



Postsecondary Sustainability Award Nominee Presentation Form

ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS

College or University Certifications

The signature of college or university President (or equivalent) on the next page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the institution’s eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of their knowledge.

1. The college or university has been evaluated and selected from among institutions within the Nominating Authority’s jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
2. The college or university is providing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a compliance review.
3. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the college or university concluding that the nominated college or university has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan to remedy the violation.
4. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the college or university has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
5. There are no findings by Federal Student Aid of violations in respect to the administration of Title IV student aid funds.
6. The college or university is in good standing with its regional or national accreditor.
7. The college or university meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Postsecondary Sustainability Award

Name of President/Chancellor: Dr. John L. Crain

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official College or University Name: Southeastern Louisiana University

(As it should appear on an award)

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

 Date: 12/16/2020
(President’s/Chancellor’s Signature)

Nominating Authority’s Certifications

The signature by the Nominating Authority on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the college or university’s eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the Authority’s knowledge.

1. The college or university has been evaluated and selected from among institutions within the Nominating Authority’s jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
2. The college or university meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety



requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

Name of Nominating Agency: Louisiana Department of Education

Name of Nominating Authority: Mr. Thomas Gresham
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify to the best of my knowledge that the school meets the provisions above.



(Nominating Authority's Signature) Date: 2/24/2021

SUBMISSION

The nomination package, including the signed certifications, narrative summary, documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars, and photos should be submitted online according to the instructions in the Nominee Submission Procedure.

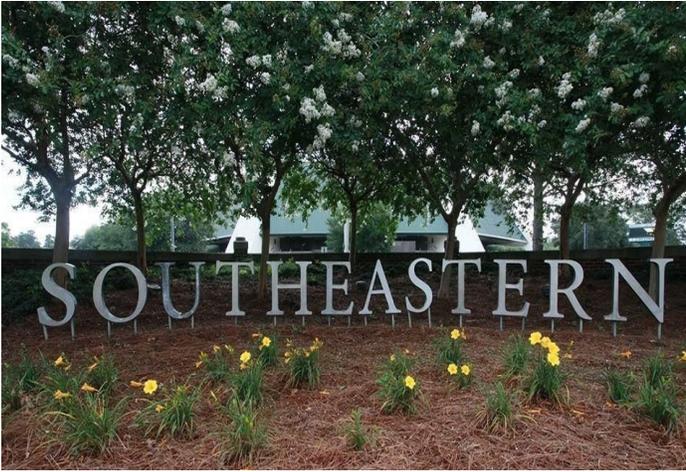
OMB Control Number: 1860-0509
Expiration Date: December 31, 2023

Public Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0509. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 37 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit P.L. 107-110, Sec. 501, Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202-4536 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1860-0509. Note: Please do not return the completed ED-Green Ribbon Schools application to this address.

Southeastern Louisiana University

Nominee to U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools



Narrative Summary

Southeastern Louisiana University is a public institution that was founded in 1925. The campus is located in a rural setting in Hammond, Louisiana on approximately 365 acres. Current enrollment at the University is approximately 15,000 students. Southeastern's mission is to lead the educational, economic and cultural development of southeast Louisiana. The University's educational programs are based on vital and evolving curricula that address emerging national, regional, and international priorities. Together, Southeastern and the community provide a broad array of cultural activities that complete the total educational experience.

Southeastern makes a conscious effort to maintain and promote sustainable practices. This commitment is evident across campus from solar panels, to water bottle refilling stations, recycling campaigns, and to our newest residence halls that use geothermal technology. Southeastern's two new residence halls are 30% more energy efficient, have reduced greenhouse gas production by 58% annually, and, as a result, saved the University \$107,000 since operations began in October of 2018.

Southeastern constructed a Sustainability Center in 2010 that utilizes a geothermal pond loop system that provides for the heating and cooling of the building. Through its sustainable energy design, the University's Sustainability Center has self-sustained 34.88 megawatts of energy with its photovoltaic panels since 2012. Additionally, Southeastern has five solar thermal systems around campus that have a capacity of 200,000 BTU/day (heat units). These renewable energy initiatives are an integral part of Southeastern's plans to be 50% off the power grid by 2030.

