Students to Create Pollinator Habitat on Site of Solar Array

A student-led project to create a habitat for pollinating insects on the site of the new solar array west of campus has now begun, with organizing and planning slated for this fall and winter, and planting scheduled for spring.

The focus will be planting native perennials that will attract butterflies, native bees, and other pollinating insects.

Part of the impetus comes from the fact that construction of the solar array entailed grading five acres of land, thereby destroying the habitat that was there.

“We want to mindfully construct a garden that won’t just look nice but that will attract the animal life that was there,” said Clairyssa Browning, the Sustainable Living Department representative on Student Government.

There are also plans to build small houses for bees that will be solely for bettering the environment and not harvesting byproducts. Plus, birdhouses are also planned for that area, as well as on main campus.

Perennials to be planted include milkweed, goldenrod, borage, and purple cone flowers (also known as echinacea).

Volunteers are invited to help or donate. Contact studentgov@mum.edu or Ms. Browning at cbrowning@mum.edu.

A representative from the Xerces Society will be on campus to teach volunteers how to create a pollinator habitat as well as to explain the special considerations of solar arrays, such as the fact that they actually tend to attract pollinators.

The meeting will be on Tuesday, October 23, at noon in Festival Hall.

Many Students Now Designing Their Own Major

The most popular major is now the Individualized Major, in which students design their own curriculum around courses offered by two or more academic departments.

“Students are excited to be able to use their creativity to mold a major that reflects their true passions and interests,” said John Collins, who directs the program along with Paula Armstrong.

The Individualized Major has quadrupled in the past year, with 31 students in the program and more indicating an intention to join. Their degree titles range from “Regenerative Agriculture and Business” to “Consciousness-Based Education for Sustainability” to “Art and Self-Development.”

Under the guidance of Professors Collins and Armstrong, students propose an Individualized Major by writing a detailed plan that lists the specific courses they will be taking.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
Once their plan is approved, it is filed with the Registrar’s Office and constitutes their official graduation requirements.

When they graduate, their degree carries the title of their self-designed major, such as “Bachelor of Arts Individualized Major: Consciousness-Based Education for Sustainability.”

This option was first offered six years ago and involved only a few students. The focus the first four years was on organizing the program and developing the best format and processes. MUM then began to give some attention to promoting the program, and in the past year interest has greatly expanded.

According to Professor Collins, the major appeals to students who haven’t yet begun college and who want flexibility, as well as to current students who have studied for a year or two and decide that they want a particular focus for their studies.

“Many decide that they want to spend more time studying Maharishi Vedic Science beyond the general education courses,” Professor Collins said. “So they design a major that integrates additional courses in Maharishi Vedic Science.”

The Individualized Major especially appeals to students who’ve earned many credits at other colleges and want to design a program that will let them finish their degree in two semesters.

Daniel Bramlett is such a student. He had been studying human service with a focus on helping those addicted to drugs and alcohol. He wanted a deeper understanding of consciousness and the mind. When he found out about MUM, he decided it was just what he was looking for.

He designed a degree titled “Consciousness-Based Human Service.” He liked the idea of naming his own degree and the fact that he could complete his degree in two semesters by studying Maharishi Vedic ScienceSM and taking classes on consciousness.

He is able to integrate knowledge of consciousness and Maharishi Vedic Science with his previous coursework in the field of human service and psychology, thereby fulfilling his original desire to earn a degree in human service.

Professors Collins and Armstrong find it very rewarding to help students design their major.

“We enjoy helping students find their true dharma,” Professor Collins said.

He said that MUM President John Hagelin has been very supportive of the Individualized Major, and that having this flexibility in the curriculum is also important to retaining students.

For more information, see www.mum.edu/individualized-major.

Dr. Nader, Alumnus, and Dr. Schaefer Receive Awards

Last month an international organization that focuses on integrating spirituality and organizational leadership presented awards to three persons with ties to MUM at an event in Chicago.

Receiving awards were Tony Nader, MD, PhD, who heads Maharishi’s worldwide organizations; Ravi Subramaniam, who received a PhD in management from MUM in 2018; and Jim Schaefer, PhD, president & founder of the local company Soil Technologies.

The awards were presented during a conference hosted by the ISOL Foundation (Integrating Spirituality and Organizational Leadership).

Dr. Nader received the Swami Vivekananda Leadership Award for Organizational Excellence for his achievements and expertise in modern science and Vedic science. He gave the plenary keynote address on the structure of the Veda in human physiology at the 2015 ISOL conference.

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The recent ISOL conference commemorated the 125th anniversary of Swami Vivekananda’s famous series of addresses in September 1893 at the first World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago.

Dr. Subramaniam received the award on Dr. Nader’s behalf. Dr. Subramaniam himself received the Nancy Raina Best Research Paper Award for his dissertation research on “Leadership Traits of Ram from the Srimad Valmiki Ramayana.” He is currently a lecturer at Centennial College, Toronto, Canada.

Dr. Schaefer received the ISOL Corporate Award for Sustainable Development and Ecosystem Management. He is the founder and president of Soil Technologies Corporation, which uses the intelligence of microorganisms to provide sustainable eco-agricultural alternatives to chemical inputs. The company markets living, microbiological soil applications that increase biodiversity in soils while also lessening or eliminating the need for toxic chemicals.

Dr. Schaefer also lectures to students in MUM’s program in regenerative organic agriculture.

