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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications
Phone: 320-589-6414, weberm@morris.umn.edu

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer
Phone: 320-589-6068, jrray@morris.umn.edu

Morris Leaps 22 Places in Nationwide Sustainability Survey

Summary: The University of Minnesota, Morris made a significant jump in Sierra magazine's "Cool Schools" listing, a ranking of the country's greenest four-year colleges. Morris reached 47th in the 2012 ranking while earning top scores in two categories, and was the only Minnesota school to make this year's list.

(September 4, 2012)-The University of Minnesota, Morris made a significant jump in Sierra magazine's "Cool Schools" listing, a ranking of the country's greenest four-year colleges. Morris reached 47th in the 2012 ranking—after placing 69th in last year's survey—while earning top scores in two categories. Morris was the only Minnesota school to make this year's list.

The index—based on a comprehensive questionnaire submitted by participating colleges—rated schools on their achievements and strategic approaches to sustainability. An independent researcher scored the survey data and awarded points to each school across a range of categories including energy, transport, waste, purchasing, and food. In total, 96 qualified colleges participated in the survey.

Morris shared the highest score with two other schools in the investing category, which covered investor responsibility as well as investments in sustainability. In addition, Morris garnered the highest possible score in the category of innovation, which highlighted Morris' renewable energy projects and participation in the Chicago Climate Exchange, a market for reducing greenhouse gases.

Two 1.65 megawatt wind turbines provide around 60 percent of the campus electricity at Morris, and a biomass gasification plant is slated to take care of 40 percent of campus heating and cooling needs in 2012. Morris is currently on-track to produce 50 percent of its energy from on-campus renewable energy systems in 2012.

Part of the reason for the increased score in this year's listing can be attributed to the expansion of the criteria used to evaluate schools. Morris and other colleges with comprehensive sustainability programs were rewarded for the breadth of their efforts relative to last year's methodology.

"This recognition highlights that Morris is a sustainability destination," says Troy Goodnough, the sustainability coordinator at Morris. "There is a lot of important sustainability work taking place in the Midwest and Minnesota. For many years, sustainability champions at Morris have been trying to make shifts in what we eat, how we heat, what we drive, and more. What has emerged from the sum of all of those efforts is the transformation you can see when you step onto campus."

The "Cool Schools" rankings were compiled by the Sierra Club in collaboration with the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, the Sustainable Endowments Institute, and the Princeton Review. Full information on the survey is available at the magazine's [website](#).

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow

intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.