The University promotes sustainability education both in and out of the classroom. Southeastern's Sims Memorial Library hosts events such as the "Green Talks" environmental series on sustainability, involving students, faculty, and the community in discussion. The Sustainability Center serves as an educational facility for the campus and the region. The Center offers diverse learning opportunities for students of all ages in the areas of renewable energy, recycling and waste reduction measures, plant biology, and other sustainable technologies. The Center has become a popular field trip for students in local K-12 schools, through its STEM outreach programs and the North Shore STEM Coalition. As of 2016, 135 individual and group tours have been given at the Center.

Student health and wellness is an important component of the educational model at Southeastern. The Recreational Sports and Wellness Center (Rec Center) offers students and community members numerous opportunities to stay physically active. The Rec Center provides free weights, fitness classes such as yoga, Pilates, spin, Tai Chi, fitness machines, and intramural sports for students.

Southeastern's dining facility, The Mane Dish, plays an important part in the health of our students and community. A team of dedicated managers and chefs at The Mane Dish work with individual students who may have dietary restrictions, including food allergies, through its True Balance dining station. This dining station avoids common food allergens to provide safely-sourced, healthy meals for those who suffer from food allergies. In addition to healthy options, The Mane Dish also provides monthly environmentally-friendly eating and waste reduction campaigns. These campaigns include Weigh the Waste, which demonstrates how much food is wasted on a specific day, and Root to Leaf, which is a series of meals prepared with edible but often discarded parts of vegetables. The Mane Dish's incentive behind these campaigns is to introduce sustainability practices and reduce waste, while also encouraging healthy consumption habits.

Pillar I: Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs

Southeastern Louisiana University is committed to reducing waste through resource conservation and reducing the University's environmental footprint. The University is making its campus greener by using alternative energy sources such as geothermal and solar, retro-fitting campus buildings with LED lights, and through campus recycling programs.

Numerous sustainability efforts have been implemented through Southeastern's Physical Plant facility to reduce energy consumption. Physical Plant staff can simultaneously view and control the HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) performance in most buildings on campus, thereby reducing energy consumption and generating significant savings. An online dashboard in the facility control system displays energy use and savings information so that visitors can observe the system's benefits first-hand. Physical Plant also offers STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) educational outreach programs to non-academic departments and the local community.

In 2009, the University implemented an energy savings initiative by modifying standard hours of operations, resulting in significant savings impact. (Table below reflects utility cost over the last 12 years).

Year	Square Feet	Cost Elec & Gas	Cost per sq ft
2007	2,847,445.00	\$3,734,726.00	\$1.31
2008	2,799,420.00	\$4,724,693.00	\$1.69
2009	2,799,420.00	\$4,804,418.00	\$1.72
2010	2,969,425.00	\$3,418,093.00	\$1.15
2011	2,968,413.00	\$3,570,019.00	\$1.20
2012	2,968,162.00	\$3,641,434.00	\$1.23
2013	2,957,581.00	\$3,703,510.00	\$1.25
2014	3,050,301.00	\$4,189,464.00	\$1.37
2015	2,965,078.00	\$4,031,033.00	\$1.36
2016	2,954,100.00	\$3,811,983.00	\$1.29
2017	2,981,408.00	\$4,042,024.00	\$1.36
2018	3,102,787.00	\$4,219,882.00	\$1.36
2019	3,104,080.00	\$4,009,885.00	\$1.29
2020	3,100,635.00	\$3,667,576.00	\$1.18



Southeastern's Utility Costs per Square Foot

Since its creation, the Sustainability Center has accumulated numerous awards including: Environmental Leadership from Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for its pollution prevention and commitment to environmental protection initiatives, the Operational Excellence Champion awarded by the Louisiana Chapter of U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC Louisiana), and the Environmental Steward award (from the St. Tammany West Chamber of Commerce) in recognition of the University's wide-ranging sustainability programs.

The Sustainability Center team works to create an environment that is conducive to learning and expanding its environmental goals. The Center provides opportunities for extensive study in sciences and technology for students of all ages. In fact, the Center welcomed over 1,500 student visitors in the last two years. The Center's staff is actively involved in community outreach programs such as STEM Cafe, First Lego League Science, and environmental awareness programs at local area schools.

Another important benefit of the Sustainability Center is the data it provides on a daily basis. The Center serves as an information hub where the Physical Plant team can manage its maintenance projects, landscapes, energy footprint, and costs. Thus, Southeastern is able to monitor and analyze its environmental impact.

