

GREEN TIMES



Alaska Pacific University • College of the Atlantic • Green Mountain College • Northland College • Prescott College



Hands - on the Eco League

Whether the process is called “engaged learning,” “hands on,” “project based,” or “learning by doing,” when students follow through on their passions by combining classroom study with real world projects, they not only graduate prepared to accept positions of responsibility, but they get a head start on creating their sustainable future.

This issue of Green Times focuses on how the Eco League’s unique approach to education provides students with many ways to gain experience, confidence and competence in their chosen field.

Real World Relevance in Nature *and* the Arts

The Eco League Colleges are well known for their dynamic natural history and adventure education curricula, where students spend extended time “in the field” learning nature’s secrets and the art of outdoor leadership. But our schools also host a variety of community based, solution focused courses in the arts and social sciences where students do consequential projects in their communities and graduate ready to take on real-world challenges. For example, Eco League students have taught writing to incarcerated youth, designed gallery exhibits, tutored on native reservations, published a nationally recognized literary journal, organized community theater, and started companies. Because small colleges can offer a great deal of personal attention and flexibility, students find the support to design internships and senior projects that provide just the innovative experiences they need to make a difference in the world.

The Eco League exchange gives students access

..... to innovative and high impact projects from Alaska to Maine so they can see how sustainability is actually practiced in different communities across the country and around the world.

How the exchange works:

- Students at any of the Eco League colleges can attend any of the other schools for two non-sequential semesters.
- They can participate in the other school’s internships and international programs.
- Students do not have to apply to the other Eco League colleges; they continue to pay tuition to their home institution.
- Credits earned at the exchange institution are transferred back to the home college and count fully toward graduation requirements.

In the Eco League Passionate Students Become Professionals

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Some Examples of Practical, Solution Oriented Education

At [Alaska Pacific University](#) the curriculum is organized around community, service, and project-based



active learning. In the psychology program students may find themselves hiking in the Chugach Mountains to investigate the relationship between nature and psychology or working in a village in Africa to personalize the meaning of service. The Marine Biology program uses Alaska's 36,000 miles of coastline as a classroom. In APU's outdoor studies program students who can handle the wet and cold, work in small groups to manage the terrain, assess the risks associated with river crossings, and camp thoughtfully in bear country are the same students who excel in statistics, research methods, and recreation planning—and later become the graduates that employers seek.

At [College of the Atlantic](#) students design their own major under the umbrella of Human Ecology. This

interdisciplinary approach wrestles with the problems of the world and demands practical application. One ongoing student/faculty project studies the effects of sea level rise on seabirds in the Gulf of Maine. Allied Whale, COA's research group, trains students to enter careers in conservation of marine mammals and their habitats. The Ethel Blum Art Gallery provides accomplished student artists with a professional quality exhibit venue and an opportunity to design art installations. At the College's Dorr Museum of Natural History all exhibits are designed and produced by COA students who also lead children through the displays. In the sustainable business incubator, students can start businesses with the full support of faculty mentors.



At [Green Mountain College](#) service learning is a key component of the academic experience and the

emphasis on internships increases skills and makes connections through giving back to the community. In Environmental Design/Build, Green Mountain College students in the Renewable Energy and Ecological Design program designed and fabricated a 100 square foot solar 'tiny house' that incorporated both passive and active solar design strategies using reclaimed and local materials. Members of the InterCultural Club hosted diversity assemblies at a local high school. An art class created ceramic bowls to auction for a local food shelf benefit. The local Resource Conservation District hires GMC interns from the environmental studies and natural resources management programs. A student written and produced one act play about immigrant families raised money for a non-profit community education program.



At **Northland College** the environmental liberal arts are lived among campus buildings that are examples of sustainable infrastructure. Students installed solar panels on the college president's house, built the Strawbale Demonstration Energy Lab, which operates off the grid and showcases alternative building techniques, and made Northland one of the first campuses to get on board with the Dark Sky initiative. Students have coordinated a Green Psychology conference, taught children about the Lake Superior environment and tracked wolves in the north woods. The College works with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission and other agencies in the placement of qualified students as paid interns.



At **Prescott College** student involvement in the community is fostered across the curriculum, providing many opportunities to reflect on how to create sustainable communities. The college senior project requirement encourages ventures that have a real and lasting impact. Students have produced field guides, established an alternative medicine center for impoverished women, and surveyed insects in an endangered desert river. In *Writers in the Community*, students teach creative writing in local schools, assisted living centers and rehab programs. *Chorography in the Community* links Prescott College students with middle school children and senior citizens in an intergenerational performance project. Art Students jury exhibitions and



install art in the College's regionally renowned Gallery.

Green Times is The Eco League's e-newsletter for high school teachers and counselors. We've made this printable version so that you can share the newsletter with students, friends and colleagues. You can subscribe to the newsletter and get it delivered to you email account through the Eco League web site:

www.ecoleague.org.

Who We Are: The Eco League is the only college consortium in the United States dedicated to sustainability education and the active pursuit of environmental studies within a liberal arts framework. Learn more about our member colleges:

Alaska Pacific University: www.alaskapacific.edu

College of the Atlantic: www.coa.edu

Green Mountain College: www.greenmtn.edu

Northland College: www.northland.edu

Prescott College: www.prescott.edu

Read About Other Eco League Student Projects on the Internet

ALASKA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

Read about a Marine Biology class's 17 day journey across the Pacific to conduct whale and dolphin research.

<http://www.alaskapacific.edu/alumni/newsletter/Contact%20Newsletter/Spring%202010.pdf>

COLLEGE OF THE ATLANTIC

Read about Collage of the Atlantic student Lauren Nutter who won a prestigious fellowship funding a year of international travel to follow up her undergraduate projects in youth empowerment.

http://www.coa.edu/press-releases_727.htm.

GREEN MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

GMC's new biomass plant will generate about 50,000 pounds of ash annually. Prof. Sue Sutheimer's Green Chemistry course researched how biomass ash may be reused so that it does not have to go into the landfill.

http://www.greenmtn.edu/news_events/green-chemistry-video.aspx

NORTHLAND COLLEGE

Click this link to see Northland College students Andrew East and Josh Smith collect data on loons and lakes for a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources study on climate change. <http://www.northland.edu/soei-student-opportunities.htm>

PRESCOTT COLLEGE

The Women's Empowerment Breakthrough (WEB) Project began as a Prescott College senior project to counter the high teenage pregnancy and abuse rates in Yavapai County. Read more about WEB's many programs at:

<http://womensempowerment.wordpress.com/>

