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R2C: Responsibility to Care **Environmental Campus Steward Program** **Kingsborough Community College**

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**R2C: Responsibility to Care
Environmental Campus Steward Program
Kingsborough Community College**

About 20 thousand metric tons of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) is produced on average by colleges each year. In an effort to be more eco-friendly, the mayor of New York State proposed the “30 in 10” challenge for universities to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions 30 percent by 2017. As the Kingsborough Community College (KCC) administration addresses the Sustainable CUNY plan, it is imperative that the student body also take action in the sustainability effort. KCC has grounds keepers and maintenance crew who are responsible for keeping the campus clean, sanitized, and well-kept. However, sustainability is not something to be tackled by one department alone. Everyone, especially the students themselves who are the very life and breath of KCC, must play a role.

KCC is uniquely situated in a city neighborhood bordered by a recreational beach. It is both as beautifully mesmerizing as it is hazardously difficult to maintain. Because of KCC's proximity to the ocean, there is a strong wind that tends to blow around trash. If people throw out trash, it may blow away into the ocean. The water also brings a whole host of different types of garbage to the shoreline of the campus. Animals are easily be affected by this. The cats that roam free around KCC can eat the trash and get ill or poisoned. In addition, seagulls and seagull excreta have long been a problem for the campus beach. One season the beach was even closed because it was deemed unsanitary on account of the excreta. Seagulls come to campus for food - they pick out of the trash cans on the cafeteria patio and the leftovers students have strewn aside. New recycling bins have been placed around campus, but still this is not enough.

This sustainability project will be long and arduous; it needs all the help it can get. *R2C: Responsibility to Care* is an idea for a campus-wide environmental steward program that we want to enact here at KCC, starting in fall 2009. This is an effort to promote both on-campus environmental action and awareness to go hand in hand with KCC and CUNY’s Sustainability plan.

OBJECTIVE

To promote environmental awareness and provide a platform for student involvement and engagement in keeping Kingsborough Community College clean and sustainable. In doing so, R2C participants will:

- Serve as the primary point of student communication for sustainability efforts on campus.
- Work with Buildings & Grounds staff to establish best practices, policies, and/or standards for sustainable projects and operations on campus, where appropriate.
- Identify and prioritize resource conservation opportunities in offices, labs, and buildings
- Inspire the KCC Community to reduce environmental and health impacts, and help KCC become a leader in the CUNY campus sustainability efforts

The R2C Steward Program initiates, coordinates and implements practical programs to reduce the College’s environmental footprint and promotes a culture that values the environment and acts to protect it. Through a variety of interdisciplinary and interdepartmental working groups involving students, faculty and staff alike, the R2C program will undertake a broad range of initiatives.

SCOPE OF SERVICE

Starting in fall 2009, KCC will be accepting candidates (roughly 10-15) from the student body to become part of the *R2C: Responsibility to Care* Campus Environmental Steward Program.

Application Process

In order to apply for the program, a student must:

- Fill out an application
- Submit two recommendations
- Complete a short-essay question on why they want to be part of the program
- Have a minimum GPA of 3.0
- Go through an interview

Program Requirements include:

- A commitment to the R2C program for the duration of one year
- Participation in 5 mandatory trainings early in the fall semester
- Attending a weekend retreat at the completion of the 5 trainings
- Completion of a *Green Initiative*, to be presented at the end of the spring semester
- Recruitment for and organization of a “Green Art” exhibit at KCC
- Spearheading the bi-annual Campus Cleanup, organized by the Student World Assembly chapter at KCC
- Acting as student representatives of Eco-Festival, KCC’s annual three-day environmental festival.
- Acting as student liaisons to KCC’s Sustainability Task Force

Program Details

The first year, the Student World Assembly (SWA) will work closely with the KCC administration to fully develop and recruit for the program. They will also recruit a graphic design student from KCC to do a R2C logo. Every year thereafter, SWA will continue to work side by side with the R2C stewards to execute a successful and sustainable program.

Candidates are recruited in the end of the spring semester and early in the fall for participation in the one-year R2C program. They are required to attend 5 training sessions in the beginning of the fall semester. At the end of these trainings, participants attend a weekend camping retreat. This will give students the ability to connect with nature, act as a reward for their efforts, and provide for a truly unique experience.

