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Earth Ethics Institute Timeline

1974: Miami Dade Community College Life Lab

1978 – 1980: Building constructed at Kendall Campus, Wolfson Campus Program

1978: Groundbreaking for the Environmental Demonstration Center (EDC):

a Wolfson project located at Kendall Campus.

“Our proposal to the College was that we be allowed to create an Environmental Demonstration Center. The College would provide the site, and we would build the building. The Center would offer noncredit courses and workshops dealing with what the cosmologist Brian Swimme would call the “planetary impasse.” We would demonstrate “appropriate technologies” for dealing with the ecological crises which eminent scientists were warning educators about.”
(Mac Smith, from the EL Millennium Project Proposal, 1999.)

1984: Mac Smith develops “The 100-Million-Year-Graph” workshop with the “Grandmothers.”

1985: The EDC offers community education classes through its Owner Builder Center, Landscape Center, Tropical Lifestyles Center, and credit classes through Life Lab.

- Miriam MacGillis of Genesis Farm brings the “New Story” and the “Cosmic Walk” to the EDC.
- Mac Smith conceives of an Earth Literacy “Communion” with Miriam and others.

1986: The EDC adds Nature Center programs for children; as well as Environmental Ethics (New Literacy study groups) for credit at Miami-Dade Community College through Life Lab at the Environmental Center.

1988: Environmental Ethics Institute (EEI) is conceived at the Environmental Center.

- Earth Literacy Introductory Study Program, a course with 12 themes, is offered by EEI, through Life Lab, at the Environmental Center.
- Thomas Berry’s “The Dream of the Earth” is published (Sierra Club Books.)

1989: Miriam MacGillis leads “Telling the New Story” weekend at the Manfred Center, Redlands, FL.

- EEI endowments are established with the MDC Foundation (College agrees to pay for EEI Director salary 1989).
- The *Earth Literacy Network* is established including EEI, Miami Dade College, Miami FL; Genesis Farm, Blairstown NJ; the Environmental Justice program, St. Thomas University, Miami FL; the Integrative Studies program, Southwestern College, Winfield KS; and the Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center, Washburn TN.

1990: An EEI Advisory Board is formed to “insure that the original agreements with the Foundation are followed.”

Original EEI Advisory Board included Mac Smith Jr., Norma Watkins, Tim McGuirl, Miriam MacGillis, Ross McCluney, Joe Iannone, Dan Daniel, Bill Nickle and John Villamil.

1991: EEI Council of All Beings is held at Manfred Center.

1992: The Environmental Center is damaged by Hurricane Andrew – building is razed.

- Brian Swimme & Thomas Berry publish “The Universe Story” (Harper Collins.)

1993: The Environmental Ethics Institute is reestablished as a college-wide Institute based at Wolfson Campus. Norma Watkins and Tim McGuirl serve as Co-Directors.

1994: The first group of EEI Earth Literacy faculty completes training (Environmental Dimensions in General Education – EDGE).

1995: EEI’s Eco-Urban program begins with 20 honors students living at the Miami River Inn: program includes community garden in East Little Havana.

1997: Environmental Ethics Institute Board Terms Established

1997: Dr. Leslie Roberts serves as EEI Director.

- McGregor Smith’s “Now That You Know: A Journey Toward Earth Literacy” is published (EarthKnows Pub)

1999: Dr. Sandra Schuh serves as EEI Director.

- Thomas Berry’s “The Great Work: Our Way into the Future” is published (Bell Tower).

2000: Joyce DiBenedetto-Colton serves as EEI Director.

- An EEI Core Faculty is established to develop and promote Earth Literacy across the MDC curriculum.
- Green Studies I and Foundations workshops are approved for MDC Professional Development (CTD) credit.
- The Eco-Urban program transitions to an on-campus Wolfson Honors program called Environmental Fellowship: The program begins Service-Learning garden project at Camillus House Somerville Residence.

2001 – 2003: Sr. Patricia Siemen serves as EEI Director.

- Immersion workshops are added to the Green Studies offerings for CTD credit. (Everglades, Biscayne National Park)
- A full-time assistant position is approved for EEI.
- The Environmental Ethics Institute's name is changed to the Earth Ethics Institute.
- Collaboration with St. Thomas University to offer Earth Literacy graduate courses for faculty.
- Collaboration with Narrow Ridge and Genesis Farm to offer programs for students and faculty.
- Nature Photo and Writing Challenges established.

2004 – 2018: Colleen Ahern-Hettich serves as EEI Director.