One of the most sustainable places in the Sustainability Center is Southeastern's Environmental Education Development (SEED) Outreach Center, which is powered by solar photovoltaic panels, and heated and cooled by a geothermal system. The Center also has an operational power-generating wind turbine, a solar thermal system, and an electrical charging station. This classroom was designed for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified. Inside of the classroom there are displays for each of the alternative energies utilized in the building, as well as an interactive 3D model of passive solar, called a Heliodon. Through its

sustainable energy design, the SEED Center self-sustained 34.88 megawatts of energy since 2012, thereby reducing energy from the local power grid.



Southeastern's Environmental Education Development (SEED) Outreach Center

The Center has two water retention ponds for water conservation. These geothermal pond loop systems provide on-site heating and cooling of the building and are used in plant irrigation for landscaping around campus. In addition, Southeastern's irrigation throughout campus has rain sensors that allow the irrigation system to operate according to rainfall measures. In the future, the University has additional plans to enhance water conservation efforts with more retention ponds. After success with the geothermal technology in the SEED Center, Southeastern decided to expand this technology by building state-of-the-art hybrid geothermal residence halls on campus. Southeastern's Ascension and Twelve Oaks residence halls have 220 wells at 300 feet underground in a closed-loop system. Gases removed from the wells are not exposed to the atmosphere and are injected back into the ground after giving up their heat. With this type of system, pumps move heat from the ground to the building when the weather outside is chilly. When cooling is needed, the process is reversed. The result is a sustainable, economical, and environmentally-friendly solution to heating and cooling. These buildings are 30.38% more efficient in electricity consumption than other traditional dorms, produce 58% less in greenhouse gases and have saved the University \$107,000 since operations began in October of 2018. These savings consist of \$93,890 in electricity savings and \$13,610 in natural gas savings. Unlike the nonrenewable energy sources of coal and natural gas used by traditional buildings, geothermal does not produce negative externalities like high air emissions and land degradation. This closed-loop system operates using one-twenty fifth of the water a standard building system would use. Southeastern is also working to expand



Hybrid Geothermal Dorms

Southeastern has installed numerous solar panels on buildings across campus to decrease costs, reduce reliance on the local electric utility grid, and to spread environmental awareness. Photovoltaic tracker panels were installed in 2012 in front of the Physical Plant's building to supply power to its administrative offices. Moreover, two stationary photovoltaic panel systems are located in the Horticulture area and in the Admission building on campus. The energy produced by these systems are used to reduce energy consumption from the University's energy grid.

Southeastern has five solar thermal systems around campus to generate heat for the university, including providing students with hot water for up to 500 showers. The University's biggest solar thermal system was installed in 2012 on the roof of the Kinesiology and Health Sciences Building. The 56-panel system heats water for the building and for the University's indoor swimming pool. The efficiency of this solar panel system is so advanced that the ROI was achieved in just five years. Due to the volatility in the natural gas market, these cost savings have been adjusted to reflect its market value given the current market rate. Not only does this provide monetary savings, it reduces the University's dependence on natural gas. Southeastern uses its sustainable solar, geothermal, and recycling projects to cut costs and reduce its carbon and energy footprint, while providing an educational tool for students at the same time.



Solar Thermal Panels, Southeastern's Kinesiology & Health Science Building

Southeastern employs recycling initiatives throughout its entire campus. In an effort to make recycling as convenient as possible on campus, the University has a single-stream recycling program. All recyclable items can go in any of the recycling containers. Green recycling bins are located on most floors of campus buildings for convenience, and many are located near printers or copiers to collect paper. There are currently 60 blue outdoor recycling bins on campus to collect recyclable materials. Southeastern recycled 47 tons of waste in 2018 and increased the amount recycled to 48 tons of waste in 2019. Campus recycling consists of wood pallets, cardboard, plastic, batteries and more. The University has a 2025 goal to prevent 40% of waste from reaching the landfill. Currently, Southeastern is working on a compost operation to utilize campus paper waste and scrap cafeteria food to be used in the landscape around campus. Our composting will reduce landfill waste and the costs and carbon emissions of hauling and processing those materials. This program reduces landfill waste through the best-management practice of recycling and re-using



on-site. This models an ideal closed-loop method for reducing waste, and creates the shortest path from start to finish of recycled materials.

