

Earth Week aims to inspire involvement

by **Danielle Beyer - Monday, April 09, 2012**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/18061/earth-week-aims-to-inspire-involvement/>

Each spring, the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh hosts Earth Week, an entire week of events aimed at celebrating and protecting the Earth.

Earth Week 2012: "Taking Action for People, Place and Planet" will be held April 16-22, with some pre-Earth Week events being held the week of April 9. Highlights include speakers, a film series, workshops, demonstrations, tree plantings, a banquet and the new Green Living Fair.

Stephanie Spehar, chair of the Earth Week planning committee, said this new event fits perfectly with this year's theme because it aims at encouraging people to get involved instead of simply providing information.

"The Green Living Fair will be very hands on and very interactive," Spehar said. "It's really about getting people to take action in their own lives and their community."

The fair, held April 17-18 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., will include displays in the Reeve Union Concourse that will feature stations demonstrating techniques for a healthier and more sustainable home and community. Stations will include gardening techniques, home energy assessments, sustainable baby products, local crafts and much more.

Earth Week is also representative of another banner year of progression in environmental and operational sustainability at UW Oshkosh.

In February, the University became the 25th institution to date in North America and the first in Wisconsin to earn the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's (AASHE's) Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) "Gold" rating. That followed UW Oshkosh receipt of the 2011 Silver Waste-to-Energy Excellence Award from the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA), awarded in recognition of the institution's first-in-the-nation commercial-scale, dry fermentation anaerobic biodigester. UW Oshkosh was also named a 2011 Tree Campus USA by the Arbor Day Foundation and has been repeatedly included in The Princeton Review's Guide to Green Colleges.

This year's Earth Week activities concentrate on teaching people about sustainability and other environmental issues through nontraditional methods, said Mark Cesario, a senior environmental studies major on the Earth Week planning committee.

"So much of a students' time at UW Oshkosh is spent learning inside a classroom," Cesario said. "Earth Week events take learning to a new level. It engages students to learn outside the classroom in a fun environment without the worry about a final grade."

Along with education and demonstrations, Earth Week 2012 is intended to be a celebration of UW Oshkosh's achievements in sustainability so far, according to Spehar.

"UW Oshkosh does a lot in terms of sustainability," Spehar said. "This week is all about coming together to reaffirm our commitment to this effort and acknowledge what we've already accomplished."

Other Earth Week events Spehar recommends students keep an eye out for include the "Beehive Design Collective: The True Cost of Coal" on April 10, the Earth Week Banquet on April 16, and the Shantython and Fair Trade Coffee Roasting for Compas de Nicaragua on April 16-17.

Learn more:

- [Earth Week events](#)