On a day-to-day basis, R2C stewards are responsible for disposing of litter that is not in trash bins while navigating the campus. They will also ensure that recycling and regular pieces of trash are thrown in the correct bin.

Once a semester, participants will:

- Plan a “Green Art” exhibit and an informational session. R2C stewards will be charged with recruiting artists and speakers from both within and outside of the KCC college community.
- Coordinate, with the Student World Assembly chapter at KCC, the bi-annual Campus Cleanup

In addition, R2C will be forward-moving and progressive in its efforts to help achieve sustainability by taking on projects that will aide KCC in fulfilling its ten-year goals as part of the Sustainable CUNY plan. A

major component in doing this will be R2C participants' completion of a *Green Initiative*. This *Green Initiative* will revolve around a topic of their choice and may include a student-run environmental campaign, issue-specific workshops, fundraisers, and more. Campus-relevant issues include:

- Energy Efficiency
 - Computers are shutdown at night
 - Power management is enacted on computers
 - CFLs are in all task lamps and applicable building lighting
 - Occupancy Sensors
 - Equipment (copiers, printers, office machines, etc.) is shut off at night or on timers
- Purchasing
 - Recycled & local office supplies
 - Minimum 30% post-consumer waste recycled paper
- Waste
 - Waste/recycling infrastructure audit
 - Clear recycling signage
 - Battery, electronics, toner cartridge recycling
 - Annual recycling reminders
 - Composting
 - Shared supply cabinet
 - Participate in or host a supply swap/freecycle event
 - Reduce junk mail, phone books, gazettes
 - Obtain gently used furniture from KCC recycling
- Education
 - Incorporate environmental components into curricula across disciplines
 - Green tips of the month (emails & posters)
 - Green board
 - Green team website
 - Newsletter column
 - Communication to co-workers about project
 - Environmentally-themed film screenings
 - Weekly articles in Scepter

During each Eco-Festival, R2C participants will do a presentation reflecting their efforts, especially that of the *Green Initiative*, from their year of service. This will include measured outcomes and achievements. They will also share their vision of future projects planned for the upcoming year.

As an ongoing responsibility throughout the year, program participants will act stewards of the environmental movement at KCC during campus events, such as Commencement, Eco-Festival, Homecoming, KCC for a Day, Campus Fest, new student orientations, student government activities, etc., assuring that the environment remains clean before, during and after these activities. Their presence at these events will remind guests to make use of recycling bins, etc., and promote environmental awareness through casual conversation.

STUDENT BENEFITS

- Environmental awareness
- Leadership training
- Co-curricular involvement
- R2C stewards will receive a badge to wear around campus signifying their membership in the program and their commitment to a sustainable campus.
- Notation on transcript indicating participation in R2C program
- Certificate at completion of program
- Reinforce academic and social stability
- Strengthen communication skills
- Networking with others students and administrators
- Practice teamwork

KCC BENEFITS

- A cleaner environment
- Student role models for a cleaner CUNY
- The spread of environmental awareness throughout the student body
- An ongoing environmental campaign at KCC
- A valuable asset in KCC's plan for a sustainable CUNY
- Measured outcomes and achievements

PROMOTING R2C

- Flyers and applications for the program will be available in the Honors House, Student Life, and the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs/Associate Provost's Offices
- The program will also be added to the list of extracurricular activities provided for students by the Student Life office
- The program can be advertised at new student orientations
 - Past program participants can come and speak to incoming students
- Students with a GPA of 3.0 and over can be sent letters
- Emails will be sent to faculty from all departments, urging faculty to recommend students for the program
- Word of mouth
 - SWA members and past R2C stewards will recruit fellow students

CONCLUSION

The *RC2: Responsibility to Care* Environmental Steward Program is based on the belief that the community should be allowed and encouraged to participate in KCC's sustainability efforts. The student body should have a say in how to best move forward in the fight for a more eco-friendly community. Creating a student-run organization is the first step in providing for a truly progressive and forward-moving greening of KCC. Upon completion of a successful first year of the R2C program, students are encouraged to work together with other CUNY students involved in their campus sustainability efforts in order to share best practices and hold joint campaigns or events, resulting with a larger impact on CUNY campuses city-wide.