port Edwards:	Matthew Schneider, 241 Alexander Ave., '00 graduate John Edwards High School
Two Rivers:	Adam Schmidt, 7935 Prairie Lane, '00 graduate Mishicot High School
Union Grove:	Matthew Czerniak, 1839 Milldrum St., '99 graduate Union Grove High School
Waukesha:	Andrew Goodyear, 1904 Chapman Drive, '00 graduate Waukesha West High School.