

Students Impacting Sustainability at the Largest University in Texas

College Station, TX: Texas A&M University's Department of Residence Life and Utility & Energy Services (UES) are proud to announce success of the 2nd Annual U-Challenge. This year we had 8 student teams with 4 at the graduate level and 4 at the undergraduate level. They did an amazing job examining utility consumption trends and brainstorming ideas on improved infrastructure and student engagement. All teams participated in a run-through of their presentations on March 6th to UES and Res Life staff along with one of our sponsor representatives in preparation for the first official round of presentations at the end of the March.

The first round of presentations was held on March 27th where 4 undergraduate and 4 graduate teams gave their findings regarding consumption in their assigned hall. These teams also proposed improvements in infrastructure and student engagement to conserve utilities and energy. Dr. Jose Fernandez-Solis (Construction Science), Tim Murphy (UES), Dr. Yasuko Sakurai (UES), and Dan Mizer (Residence Life) served as the judges during the first round. At the end, 2 teams from each level progressed to the final round of the competition on April 11th. Teams that did not progress were invited to come to the final round and view the finalist presentations while enjoying a catered banquet from Chartwells.

Despite only half of the teams proceeding to the final round, all 8 student teams who participated in this year's U-Challenge have the chance to see their recommendations implemented at Texas A&M in the future. Residence Life is excited to work on implementing student suggestions in their efforts to make sustainability an Aggie tradition.

Sponsors, Siemens and Johnson Controls, provided several events for our students to attend as part of the challenge. Johnson Controls gave a presentation on March 8th discussing what the energy and utility fields look like today for young adults preparing to enter the workforce. They also reviewed future internship and career opportunities. Siemens provided three energy engineers to take students through Hobby Hall. Students had the chance to go through the motions of a basic energy survey and learned more about the mechanical and electrical systems they are currently researching.



Left: Students gather for a photo after a presentation by Johnson Controls. Special thanks to Jim Notman, Jim Swan, and Phillip Purpich from JCI for coming out and speaking to our student team members.



Right: Energy engineers from Siemens take students through an energy survey of Hobby Hall. Special thanks to Kevin Liu, Curtis Boecker, and Paul Jablonski from Siemens for coming to give our students hands-on experience.



Left: Judges for our final round of presentations. From left to right: Mr. Chad Nobles (Siemens), Ms. Kelly Wellman (Office of Sustainability), Ms. Chareny Rydl (Residence Life), Mr. Jim Riley (UES), and Mr. Phil Purpich (Johnson Controls).

Right: The undergraduate team for Wells hall presents at the U-Challenge banquet and final presentation round. Team Wells placed 1st for the undergraduate level of the competition.



Team Davis-Gary: 1st Place Graduate Level – Left to Right: Salih Emre Demirel, Shachit Shankaran Iyer, Mohammed Alvi, Ishan Bajaj (Team Leader), Akhil Arora, Spyridon Tsolas



Team Aston: 2nd Place Graduate Level – Left to Right: Kirk Ammerman, Josiah Coad, Ally Souris, and Erica Metheney (Team Leader)



Team Wells: 1st Place Undergraduate Level – Left to Right: Bruno Penagos (Team Leader), Yumarly Suarez, Tatyana Atherley, Rafael Dugarte, Christian Rodriguez-Fuenmayor, and Jose Bendana



Team Dunn: 2nd Place Undergraduate Level – Left to Right: Abdul Rahman Khan, Chance Rushing (Team Leader), Walker Van Hook, and Yung-Hsin Tung.

Biographies of Partners



Kristianna Bowles

Kristianna Bowles is the Graduate Assistant Sustainability Coordinator for Residence Life at Texas A&M University. She is pursuing her Master's degree in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences with an emphasis in Youth Development. Prior to studying at TAMU, Kristianna received her Bachelor's degree in Biology with a concentration in Ecology and Environmental Biology from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA.

Tim Murphy

Tim Murphy serves as an Energy Steward for the Utilities & Energy Services department in the Division of Administration. Tim graduated from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science of Renewable Natural Resources. He spent 3.5 years in Energy Management while working for Schneider Electric, and 4.5 years in the Oil and Gas Industry in Drilling and Completion, using automation controls to increase efficiency, reduce waste, reduce cost, improve results, and enhance bottom lines. Tim's primary areas are Residence Life Buildings.



Contact Information

For questions or concerns about the program, please contact Kristianna Bowles, Residence Life's Graduate Assistant Sustainability Coordinator, at kristiannab@housing.tamu.edu or 979-862-3158.

Partners

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