

# SUSTAINABLE ENERGY MAKING MORE USING LESS

**M**IZZOU'S SUSTAINABLE SENSIBILITY IS growing from the top down, bottom up and in nooks and crannies all over campus. As an MU student, Ben Datema knew he wanted to get other students involved in environmental issues. "People want to do what's best, but we don't always know what that is," says Datema, BA '10, who is now MU's student sustainability adviser. "For instance, should I use paper towels or a powered hand dryer? Well, that depends on where the paper and the power come from." The issues can get muddy quickly.

So, when Datema came upon the idea of an online dashboard that monitors and displays individual buildings' electricity use, he jumped on it. "Dashboard's feedback is immediate, and I saw it as a way to give students real-time information they could act on to change their behavior."

Datema won a grant from MU in 2008 to install Mizzou Dashboard in Hatch, Schurz and College Avenue residence halls. The dashboard can display building data side by side, a feature that played into the next part of his plan. He worked with members of the student environmentalist group Sustain Mizzou to set up a weeklong energy-use competition between the halls' 1,400 residents. The task: conserve.

To launch the idea, Datema and others formed a "ninja crew" of guerilla marketers who gathered at 5 a.m. one day to blanket

the residence halls with sticky notes and flyers bearing the provocative message: "You Suck (energy)." The ninjas also tagged copiers, printers and other appliances with information about how much energy they required. "We started quite a buzz," Datema says, and the competition was a hit. Schurz won, reducing electricity consumption by 3.4 percent to College Avenue's 3.0 and Hatch's 1.1. Together, the students conserved 1,283 kilowatt hours of energy in one week. Mizzou Dashboard is now in nine residence halls, and annual competitions continue.

Working at the grassroots level, students such as Datema have helped shape Mizzou's sustainability agenda, says Steve Burdic, sustainability coordinator at MU. Sustain Mizzou started in 2004 to work on education and local environmental action. Burdic also points to a top-down institutional commitment. For instance, Chancellor Brady J. Deaton created Burdic's office in 2009 to foster sustainability across campus. That same year, a student sustainability office was formed to get students involved using funding from a sustainability fee that students pay. And in 2011, Mizzou released a Climate Action Plan outlining how it will reduce its greenhouse gas emissions during the coming years.

Looking out for the environment is becoming a way of life on campus. Check out Mizzou Sustainability by the Numbers at the bottom of pages throughout this section.

*More: [mizzouadvantage.missouri.edu](http://mizzouadvantage.missouri.edu)*

