

## **Sustainability Spotlight: Office of Admissions**

By Melyssa Allen

The efforts made by the Office of Admissions to improve sustainability were on display during Meredith's September 12 Senior Visitation Day.

The event's theme, "Maximize Your Resources," was an extension of the College's campus theme. Organizers designed the visitation day theme to encourage prospective students to do so in everyday life, as well as at Meredith College.

Visitation Day programs were printed on recycled paper and the office re-used paper already in stock to print other materials. After the event, remaining materials that could be re-used were saved for future use or recycled. Paper evaluations used in previous years were replaced with an online evaluation. The give-away item for each prospective student was a Meredith journal filled with recycled paper and a pencil made from recycled materials.

Admissions staff worked with the Dining Hall to "green" breakfast and lunch. At both meals, corn-based paper goods, plates made of sugar cane and cups made of recycled materials were used. The use of water bottles was also discontinued. Locally grown vegetables were served at lunch. After lunch, guests put their plates in a trash bin to be composted. The Dining Hall staff set out signs so guests would be aware of the composting system.

"Students and parents were incredibly receptive to the initiatives our staff implemented, and I think it set a wonderful standard for events to come," said Director of Admissions Cristan Trahey. "We took a lot of pride in what we presented."

Trahey said the admissions staff plans to continue these sustainability efforts at future events and hopes to find ways to expand on them.

Senior Visitation Day attracted 165 guests, including 77 prospective students and 88 other guests. Forty percent of the prospects submitted applications that day.

The Office of Admissions has also made environmentally friendly changes to its daily operations. These include the following:

- Staff members' desktop computers use smart power strips that turn off all peripherals when the computer shuts down and prevents residual seeping of electricity from machines that are turned off;

- Using locally and organically grown flowers in the office during the growing season;
- Adding a dedicated tray to reuse paper in the office's second floor printer;
- Recycling all paper that cannot be reused; and
- Using web-based applications to send email correspondence and manage event registrations, thereby cutting down on the use of paper.

"Our internal efforts within the Office of Admissions were inspired by staff who are committed to these practices in their own lives, but also by the hiring of Laura Fieselman," Trahey said. "The staff walked away from her presentation at the opening conference ready to do something, however large or small, to address sustainability issues on campus."

*Editor's Note: The Sustainability Spotlight will be a regular feature in "In A Nutshell." Faculty and staff members who have sustainability efforts to share may email them to [allenme@meredith.edu](mailto:allenme@meredith.edu) for consideration for a future issue.*