Campaigns initiated by the Sustainability Center such as “I Choose To Reuse,” educate and engage Southeastern’s community to reduce its plastic bottle consumption rates. As of March 2021, Southeastern has 90 refillable water stations across campus. These water stations have an infrared sensor that recognizes when the fountain is in use or not to conserve water. With the implementation of water refilling stations, Southeastern has prevented over 440,000 water bottles from the landfill so far.



Refillable Water Station and Bottles for “I Choose To Reuse”

Also, the Department of Transportation Services is committed to providing customer driven resources which help our students with their daily transportation needs. The University’s “Lion Traxx” Shuttle Bus Service is provided free of charge to all Southeastern Louisiana University students, faculty and staff (with a total of 3 buses and 2 routes). The Lion Traxx delivers students to the local grocery stores near campus on weekends. Southeastern also encourages the safe operation of bicycles on and around the campus with numerous bike rack stations. Individuals who ride personal bicycles on campus are required to ensure that the bike is in proper operating

condition. Golf carts are used by multiple departments across campus, operated with rechargeable batteries to additionally aid in reducing the University's carbon footprint.

Pillar II: Improve the health and wellness of students and staff

Health and Wellness Promotion

Southeastern Louisiana University is committed to promoting and supporting a healthy and safe campus environment. Southeastern operates a campus Counseling Center that provides a multitude of services; consultation, workshops, counseling for individuals, families, and couples, psychoeducational groups, support groups, therapeutic groups, and 24/7 emergency on-call services. Examples of issues addressed are low self-confidence, relationship problems, difficulties with alcohol and other drugs, sexual harassment, and suicidal thoughts. This counseling center is available to all students, faculty and staff.

In September 2019, The Counseling Center launched "Lion Up Recovery" which is the state's first Collegiate Recovery Program (CRP), designed to help students maintain their recovery and refocus on academics. It is a program which offers specialized and strategic support to help students achieve growth and success in their recovery and academic journey. Collegiate Recovery Programs offer this type of support, much like student athletes and veterans receive on college campuses. Collegiate recovery programs are not designed as treatment programs; they offer extended recovery support on college campuses so students have a safe harbor and a community of like minded individuals to be supported with. Students are required to attend weekly seminars, attend at least two recovery support meetings a week, attend CRP events including monthly celebration of recovery meetings, sober tailgating etc.

Southeastern Louisiana University takes student welfare and success very seriously. The Recreational Sports and Wellness Center (REC) at Southeastern offers students and community members effective ways to exercise and stay healthy. The REC has its own Student Health 101 magazine to further educate students and staff on keeping their mind, body, and spirit healthy. The center is free with student ID and provides numerous group exercise programs such as yoga, Pilates, and sport activities as well as personal trainers available for personalized assistance. Fitness classes are offered to better the health of the student body and staff who participate in the physical activities offered. The center has a fully equipped fitness room, four multipurpose courts, an indoor track, locker rooms with saunas, two group exercise studios, two racquetball courts, and meeting rooms.

Southeastern's cafeteria, The Mane Dish, leads healthy eating initiatives through the efforts from the Campus's Dining Services. The two campaigns, Weigh the Waste (to calculate student food wastage) and Root to Leaf (utilizing the entirety of a chosen food item to reduce waste and

encourage healthy eating) are monthly events for students to get involved in sustainable and healthy eating. Southeastern’s dining manager and chefs also work with individual students with dietary restrictions such as food allergies to make arrangements for specifically prepared food when the daily menu offerings do not meet their needs. Included in this is the cafeteria’s True Balance dining station. This dining station provides not only healthy meal options but also takes into account common allergenic foods: milk, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts and crustacean shellfish. The True Balance station avoids these allergens to provide safely-sourced meals for those who suffer from food allergies. The food station provides a safe haven for people that are normally restricted in their diet and that have to go to great lengths to make sure what they’re eating is safe. The food from True Balance is alive with flavor and nutrition all while providing these assurances, and as a result, the station has been very well received.



Root to Leaf station, The Main Dish, Southeastern Louisiana University

As of fall 2013, the University has an on-campus food pantry. This pantry was initiated to address the issue of food insecurity that affects some college students nationwide. The food pantry collects non-perishable food items during campus events and accepts donations on an ongoing basis, providing students, faculty, and staff with nutritional food options they may not otherwise have access to. Each individual is allowed 20 items each week with no more than 3 of the same items per day. On average, 3,500 food items are taken from the pantry monthly, with 400 students coming in each month.

