

Student Initiatives

HIGHLY COMMENDED

University of Loughborough Students' Energised into Hall Rivalry

'I charge by the hour' and 'Don't just turn me on and leave me' are two of the eye-catching marketing slogans used in an inter-hall energy competition. Some 3000 residents are enticed to reduce energy consumption through a reduced price bar at a termly party, and the 'feel good' factor of monthly payments for carbon sequestration.

The competition was financed by a £4,000 grant from Imago Services, the University's residence management organisation. In 2005-6 it resulted in an overall 4% decrease in energy from the halls involved, financial savings of £6,243 and nearly 60 tonnes fewer carbon dioxide emissions. Some of the halls achieved savings as high as 22%. The savings were maintained in the 2006-07 period, with a further 5% reduction.

Campaign material using the catchy marketing slogans were distributed throughout halls, along with hall energy events, placement of notices and the display of results on the Students' Union web site.

According to Simon Alsbury, the Union's then Ethical and Environmental Officer, and founder of the scheme, "the competition has changed the image of ethical and environmental issues within the student body, and led to a substantial increase in the level of awareness and volunteering." This has enabled the Ethical and Environmental Group to do more, such as organising a well attended Fairtrade fortnight, and a campus sustainability awards scheme.

Simon Alsbury also notes other benefits. "The students who have become more involved in hall teams and/or Union activities have developed useful personal skills such as marketing, event organisation and team working. The competition has helped develop the working relationship between the Union, Imago Services, and Estates Services, which has to be good for everyone."



Rutherford Hall, where a blackout was held during the competition.

Judge's Comments on Student Initiatives (continued)

Loughborough Students' Union's league table of hall energy savings is an original and enterprising project which motivates students to use less, and raises awareness of sustainability issues. It cleverly updates the university tradition of friendly rivalry between residences into a modern form, taps the energy of students by putting them in the driving seat, and can be readily replicated in other institutions.