

President Obama's Call to Tackle Climate Change Answered by HBCU Green Ambassadors



Spelman Green Ambassador Kandyce Perry (black shirt) judges as students compete for prizes by tossing recycled plastic bottles into bins during the Toyota Prius Tour visit to Spelman College.

Washington, DC – As President Barack Obama reiterated the need to fight climate change during his State of the Union Address Tuesday night, “Green Ambassadors” were already doing their part to tackle climate change by promoting sustainable lifestyles to students and staff at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

Selected and trained by UNCF Special Programs (UNCFSP) Building Green Initiative and Toyota Green Initiative, some 52 students on 27 HBCU campuses serve as “Green Ambassadors.” Currently the ambassadors are competing in the 13th annual RecycleMania, a competition to see which college campus can reduce, reuse and recycle the most on-campus waste. The eight-week contest raises awareness about waste reduction programs on over 500 college campuses. Last fall Green Ambassadors participated in the Toyota Campus Prius Tour, a college tour featuring Toyota hybrid vehicle test drives, a simulated recycling center and eco-friendly games and prizes.

“Sustainability is not a new concept for black colleges; efficiency, conservation and innovation have been central to institutional survival,” said Felicia M. Davis, director UNCFSP Building Green Initiative. “Recycling is an important

first step on the road to sustainability. RecycleMania is a great way to encourage students and staff to reduce, reuse and recycle while providing exposure to green economy principles and sustainable lifestyles. The cool thing is that there are no losers in this competition, every little bit helps and this is a great way to inspire positive change.”

The UNCFSP Building Green Initiative (buildinggreennetwork.org) has created a diverse network committed to increasing green building, energy efficiency, student engagement, curriculum development, research and campus-wide sustainability for Black, Hispanic-Serving, Tribal and Asian Pacific Islander institutions. The UNCF Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) Green Report surveyed sustainability activity at 52 MSIs. A special HBCU Sustainability Report will be released during a briefing on Earth Day, April 22, 2013.

RecycleMania (www.recyclemania.org) will run through March 30, 2013, with the involvement of more than 4.4 million students and nearly 1 million faculty and staff participating throughout the US and Canada. Schools compete in 11 categories to see which campus can recycle the most paper, cardboard, cans and bottles, and food waste on a per capita basis; which can produce the least amount of waste; and which recycles the largest percentage of their overall waste stream.

ABOUT THE UNCFSP BUILDING GREEN INITIATIVE

Under the leadership of UNCF Special Programs Corporation, the Building Green Initiative provides training, resources and other technical support to help campuses limit emissions and use resources more efficiently. Partners include: Environmental Defense Fund, Second Nature, US Green Building Council, National Wildlife Federation’s Campus Ecology (NWF), Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), the Billion Dollar Green Fund and others work with UNCF Special Programs to accelerate the integration of sustainable practices on MSI campuses.

ABOUT RECYCLEMANIA

RecycleMania was launched in 2001 as a friendly challenge between Ohio University and Miami University to increase recycling on their campuses. RecycleMania, now an independent program of RecycleMania, Inc., is made possible with sponsorship support from the Alcoa Foundation, American Forest & Paper Association, The Coca-Cola Company and SCA. Program management is provided by Keep America Beautiful with additional program support from the U.S. EPA's WasteWise program and the College and University Recycling Coalition (CURC). RecycleMania is proud to partner with UNCF Special Programs, the Campus Conservation Nationals, NWF, and AASHE.