



Wells College

Department of Biology
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AASHE STARS Review Team

Reference: ***"Sustain-A-Cell" Project***

To whom it may concern:

For my Fall *Anatomy & Physiology* course, I assign pairs of students the task to learn about cell structure and function through their creation of a cell model. Again this year, I instructed my students to make their cell models more sustainable through the use of 'found' and/or 'natural materials'. I call this class project *"Sustain-a-Cell"*.

Before turning my teams loose to create their cell models, I again invited Marian Brown, director of the college's *Center for Sustainability and the Environment* to come into my two labs to instruct the class on what are 'found' materials and where to look for them on campus. Two ground rules director Brown sets for acceptable "found" materials: don't take anything that is still usable and make it *unusable*, and don't take things without permission (like other students' art projects). She suggested several locations for my students to find such objects, including our two free campus reuse areas: the *Bargain Basement* for housewares, costumes and arts & crafts, and the *RUMPUS Room* for office supplies. She also suggested checking recycling bins for used paper and plastic containers as well as looking in the IT department's *e-waste* collection box. (See attached *"Found Materials"* handout given to my students by director Brown).

Both years we have collaborated on this project, the *Center for Sustainability* has incented my class' lab teams with cash prizes for excellent efforts. Winning teams have to meet my criteria for complete responsiveness to the *"Sustain-a-Cell"* assignment: including all cell organelles in the model and identifying their function, as well as identifying the materials used – and where those materials came from - to represent each cell component. Director Brown evaluates the lab teams' entries in three categories: *Most Creative Use of Found Materials*, *Most Creative Use of Natural Materials*, and *Most Amusing Use of Found and/or Natural Materials*.

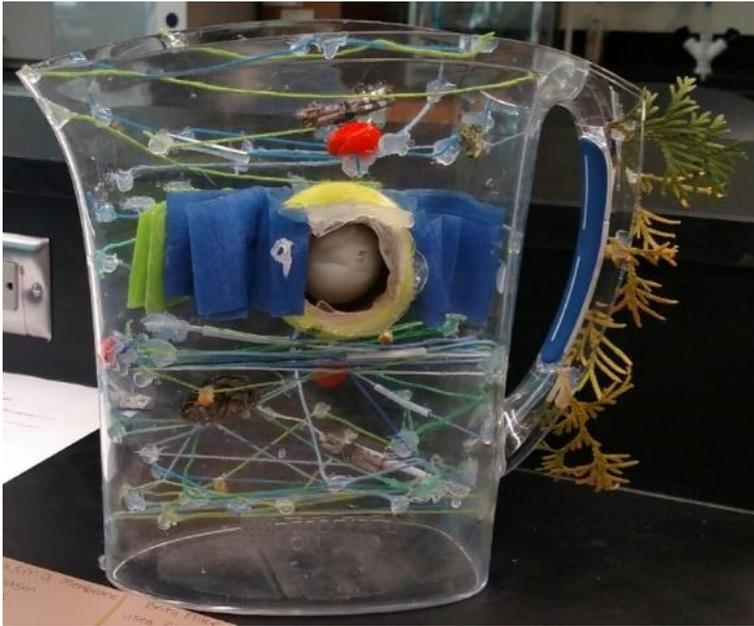
This year's team winning for *"Most Creative Use of Found Materials"* used a broken Brita pitcher as the cell membrane to which they hot-glued various other "found" items to represent cell components (e.g. an old tennis ball, used string, colored streamers left over from a campus event, popcorn kernels). The winning team for the *"Most Creative Use of Natural Materials"* started with a hollowed-out pumpkin as their cell membrane and used only biological materials to represent the internal components. The hands-down winner for the *"Most Amusing Use of Materials"* went to the duo that used chewed pink bubble gum shaped into several cell organelles. Photos of this year's winning entries follow.

This *"Sustain-a-Cell"* assignment represents a great academic partnership between the *Center for Sustainability and the Environment* and the Natural Sciences academic program, plus it offers a tremendous "two-fold" learning opportunity for my students. Lastly, director Brown and I agree that it is just plain a "hoot" to see what our students come up with each year.

Respectfully submitted,

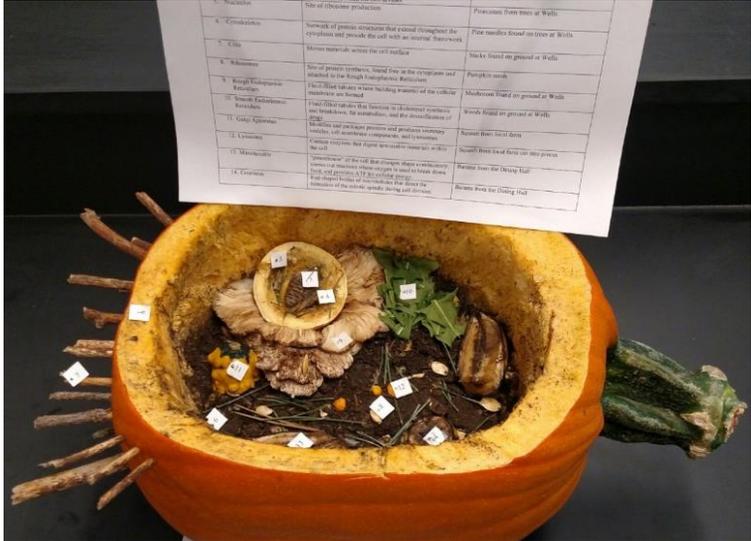
Christina Schmidt

Christina Schmidt
Assistant Professor of Biology



First place: Most Creative Use of Found Materials

First place: Most Creative Use of Natural Materials



First place: Most Amusing Use of Found and/or Natural Materials

Art from Found Objects

Found object originates from the French *objet trouvé*, describing art created from undisguised, but often modified, objects or products that are not normally considered art, often because they already have a non-art function.

~ Metropolitan Museum of Art Terms



Finding “Found Objects”:

Bargain Basement (basement of Main)

Craft supplies, costumes, housewares, clothing, room decorations, miscellaneous items – **don't make something still usable UNUSABLE**



→ located in Macmillan 111A

Campus Copy Rooms – discarded paper (white or colored), one-side printouts, paper shredder contents. **DON'T TAKE UNUSED PAPER!!!**

Art department (Campbell) – discarded art supplies

Ask first to be sure something you want is really a discarded item

Mail Room - recycled magazines, catalogs, envelopes

Main Dining Hall – check in green recycling bins (on the loading dock) or the cardboard recycling bin

The Grind – check in recycling bins

Campus Store – check nearby recycling bins (cardboard)

Campus Recycling Bins – especially check the recycling bins in res hall laundry rooms and bathrooms.

Natural materials (dried leaves and flowers, bark, shells, stones, fossils, feathers, etc.)



The *Center for Sustainability* will award prizes for:

- * Most Creative Use of Found Objects
- * Most Creative Use of Natural Materials
- * Most Amusing Use of Found and/or Natural Materials