
CCAT/SERC Trip Memo

To: Doctor Cashman
From: Matt Wardynski
Subject: CCAT and SERC
Date: November 18th, 2016

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to describe what we learned about the Campus Center for Appropriate Technology (CCAT) and the Schatz Energy Research Center (SERC) during our on-campus ENGR 115 trip. Some students from CCAT and SERC gave us a tour of the facility and taught us about how each center works with renewable energy.

Discussion

CCAT and SERC both gave us different perspectives of renewable energy. CCAT showed us how they used “appropriate technology” to power their house, and SERC educated us about past projects involving hydrogen fuel cells and the current technologies that they test for other companies. At CCAT, appropriate technology is defined as “technology that balances environmental, social, and economic needs of a community.”

When we were invited inside CCAT to look around, I asked someone there if they had a compostable toilet. They said that they did not have one yet, but it is a project they hope to start soon. Though I think compostable toilets are not the most pleasant to use, I do think it would serve as an appropriate technology for CCAT because CCAT is big on compost and they probably have the space for one. Compostable toilets are better for the environment because they do not create much unusable wastewater like normal toilets; instead they create compost that can be used for the many gardening projects happening on site. I am not sure how much this project would cost, but I would imagine it would be something that CCAT could afford.

There are many unfinished projects that are still taking place at CCAT, some of which I might want to get involved with when I have the time. Particularly, I think I would want to get involved with the compost system and maybe start a project that deals with mowing the lawn without using gas powered mowers. Well, it might not be that much of a project to organize a group of people to start using push mowers or something, but it would contribute towards CCAT’s mission of using appropriate technology. Probably the most interesting thing I learned on this trip is simply the concept of what appropriate technology is. I have always appreciated “green” technology and energy, but I feel like the term “appropriate technology” is more suitable when referring to eco-friendly technologies.

Conclusion

The field trip proved as an interesting experience that will be helpful for future instances of renewable energy and technology. I also am aware of volunteer opportunities, which I may take advantage of in the future. It was important to learn about these resources available right here on our campus and I am glad we went on the trip.