FROM THE FOUNDER

“Transcendental Meditation helps to strengthen the physical condition of the nervous system as well as the mind; it enables the mind to use its full potential, remain concentrated, conserve its energy, establish good coordination with the body, and thus cultivate a strong thought-force whereby actions are performed in such a way that the most effective and desirable results are produced.”

— Maharsi Mahesh Yogi, Science of Being

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Alumna Suzanna Mullenneaux has recently joined the Personal Support Services team, working part-time to meet with any students who may need mental or emotional health support.

She earned a BA in the Science of Creative IntelligenceSM from MUM and a master’s degree in counseling psychology from Norwich University.

She is a licensed mental health counselor and has been practicing for 16 years in Southeast Iowa.

According to the Department of Student Life, she is excited to be working with the diverse students at MUM and looks forward to offering her counseling skills in a safe, confidential setting on campus.

Her therapy practice emphasizes the importance of self acceptance, personal choice and empowerment, the development of healthy boundaries in relationships, and a commitment to personal integrity and self care.

Her experience as a therapist includes Life Solutions Behavioral Health at Optimae Life Services, Hillcrest Family Services, Rescare Inc., Mindful Psychology Group, and Maharishi School counselor.

She is licensed in Mental Health Counseling by the state of Iowa.

Enrollment in MUM’s online master’s programs continues to grow, with a total of 103 students registering this fall for the two programs offered through MUM Online.

This figure includes 25 students in the online MA in Maharishi Vedic Science and 78 in the online MS in Maharishi AyurvedaSM and Integrative Medicine.

In addition, there are currently 40 students enrolled in the low-residency MFA in screenwriting.

“We’re pleased to see this growth in online enrollment,” said Yeshi Choden, marketing and promotions specialist for MUM Online. “The national trend is toward online learning, and we give our best effort every day to meet the demand for gaining better access to our online courses. We hope to eventually offer as many of our academic programs as we can.”

There is still time to apply for the February 2019 entry in the MS in Maharishi Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine. See www.mum.edu/mum-online.

Dr. Maheshwari’s Data Analytics Book Listed #1

Universities and information technology websites are highlighting Professor Anil Maheshwari’s book on data analytics, typically placing it first in their listings of must-read books on this topic.

Titled Data Analytics Accessible, the book is recommended by BRIDGEi2i.com for its “extensive and rapid tour of all major topics and considerations one might expect when it comes to data analysis.”

The University of Texas at Austin includes it as #1 in their list of “4 Books Every Data Analyst Should Read,” praising the book’s easy-to-follow, digestible format and use of real-world examples.

The Datapine.com website includes Dr. Maheshwari’s book as #1 in their list of “The Best Data Analytics and Big Data Books Of All Time.” They write, “If we had to pick one book for an absolute newbie to the field of data science to read, it would be this one.”

His book is being used as a textbook by more than a dozen universities.

Research is showing that a local company’s sky photography that’s widely used in hospital ceilings engages the brain in unique ways – research that was presented by alumnus David Navarrete at the 4th biannual conference of the Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, CA, last month.

The poster presentation, titled “Applied Cognitive Architecture: The Restorative Impact of Perceived Open Space,” detailed the neurobiology behind the unique sky photography called Open Sky Compositions that has been developed at the Fairfield company The Sky Factory, where Mr. Navarrete is director of research initiatives.

“Unlike conventional fine art and commercial sky imagery, our compositions contain about 20 or so structural/contextual cues that engage our memory’s spatial maps of the sky, essentially activating a different part of the brain,” Mr. Navarrete said.

The research was conducted in conjunction with Texas Tech University’s College of Human Sciences and its Neuroimaging Institute. The published study has earned awards from various organizations in healthcare and environmental design, including Planetary International (2017), a global advocate of healthcare design centered on improving the patient experience.

“As an alumnus, I felt incredibly fortunate to represent Consciousness-Based education in such a distinguished academic forum,” Mr. Navarrete said.

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Maharishi School Opens Boarding Dorm in Hildenbrand

In recent years as many as 30 Maharishi School students were boarding students coming from around the world and living with host parents.

Now the school hopes to host even more, thanks to converting the rooms in the ground-level floor of Hildenbrand Hall into a boarding dorm, including a dining hall, kitchen, and an apartment for an adult supervisor.

Remodeling of the boarding dorm was completed in August, and nine students are currently living there.

According to Maharishi School director Richard Beall, the dorm can accommodate up to 30 students. The school hopes to have 80 boarding students in five years.

“We have a big interest in our boarding program, but many parents in other countries are reluctant to have their children live with host families,” Dr. Beall said. “They have a strong preference for a boarding dorm. Now that we have a dorm, we expect to enroll many more boarding students.”

Living with host parents will still be an option, and a number of the School’s international students who are continuing from last year chose to remain with their host families.

The students eat breakfast in the dining hall in the dorm, lunch at Maharishi School, and dinner catered by HyVee in the dorm dining hall in the evening.

Supervising the students this year are teacher David Pohlman and MUM student Karen Ballinger.

Hildenbrand Hall is located on the west side of Highway 1, with the upper two floors housing MUM’s women students.

MUM Now Accepting Cryptocurrency Donations

In keeping with the times, MUM is now accepting donations in the form of cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin.

This new form of digital currency exists only as data and is designed to be a new medium of exchange.

See giving.mum.edu/bitcoin to make a donation. The page includes a link to a step-by-step guide.