The beginning of the new year also saw the beginning of the national recycling competition, Recyclemania. Hundreds of colleges and universities from across the nation competed with each other to determine who could reduce the most amount of campus waste by diverting recyclables away from the landfill. Baylor University finished 3rd overall in the Big XII, and in the top ten overall in the state of Texas, finishing ahead of schools like SMU and Texas A&M. Overall recycling totals are comparable to those we had in 2010 with 168.93 tons from the first part of the year.

January also saw the groundbreaking of the university’s community garden. A wide variety of members from the surrounding communities attended the ceremony, which had to be held inside the Bill Daniel Student Center due to rain. Soon thereafter, members of Baylor’s Campus Kitchen, along with residents of the Browning Square Graduate Student housing, made the first plantings in the garden. By the end of the academic year, all plots in the garden were fully planted and being actively tended to by Campus Kitchen, graduate students, and Environmental Science students. Plans for local school visits are in the works for the fall semester. Both the Family and Consumer Sciences and Environmental Sciences departments will incorporate the garden more fluidly into their curriculum in the coming fall semester.

The Sustainability Student Advisory Board (SSAB) hosted the university’s first-ever Creation Week, which was held during national Earth Week. The SSAB made announcements and hosted a booth at chapel to educate students about university sustainability initiatives. The SSAB sponsored the Tuesday Dr. Pepper Hour and invited student groups involved in sustainability related issues to host booths and share their missions with Dr. Pepper Hour attendees. Creation Week culminated in an outdoor celebration that featured student musicians from Uproar Records and organizations from the Waco area hosting booths for students, faculty, and staff to explore. Overall, Creation Week was a resounding success and plans are already under way for 2012.

The university and our sustainability efforts were recognized in a variety of ways during the semester. Baylor won the Best in Athletics category in the National Wildlife Federation’s national Chill Out! competition. We received $1,000 and national recognition on the NWF podcast, website and press release, which were all distributed nationwide.

Along with the recognition received from the National Wildlife Federation, Smith Getterman and Rosemary Townsend were invited by the National Association of College and University Business Officers to give a presentation at their annual Smart and Sustainable Campuses conference, which took place in College Park, Maryland. Getterman and Townsend gave a joint presentation on how we integrate faith with sustainability at Baylor and how Baylor’s Campus Kitchen is an example of such integration in action.
The Office of Sustainability continued to expand its educational efforts on campus by participating in major on-campus events such as the Student Foundation’s Bearathon, Uproar Records’ first annual Project Greenway, and the McBride Center for International Business 5th Annual Global Business Forum. Baylor curbed all campus irrigation on March 22nd and joined with millions of people across the world in observance of the United Nations World Water Day in an effort to bring attention to the world’s growing water crisis.

Partnering with Matt Penney and Parking & Transportation, Getterman and the Office of Sustainability have played a pivotal role during the beginning stages of bike lane implementation in and around campus. Penney and Getterman conducted student, faculty, and staff focus groups. They continue to collaborate while researching best university practices and continually consult with the City of Waco and TxDoT in order to ensure city and state support of the initiative.

The Office of Sustainability worked with ARAMARK Energy and helped guide the creation and implementation of the Baylor Energy Awareness Program. During the spring semester, Baylor’s first ever residence hall energy challenge was held. The Martin, Russell, Kokernot, and North Village residence halls competed to see who could use the least amount of energy during the spring semester. Students were actively engaged in energy reduction and educational activities throughout the semester. All of these efforts were fully supported by the Office of Sustainability and the ARAMARK energy group. North Village ended up beating out the other residence halls to take the first annual energy competition title. The contest resulted in a 5.1% overall energy savings for the university which is equivalent to 1,179,773 lbs of CO2 and 909,617 kilowatt hours. We look forward to an even more successful fall semester as we expand the competition to reach more students and more residence halls.