Southeastern is home to the only student-run farmers market on a college campus in Louisiana. The University's student environmental club, Reconnect, organizes several farmers markets each semester, held in front of the University's Student Union. The events feature food sales from area farmers, fresh produce, food samples, arts and crafts, homemade soaps and vendors. Reconnect participates in the Real Food Challenge, a national effort among college students to promote the use of locally grown, healthy and sustainable food products. The student-run group provides an opportunity to help educate the campus community about environmental and sustainability issues while connecting with other student groups (both internal and external to Southeastern) who share common goals and assist in the greening of Southeastern and the community at large. Also run by Reconnect and participants in the community is the campus community garden. This garden is located at the Sustainability Center and was implemented to produce food for the local community as well as be an educational tool for local youth. The garden is the second dedicated effort at Southeastern intended to provide nourishment for students who may struggle with food insecurity.



Southeastern Student Working in the Community Garden

Environmental Health

The University's landscape manager and team closely manage Southeastern's landscape and grounds. The University avoids campus-wide pesticide applications in landscapes and grounds to minimize chemical exposure to students, faculty, staff and guests. Pest control is localized for specific pest prevention. Ant baits are applied as a safer method twice or more per year throughout campus on visible mounds and younger landscapes. Chemicals are stored in locked sheds throughout campus to ensure safety measures for students. Indoor air quality, ventilation, and cooling and heating measures for all campus buildings are monitored to maintain the comfort and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.

Southeastern's campus has high standards in air quality. All of the buildings are equipped with UV lights and iWave Air Purifier systems which purifies air continuously in the buildings. iWave-V is a low-maintenance, bi-polar, high-output ion generator designed for treating air in residential duct A/C systems. As the air flows past the iWave-V, positive and negative ions actively purify the supply air, killing mold, bacteria and viruses in the coil and living space. The ionization process also reduces allergens, smoke and static electricity, as well as controlling odors (cooking, pet, VOCs) and other particles in the air without creating ozone or any harmful byproducts.

An ongoing Surface Contaminant Sterilization System, the VHP (Vapor Hydrogen Peroxide) system, is employed to continuously disinfect surface areas in a room, as well as reduce airborne pollutants that bond with the VHP molecules. It is installed and used in areas with higher surface contamination risk regardless of population level. Examples include: Food Service areas and University Housing.

Southeastern has also employed three on-going air disinfectant systems throughout campus that operate on a continual and automatic basis:

1. Troffer System: Provides continual disinfection/cleaning of the air and is used in areas with lower surface contamination risk and higher population levels leading to a higher air contamination risk. This is a multi-stage process that achieves a 99.9% removal of common airborne pathogens using Activated Carbon and HEPA filtration as well as UV (C) LEDs. It helps address mold, bacteria and viruses. This system is deployed in high student load areas where there is higher student traffic.

2. Ultra HEPA filter systems: These portable air filtration systems filter particles at the viral size and are deployed in four of Southeastern's buildings.

3. Bipolar ionization technology: These systems ionize air molecules that attach to and deactivate harmful substances like bacteria, mold, allergens, and viruses. These are being installed in 85% of classroom/office buildings on campus and multi-purpose spaces such as the Student Union.

Southeastern is continuously developing landscape areas that create a healing environment. As students leave home and are under stress, these healing spaces provide a venue for solitude, healing, and fresh air. Additionally, the Walk Around Campus was developed to provide a safe walking area for students and local residents around the campus perimeter. The walking area was designed for health and fitness with the concrete extension and LED lighting to create a safe environment. This walking area assisted in the City of Hammond in receiving the Safe City Award.

Also, Southeastern is committed to promoting and maintaining a healthy and academic environment. The use of tobacco products is prohibited on all University property (indoors and outdoors) and in all Southeastern Louisiana University vehicles, and the sale, distribution, or advertisement of tobacco products is prohibited in University buildings and public areas. Student violators will be ticketed by University Police personnel and referred to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability for disciplinary action as appropriate. Faculty, staff, contractors or visitors who violate this policy will be ticketed, and as appropriate may be reported to the relevant University department/office.



