

Template Email to Faculty

Each academic discipline has a unique and important role to play to educate our students about how to create a more environmentally sound future. There are multiple opportunities to relate your course to today's issues that will give students the opportunity to apply what they are learning to a real world solution to our shared sustainability challenges. Such a learning assignment, whether as a core part of your course or as an alternative credit assignment will help students become more engaged in solving societal problems.

The Policy and Legislative Workgroup of the Green Universities and Colleges Subcommittee of the Green Government Coordinating Council of Illinois is sharing information you can use in your courses. The issue we are sharing with you now involves the fact that more energy efficient housing in our community will result in a healthier local economy, healthier humans due to higher air quality, and more jobs for our students. We are sharing this information with you so you can help encourage key actions to grow jobs. The issue involves getting information on how energy efficient a home is into the Realtor listings for potential buyers. This has already happened in 80 listing services across the country yet we do not yet have it across Illinois.

A Multiple Listing Service (MLS) is the group of connected online databases that collect and display information about properties for sale, allowing a single entry into multiple listings. An MLS is maintained by the local association of realtors and is primarily a tool for home sales. While usually only accessible to realtors, an MLS facilitates critical information sharing between all parties (buyers, sellers, appraisers, and lenders) via the realtor. While some individually-sold homes rely on other means for communicating real estate information, the vast majority of homes for sale in the U.S. take advantage of an MLS.

A "green" MLS is simply one that includes information on green building attributes (such as a LEED, Energy Star or other such certifications, energy efficient upgrades, etc.) for consideration when purchasing. The benefits of a Green MLS are:

- Helps buyers quickly find green homes.
- Makes it easy to fully promote the special features of a green home.
- Supports apples-to-apples comparison when it is time to appraise a green home.
- Supports the flow of green home information/performance between the players in the marketplace.
- Creates value for green homes.

Your students could get involved in the following ways:

- a. If you are a **STEM or business** related course, students could measure the potential pollution reductions and/or dollar savings from a 10%

increase in energy efficiency in our housing market and send the results in support of energy labeling on the MLS.

- b. If you are a **humanities or social science** related course, students could:
1. quote research on behavior change related to energy efficiency that occurs when information is made available and use this information in a letter of support for energy labeling on the MLS. We are glad to supply citations on behavior and energy efficiency or you can have the students search for it.
 2. develop a piece of art or drama, a letter for the newspaper/realtors group or a piece for the local cable access channel that explains the issue and helps realtors see the benefits.

Helping students become educated and active citizens and community members is one of the goals of higher education. Please let us know what you choose to do and how else we could assist you.