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**Semester:** Spring 2021

**Class:** COMM 473

**College:** Bellisario College of Communications

**Faculty:** Tara Wycoff

**Community Partner:** Pennsylvania Envirothon

**Impact:** COMM 473 students designed an effective communications program that can be implemented by Envirothon to reach underrepresented students and communities. In the future, these solutions could lead to more urban students participating in this valuable, resume-building environmental education competition.

**Pennsylvania Envirothon**, a high school environmental education program, approached SCC and COMM 473 to help create a communications program to expand diversity within their program. Every year, Envirothon holds a competition in different areas of sustainability. The goal of COMM 473's communication strategy was to diversify students who participated in that competition. The COMM students uncovered problems with reaching the targeted communities and led a discussion with Envirothon delegates that covered possible solutions to these problems. The biggest problem uncovered by students was that urban communities lack access to quality environmental education that gives them the capabilities to compete in the contest. Through research and surveys, the class discovered that many high school students are not encouraged to join science extracurriculars, and many only join to build their resume. On top of this, PA Envirothon lacks content related to urban environments, where their targeted participants reside. Some of the solutions proposed were updating the website to emphasize resume building experience, conveying the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion to Envirothon staff, and creating a Pennsylvania Envirothon Urban Engagement Council. Through these practical solutions, Envirothon can create an effective communications strategy to help underrepresented students participate in their programs.



"The students quickly uncovered that the program's offerings needed to be more inclusive. Our conversations covered representation in environmental education and related professions, communicating diversity, equity, and inclusion programs authentically, as well as helping organizations prepare and plan." -Tara Wycoff, COMM 473 Assistant Teaching Professor