



September 15, 2009

## Let us all work together to Be Marshall Green

University Communications recently issued a news release announcing the establishment of the Marshall University Sustainability Department and the appointment of Ms. Margie J. Phillips, a longtime energy analyst with a passion for sustainability, to lead us in our efforts. This communication helps explain what this initiative means for the Marshall University Community both in terms of the near- as well as the long-term.

By their very design and operation, universities have a significant impact on the environment. That impact, however, does not have to be negative. Through mindful incorporation of sustainable practices, we can ensure a cleaner, greener, healthier future for the Marshall University Community. We live in a global community that is more environmentally conscious with greater expectations for environmental accountability by individuals and public and private entities. Universities are no exception. In fact, we are under increasing scrutiny from our governments, communities and students to diminish our environmental footprint. The formation of this department and the appointment of Ms. Phillips demonstrates how very seriously we take this obligation.

In the past, our Physical Plant employees have saved the University money through energy efficiency efforts and savvy equipment updates. Improving operational efficiency and conserving Marshall's financial resources has been an incumbent part of the job. The added benefit was that they were also giving the environment a break. Expect our Sustainability Department to accelerate those good efforts and reach into every corner of the University to encourage responsible, feasible and sustainable practices. The Sustainability Department will help us all think of how we can reduce waste and conserve water and energy, as well as reduce environmental emissions. We will also be looking for affordable opportunities to incorporate "green technologies and materials" into our planning and operations.

This commitment by Marshall University was prompted by Marshall students and personnel in facilities and plant operations. Eighteen months ago, I was contacted by students from the Student Government Association and the Sierra Student Coalition. They wanted to know where I stood on the idea of creating a more sustainable Marshall University. We formed The Greening Marshall Committee to serve as a sounding board for the environmental concerns of

students, faculty and staff. Before long, even members of the Huntington community were taking part. After a few meetings, the group had breathed new life into a lackluster stadium and tailgate recycling program; landed a \$65,000 Statewide Recycling Grant from the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection to establish a recycling program on our Huntington Campus; and, a few months later, the students on the committee put to a vote a \$5 Green Fee. Marshall University's student body became one of only three universities in the country to support such a fee. As a result of all of this hard work and the funds from our student-initiated Green Fee, we have a Sustainability Department in place and we are moving forward. Our students are believers, thinkers and doers. I am so pleased they wear the Green and White.

I attended the semester's first meeting of the Greening Marshall Committee recently. Ms. Phillips told the group that the door to the Sustainability Department will always be open. She connected with our student representatives and expressed the need for ideas and input, creativity and energy. I feel certain the passionate students in that room will deliver. Margie's office is located in the Physical Plant building. If you would rather save fuel and a trip to 20<sup>th</sup> Street, send your ideas to her e-mail address at [philli10@marshall.edu](mailto:philli10@marshall.edu).

I encourage everyone – students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of Marshall University – to share your great ideas and your energy. Without a doubt, the economic, social, and environmental benefits of a sustainable Marshall University will extend far beyond the physical boundaries of our campuses well into our communities, region and beyond.

Be Marshall Green.