Pillar III: Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

Consistent with its mission to lead the educational, economic and cultural development of Southeast Louisiana, Southeastern utilizes every opportunity to aid in environmental education

of its student body. One means of doing so was through the creation of its SEED (Southeastern's Environmental Education Development) Center. This Center provides a strong learning component for Southeastern students and the local community involved in energy, mechanical and construction engineering technology. Local Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) students often visit the campus of Southeastern, stopping in the University's Sustainability Center for environmental education. The SEED Center at the Sustainability Center is an educational learning experience designed to introduce sustainable initiatives to its visitors. Guests learn about the University's involvement in geothermal heating and cooling systems, solar thermal panels, solar photovoltaic panels, wind turbines, biomass electrical generators, and water reclamation ponds. Students are able to experience an introduction to sustainable practices, LEED program, and view firsthand the functional concepts of these efforts. Visitors venture into an unconventional, energy-neutral classroom and delve into the internal workings of each renewable-energy system. The web-page of the Sustainability Center provides further educational resources in sustainable energy and the initiatives Southeastern is implementing on campus (<http://www.southeastern.edu/sustainability>). The campus's sustainability map is one such resource for students to explore the sustainability measures on campus with location and educational information.

The Sustainability Center's team conducts several lectures around campus on sustainability in addition to guiding student groups on educational tours. These lectures are conducted in numerous places across campus, ranging from classrooms to the geothermal facilities, the sustainability center, and auditoriums. Such topics of discussion include how students can get involved in environmental initiatives on campus, recycling, careers in sustainability, etc. In addition, the University's library sponsors a series of "Green Talks" held throughout the semester. Guest speakers include professors as well as local environmental leaders, educating students on current environmental issues and how they can aid in bettering the environment in

their day-to-day lives.



Southeastern's curriculum features a dynamic mix of classes pertaining to environmental studies. Numerous classes in environmental education, energy, and human systems are a part of an array of different programs offered on campus focused on the environment. One such example is Southeastern's College of Science and Technology which offers electives such as Environmental Awareness, Conservation Biology, and Pollution Fundamentals and Control Technologies. Also, the University's College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Science offers Environmental Sociology, Earth Science, a Food Sustainability and Society course, and Applied Environmental Sociology in its elective choices for students. With its broad scope of environmental classes over many disciplines, Southeastern aims to provide greater environmental awareness in its educational curriculum.

In addition to its many initiatives in sustainable measures on campus, Southeastern engages in environmental activism throughout Southeast Louisiana. Southeastern's Biology program is highly involved in the ecosystem of Lake Pontchartrain through Turtle Cove Environmental Research Station. Their mission is to facilitate and support a better understanding of Southeast Louisiana's coastal wetland environments through research, education, and public outreach activities and programs. Research activities are conducted by those faculty, staff and students in biology (focusing on wetland ecology, cypress restoration, aquatic microbiology, entomology, and herpetology).

One such initiative to enhance Louisiana's wetlands is Southeastern's collection of discarded Christmas trees. Local partners collaborate with Southeastern to help the University in this event,

rallying students and volunteers to deploy the trees in the Manchac wetlands located northwest of New Orleans. This practice provides hands-on environmental opportunities for students and other volunteers. Throughout the program's 26 year history, approximately 40,000 trees have been collected to help build up marshland in areas that have been impacted by erosion and other factors.



Southeastern Biology Students Working in Louisiana's Wetlands

Another sustainable element and educational tool for Southeastern students and the community is the SEED Center's aquaponics system. Located in its very own greenhouse at the Sustainability Center, the aquaponics system has been constructed and is scheduled to open to students in 2021. This project is intended to provide further education in sustainable living and increase awareness in sustainable and nutritious consumption in students and visitors of the Center. With this innovative system, Southeastern will advance its students and community's education in the sciences, furthering study in the nitrogen cycle, beneficial bacteria, and plant nutrition.



Baton Rouge Academy Chapter Tour at the Sustainability Center, Summer 2019

Finally, Southeastern Louisiana University annually hosts The Big Event for students, faculty, staff and alumni collectively engaging in a day of community service in the City of Hammond and nearby communities. Sponsored by the campus’s Student Government Association, The Big Event is intended to give students and other volunteers the opportunity to help the communities and organizations that support Southeastern. This event includes beautification and landscaping projects on campus and the local communities, as well as environmental clean-up effort in downtown Hammond.



The Big Event, A Day of Service to the Community