

Tiny Housing Project at Westminster College

A Proposal by Helen Boylan

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Goal

The overall goal of the Tiny Housing Project is to help elevate Westminster College to a position as a leading innovator in sustainability education while providing undergraduate students in a variety of majors with a living experience which links environmental/sustainability concepts to other elements of a liberal arts education.

The integration of tiny housing with academic experiences will enable the College to advance several of its mission-based student learning outcomes, including “to acquire knowledge of self, society, human cultures, the natural world, and human relationships to God,” “to apply knowledge to contemporary issues,” and “to demonstrate moral and ethical commitments to neighbor, society, and the natural world.”

Objectives

In addition to serving as a novel means for forwarding Westminster’s mission, the Tiny Housing Project will enable a series of more specific objectives to be achieved, including:

- Provide unique and marketable student learning experiences (and associated student learning outcomes) that are made possible by integrating tiny housing with academic experiences.
- Establish Westminster College regionally and nationally as an innovator in sustainability education and sustainable living.
- Recruit increased numbers of sustainability-minded students (especially those who may not otherwise have Westminster College on their radar screens).
- Gain greater visibility for Westminster College, regionally and nationally, through marketing and promotion of the Tiny Housing Project.

Implementation

We will implement the Tiny Housing Project in phases:

- Phase I (AY 2015-2016): Planning, marketing, and building/purchasing of one tiny house.
- Phase II (AY 2016-2017): Visiting scholar to live in tiny house for a semester; planning and building a suite of three tiny houses.
- Phase III (AY 2017-2018): Student living-learning experiences in tiny houses which is embedded in specific coursework and achieved through a rotation model (2-3 week experience for each student, pending ability to deal with dormitory codes).
- Beyond Phase III: Assessing project to determine if a larger community of tiny houses would be beneficial.

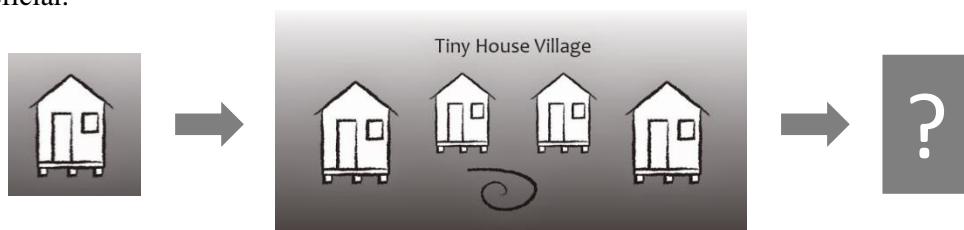


Image adapted from: <http://www.tentcityurbanism.com/2014/08/broadening-scope-of-tiny-house-movement.html>

Fall 2015 Task List

- Meet with VPAA to get approval to move forward with Tiny Housing Project; include other stakeholders from administration as deemed appropriate
- Assemble Tiny Housing planning team (including faculty, staff, students, and construction consultant) and plan regular meeting schedule
- With input from team, determine whether the better approach is to build or buy a tiny house in Phase I, and choose location for tiny housing
- Travel to view tiny house in person or attend tiny housing expo
- Promote tiny house concept to WC faculty and generate course-related activities for the project
- Implement Tiny Housing marketing project in BA 305 Marketing (mentored by B. Petrus and linked to marketing efforts of The Office of Admissions and associated Marketing Office)
- Plan for utilities challenges (water, sewage, electric, heating, cooling) or “off-grid” option for first tiny house
- Understand challenges/regulations associated with dormitory code and determine how to meet them or avoid the necessity of meeting them
- Develop two housing designs (low budget, moderate budget) and associated budgets and/or materials lists for first tiny house

Requesting budget of \$2,500 for Fall 2015 to support construction consultant and travel.

Spring 2016 Task List

- Get budget approved and obtain funds (estimate of \$50,000) for Tiny Housing project
- Implement a Tiny Housing project in at least one other course (public relations, environmental science, broadcast communications, writing, etc.)
- Secure a speaker for Earth Week who has experience with tiny living
- Assemble Tiny Housing building/purchasing team (including faculty, staff, students, and construction consultant)
- Finalize housing design (with significant student input) and obtain materials and supplies, as needed
- Plan logistics of build or placement (who, where, when, etc.)
- Build or purchase and place first tiny house
- Advertise for visiting scholar to live in tiny house during AY 2016-2017
- Make plans for how to showcase tiny house Summer 2016 (possible living arrangements for Field Station student worker)
- Develop strategy and funding plans for Phases II and III

Budget for Spring 2016 will be finalized by the end of Fall 2015.