

Britain's greenest colleges revealed

Pershore and North Devon colleges recognised at third Green Gown Awards

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The winners of the prestigious Green Gown Awards have been revealed. The Pershore group of Colleges and North Devon College both received awards for their green practices. The awards recognise and celebrate the progress of universities and colleges in promoting sustainable development. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) sponsors the awards as part of its work to meet the needs of learners, employers and the environment, both now and in the future.

Professor Peter James, Co-Director of HEEPI, who organise the Awards, said:

“The Green Gown Awards show how commitment, energy and innovation enable universities and colleges to respond positively to environmental and social challenges”.

The Pershore Group of Colleges won the best college category for 2006/07. Pershore has implemented a range of initiatives to reduce fuel use, reduce the use of chemicals on its land, recycle rainwater, source food locally, enhance biodiversity, train staff on sustainable development and integrate the subject with the college curriculum. Benefits are already being realised for the college, staff, students and the local community.

Dr. Heather Barrett-Mold, Principal and Chief Executive of the College, said:

“This College has for a number of years been integrating the principles of sustainable development through everything it does, from teaching students composting to using bio diesel and local sales of organic food. We are delighted that our efforts have been

recognised by this award.”

North Devon College Student Green Group was highly commended in the Student Initiatives category.

Melanie Hunt, National Director of Learning at the LSC said:

“Congratulations to everyone recognised in this year’s Green Gown Awards. It is wonderful to see colleges being recognised because it reflects the growing enthusiasm and commitment to sustainable development in the FE sector. We will continue to sponsor the Awards – and expect an even more difficult task in judging next year”.

Bill Rammell, Minister for Further, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning said:

“Education is fundamental in bringing about the behavioural change needed in this country to secure and drive forward progress on key environmental issues such as climate change and sustainable consumption.

“Through the Learning and Skills Council's National Capital Prospectus, we have already announced that colleges and other qualifying providers will need to embed principles of sustainability in the design of their buildings and building systems.

“This is part of the Government’s commitment to making FE buildings more eco-friendly, efficient and cost-effective - and it is through the Green Gown awards that those providers who are fully embracing these principles are being recognised today.

“This Government is making record levels of funding available to the FE sector for the renewal and modernisation of its estate, with the aim of delivering learning in buildings that are environmentally friendly and sustainable. These are already encouraging better participation in FE.

“We want buildings designed to meet the needs of individuals, employers and our communities, both for the challenges we face today, as well as for those we will face in the future”.

This year’s winners have demonstrated progress in a range of areas including the use of champions across campus, energy and water efficiency, building refurbishment, sustainability in the curriculum and student initiatives.

More information on their achievements, and those of previous winners, are available on the HEEPI website.

The Green Gown Awards will be presented at the AUDE Annual Conference (2-4 April 2007) and at the EAUC Annual Conference (17-19 April 2007).

Notes for editors

LSC

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

The LSC Sustainable Development Strategy

In September 2005, following extensive consultation with partners and stakeholders across the learning and skills sector, we launched our sustainable development strategy 'From Here to Sustainability'. The strategy identifies what the learning and skills sector and the LSC itself can do to promote and embed sustainable development skills, and manage resources in ways that encourage sustainability. It takes a long-term view, recognising that the process of cultural change will require sustained effort over several years. <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/whatwedo/sustainable-development.htm>

Over the next 10 years, our vision is that the learning and skills sector will proactively commit and contribute to sustainable development through its management of resources, the learning opportunities it delivers and its engagement with employers and communities. In particular, it is our vision that:

- all providers and learners will know about sustainable development and expect it to be part of normal practice
- organisations will have strategies, policies and plans in place to integrate and implement sustainable development, and these will be understood and acted on
- the LSC will have become an exemplar organisation by integrating sustainable development into its policies and everyday practices
- risks and barriers preventing sustainable development will be understood and strategies to overcome them will be shared
- continuous improvement in the sustainable development performance of the sector will be recognised and celebrated
- good practice will be recognised, understood and shared

The Green Gown Awards:

The Green Gown Awards are supported by AUDE, BRE, BUFDG, EAUC, The Energy Consortium (Education), Guild HE, HEFCE, The Higher Education Academy, LSC and Universities UK. For more information on the Green Gown Awards and a list of the Winners and Highly Commended visit www.heepi.org.uk

HEEPI:

The Higher Education Environmental Performance Improvement project is funded by HEFCE. Its aims are to develop better data on the topic to facilitate benchmarking, and to use this data to inform workshops, guidance documents and other activities. HEEPI is based at the University of Bradford, and has representatives of the main sector organisations such as the Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE) and the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC) on its management board.

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