

## GUIDELINES FOR CONSERVATION PSYCHOLOGY CAMPUS CONSERVATION PROJECT

- I. Problem identification. Identify a *specific* issue that has a significant environmental impact on the college campus or in the larger community. The problem should be interesting enough to challenge you, and should have a good chance of success. Some examples are: 1) reduce the amount of “disposable” cups or other containers used at food service areas; 2) institute or improve a recycling program; 3) increase local use of public transportation, walking or biking rather than driving; 4) work to reduce local energy waste.
- II. Specify the problem and building commitment.
  - A. Specify the particular issue of interest, and the agencies or individuals involved.
    - i. What will you try to accomplish? How will you begin?
    - ii. Are the agencies/individuals likely to be cooperative or resistant to change?
    - iii. If your goal is to decrease a behavior(s), state the goal in terms of an increase of a behavior that is more desirable and incompatible with the undesired behavior (e.g., focus on increasing use of public transportation rather than reducing driving to campus).
    - iv. If it is complex goal, or one that will take a long time, state short-term goals.
  - B. Overcoming obstacles.
    - i. List situations or issues that may interfere with changing current practices.
    - ii. List short- and long-term pros and cons of changing the practices.
    - iii. Identify campus or community leaders (staff, faculty, student leaders) who will support your program.
    - iv. Make plans for dealing with obstacles.
    - v. Establish sub-goals, and plans for reaching them.
- III. Begin observation, and think about the stimuli that are governing the behavior(s).
  - A. Record current practices.
    - i. Begin by observing what’s happening now to get a "baseline" (don't worry about change yet).
    - ii. Is the behavior or issue well established and hard to modify? How will this impact your program of change?
  - B. What are the consequences of existing practices?
    - i. Are desired behaviors positively reinforced?
    - ii. Are undesirable behaviors being reinforced?
    - iii. Is it possible that the desired behavior is being punished?
- IV. Plan for change.
  - A. Antecedents - Devise plans to increase or decrease antecedent stimulus control. For example, providing prompts (“*Please turn off the lights when you leave*”), or instituting incentives.
  - B. Behavior (actions, thoughts, feelings) - Consider methods of developing new behaviors, including modeling the behavior for others, shaping the behavior (i.e., *reinforcement of successive approximations*), and giving them opportunities for rehearsal. Plan how to break automatic patterns.
  - C. Consequences - Identify specific reinforcers for new behavior, and/or punishers for undesired behavior. Plan to eliminate existing reinforcers for the undesired behaviors.
- V. Solving Problems - Be prepared to modify your plan as problems arise.
  - A. List concrete details of the problem.
  - B. Try to think of as many solutions as possible.
  - C. Brainstorm with others; consult local “experts.”
  - D. Choose one or more solution(s) to implement.

