

- For students studying education, social sciences, architecture, and building and planning, 45% said an institution's record on sustainable development was important or very important in choosing where to study - UCAS Future Leaders Survey

## HIGHLY COMMENDED

### North Devon Student Green Group Has a National Impact

North Devon College is a relatively small further education college in Barnstaple. To have an active student group promoting green issues is unusual for such an institution - and all the more so when it has an impact outside the college, and even a national influence.

The Student Green Group was founded in 2005. Although it has received modest support from the College - three hours of staff time a week to facilitate discussions and actions, and funding for stationary and similar expenses - it is autonomous and sets its own objectives.

At campus level, the Group has been represented on the College's Environmental Working Group, run successful campaigns to increase recycling facilities, lowered the price of Fair Trade products in food outlets, and organised lunchtime debates and volunteering activities with the National Trust. It has also contributed to local debates through protests, letters in the press and other means.

One especially successful initiative has been the creation of a peer-to-peer educational tutorial on climate change which emphasises the impact of individual choice on sustainable and equitable development. This tutorial has been delivered to over 200 people, many of them outside the College - including students at a local secondary school and the University of Plymouth, and teachers at a training day.

At a national level the group have participated in national demonstrations, had articles published in national magazines, and participated in an Environment Agency Conference. In addition, the group have been successful in raising funds and awareness for local and national charities, including Oxfam, World AIDS Day and Operation Christmas Child.



Pete Jolly, a youth worker at the College who assisted the founders, believes that "groups such as this provide a practical demonstration that many young people are passionate, motivated and committed to learn and act for change on socio-environmental issues of concern to them. They simply need a voice and a role in the decision-making process. It also helps the College by enhancing relationships between students, staff and senior managers, and reputation. For example, the work attracted favourable comment in the recent Ofsted inspection."

Group members Rachel Rowan, Ellie Hanson and Alex Lodge on the march

#### Judge's Comments on Student Initiatives (continued)

*The Student Green Group at North Devon College is an impressive example of what can be achieved even within relatively small institutions. This campaigning group has had a regional and even national impact through its successes in areas such as recycling, fair trade, charity initiatives, and peer education. It demonstrates how much can be achieved through harnessing and encouraging student energy and enthusiasm.*