- Wisdom Luncheons are offered at Wolfson, Kendall, InterAmerican and Hialeah (2004-present).
- Plant-A-Thousand-Gardens – collaboration with Slow Food – planting school gardens begin (2005). Gardens continue as EEI Organic Gardens in the Community (present)
- Discipline Specific multi-class lectures begin and are presented for School of Architecture Faculty and Students; Interdisciplinary multi-class presentations organized (2004-present)
- MDC Strategic plan includes sustainability (2005-2010)
- IDS 1920 Earth Literacy Colloquium approved, not fully transferable, doesn't count towards AA degree

2006: MDC President Eduardo Padron signs the Talloires Declaration. (2006)

- EEI Hosts *Tropical Green: Green Building in Tropical Zones* Conference (Feb 2006)
- EEI Core Faculty is renamed the EEI Council
- EEI develops and offers Student Immersions to Everglades; Oleta River State Park; Biscayne Nature Center; Organic Farms and Fruit and Spice Park; Barnacle House; FAU Nursing Building (2004 – present)
- EEI expands offerings in Green Studies Professional Development Workshops in collaboration with CTD and others on Climate Change; the Earth Charter; Precautionary Principle; Environmental Sustainability; Library Resources for Sustainability; Lighten Your Eco-Footprint; School Gardens Meeting Florida Educational Standards; Awakening the Dreamer Symposium; Fostering Behavior for Sustainability; Women's Health and the Environment and others (2006-present).

2007: MDC adopts 10 new General Education Outcomes: Outcome #10 "Describe how natural systems function and recognize the impact of humans on the environment."

- Collaboration with Florida International University (FIU) graduate courses for faculty and staff.
- Narrow Ridge Week-long Field Experience in Washburn, TN starts for Students
- Green Studies Immersions added: Covanta Waste to Energy Plant Tour; Oleta River State Park; Cape Florida State Park; Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve; Deering Estate; Virginia Beach State Park.
- EEI offers Community Ed. Workshops in Green Building & Design; Photovoltaic/Solar Systems (07-09)
- Focus the Nation: National Teach-Ins on Climate Change begin (2008- 2010). Multi-class presentations on Climate Change (continue to present)

2008: EEI awarded AmeriCorps VISTA members (2008)

- AmeriCorps VISTAs work to establish service-learning in support of environmental sustainability
- MDC establishes Green Teams at each campus (2008- present) and a College-wide Sustainability Steering Committee (2009- 2012). Sustainability Fairs and Symposiums begin at campuses.

2009: CROPS (Community-Rooted Organic Produce Services) is established at Wolfson (2009).

MDC develops Get2MDC.com, an Alternative to Car Transportation Website (2009-10); carpool established at Wolfson.

2010: Sustainability becomes one of the Eight College Values of the MDC Strategic Plan 2010-15

- IDS 1153 Earth Literacy and Sustainability approved elective, fully transferable for AA degree
- EEI begins the MDC Green Goals Challenge (2010-11) and Eco-Ambassadors (2011)
- CROPS expands to InterAmerican and Kendall (2010). CROPS expands to North (2011)
- Get2MDC.com carpool expands to IAC and Kendall

2012: Kendall and InterAmerican Campuses provide funding for EEI Part-time Professionals

- CROPS Expands to Hialeah, Homestead and Medical; Get2MDC expands to North
- Earth Literacy and Sustainability Graduate Courses reinstated and offered with FIU –

2013: Global Sustainability and Earth Literacy Studies (GSELS) course designation Fall pilot and assessment and Formalized by EEI in Spring 2014

- Get2MDC.com carpool expands to Medical – established at Wolfson, North, Kendall, IAC, Medical
- Strategic Environmental Sustainability Value Champions appointed and team developed for assessment

2014: North and Wolfson Campuses provide support for Program Professionals in 2014

- 2014:** Permission to designate course in the “NOTES” field in college system
- 2016:** Restructuring of Miami Dade College administration puts EEI under new Vice President & Chief Innovation Officer Damian Thorman and new Director of Changemaking Education and Social Innovation, Sandra Louk LaFleur; EEI is now part of the college’s *Let’s Be Changemakers* initiative
- 2016:** Global Sustainability and Earth Literacy Studies Learning Network engages 82 faculty members who designate 318 courses in multiple disciplines college-wide and reach over 7500 students yearly
- 2017:** GSELS Faculty (81) designate 480 classes reaching (2016-17) 12,516 students
- 2017:** Additional administrative changes see EEI moved to district Academic Affairs, under Vice Provost, Academic Affairs Julie Alexander
- 2018:** After 14 years of dedicated service, Colleen Ahern-Hettich retires from her position as EEI Director.
- 2018:** Allison Rich serves as EEI Director
- 2019:** Sandra LaFleur serves as interim EEI Director
- 2019:** Michael Matthews serves as EEI Director
- 2020:** The Covid-19 pandemic dramatically curtails MDC activity and classes, necessitating a transition to virtual programming
- 2021:** Virtual programming continues. Work toward making GSELS a truly formalized MDC program continues, with program improvements and enhancements taking place. Other highlights include:
- The Campus Learning Community and virtual symposium become collegewide in their scope
 - Recognition from College administration and colleagues for the GSELS Virtual Projects Showcase
 - The developing MDC Sustainability Action Plan offers the opportunity for facilities/Academic Affairs collaboration

