Welcome Back!

Summer is over and the leaves have started to change. Another school year is upon us and we at The Boston College Office of Sustainability are more excited than ever to make this 2013-2014 year BC's greenest year yet! We are committed to conserving our resources and reducing the impact our community has on our fragile planet. The Office of Sustainability, BC Facilities Management, Office of Engineering and Energy and other on campus offices, student groups and organizations have been working hard to implement and make upgrades in the interest of lessening our carbon footprint and improvements in managing our resources. These combined efforts hopefully will instill in each of us a greater sense responsibility and an increased dedication toward environmental stewardship. On behalf of everyone here at The Office of Sustainability, welcome back. We look forward to and rely on your continued support and participation.

Boston College Office of Sustainability Mission Statement:

Boston College recognized that there are limits to the world’s resources. To ensure the quality of life for future generations, Boston College seeks to demonstrate the leadership in environmental stewardship and sustainability, living the motto ‘ever to excel’. The university is committed to conserving resources and reducing the impact that its services and activities place on the environment.
Fresh. Local. Fun.

Boston College Dining Services Sponsors Farmer’s Market to Give Students a Taste of Seasonal Fare

If you’ve ever walked through the plaza of Lower Dining Hall on a Thursday afternoon in the Fall, between the hours of 3:00pm and 6:00pm, you’ve probably seen a crowd of students perusing a selection of fruits, veggies and loaves of freshly baked breads at BC’s outdoor Farmer’s Market. It’s one of BC’s best-kept secrets and everyone needs to know about it. First of all, Farmer’s Markets are an excellent source of fresh, locally grown produce that both promote sustainability and help support local farms. Farmer’s Markets also allow the farmers to sell their products at retail costs which help sustain business and families in your area while providing a venue for small-scale farms. You are supporting human beings and the economy, not GMO food conglomerates. There’s also no way around the fact that eating fruits and vegetables that are grown locally is healthier for you and tastes better too! Eating locally grown fruits and vegetables and eating locally made food products support environment by reducing the amount of fossil fuels that are used to transport products. Visiting a Farmer’s Market is also a great way to meet the people who grow your food and is an exciting opportunity to try new foods since many farmers markets offer lesser known fruits and vegetables that are just as tasty, if not more so, than those you’re used to eating every day. Not sure how to prepare these new foods? Ask the farmers how and they may share one of their favorite recipes with you, like this one below:

Recipe: Classic Butternut Squash Soup

Yields 6 servings. (Recipe courtesy of Whole Foods Market)

Optional: Parmesan cheese and sautéed sage for garnish

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 carrot, diced
1 celery stalk, diced
1 onion, diced
4 cups cubed butternut squash
½ teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper

Heat oil in a large soup pot. Add carrot, celery and onion. Cook until vegetables have begun to soften and onion turns translucent, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in butternut squash, thyme, chicken broth, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until squash is fork-tender, about 30 minutes. Purée soup in batches in a blender or food processor until creamy and smooth. Enjoy warm!
With a growing number of students on BC’s campus taking an interest in sustainability and resource efficiency, the question “What is BC doing to be ‘green’?” gets thrown around quite a bit. To some, the changes that have been made are less obvious than to others, but nonetheless, we are moving in the right direction when it comes to doing our part to be sustainable global citizens reducing our carbon footprint.

In the last few years, a variety of energy upgrades have been made all over campus. Perhaps one of the most easily recognizable changes was one that came as a result of a study a group of seniors did last year as part of their Environmental Studies Seminar course. The students found that a considerable amount of BCs energy consumption came from inefficient showerheads in the residence halls on campus. By switching to much higher efficiency models with a much lower flow rate of 1 gallon per minute (GPM), BC has the potential to cut the water use in half as well as significantly reduce energy consumption in heating the water. These upgrades not only reduce our campus’ carbon footprint but also will pay for themselves in savings, too.

Another big change that has happened in the recent past is the lighting upgrades to Linden Lane. Boston College has seen perhaps the most significant savings, both in energy and cost, since making the shift to LED lighting across campus in locations where they are most needed. In some cases, LED lighting can result in as much as 50% in savings. Additional lighting upgrades include: transitioning from Mercury/Company Fluorescent Lighting to LEDs in Higgins; upgrading to High Efficiency Fluorescent fixtures in the lab spaces; and installing occupancy sensors which help save energy by turning on the lights only when a person enters the room.

As the need to conserve energy and resources increases, BC continues to look into a number of energy saving options. Future energy saving projects in the works include upgrading the Heating, Ventilation and Air Cooling (HVAC) systems in Conte Forum and the Law Library, installing a new dehumidification system in Conte, and new hot water controls in the dorms on College Road.

LED light fixtures light the way to energy efficiency on Linden Lane

Boston College is also proud to announce that four of our buildings have achieved Energy Star certification. (See page 6 for more info.)
Living and Learning: Students Live & Learn the BC Mission to Serve Through a Sustainability Lens

Nestled in one of the wings of Edmond’s Hall is a community of Boston College sophomores who share a common passion for sustainability and advocating for the environment on campus. This special group of students makes up the very first residential community participating in the Sustainability Special Interest Housing Program. The program, open to all rising sophomores, is designed to provide a learning environment (consistent with the national increase of sophomore living programs) based on the theme of sustainability. The interest in sustainability has continued to grow over the years among both BC students and faculty so this program was a natural fit.

“Faculty and staff connections are important for sophomore development and environmental responsibility is important for everyone,” says Kate D’Angelo, Office of Residential Life. The program provides sophomores an opportunity to learn and live the BC mission of serving society through a lens of sustainability. It brings together students who are passionate about the same topic and who are interested in learning about and advocating for environmental responsibility. Students have the opportunity to learn from each other as much as they will learn from the faculty and staff guest speakers.

When asked about future plans to extend the Sustainability Special Interest Housing Program to other residence halls on campus, D’Angelo says, “Right now we are concentrating on building a successful first year program. Assessment and student feedback will be important to determine when/how the program grows.” If you are interested in learning more about the program, visit the BC Residential Life website. Applications for next year’s program will be available in the Spring before Housing selection.

Boston College Junior Spends Summer Conducting Research in Northern Iceland

While most students were tightening the knots on their neckties or packing their totes and heading to the beach this summer, Alex Krowiak, A&S ’15, was conducting important research alongside a team from the University of Wisconsin, Madison in Northern Iceland.

Situated on Lake Myvatn, a eutrophic lake located in an area of active volcanism and known for its diverse wildlife, Alex investigated the effects of nutrient movement from the lake to the surrounding terrestrial habitats. The mating process of tiny flies, called midges, causes this phenomenon. These insects emerge from the lake by the billions and move to the land to mate, creating an influx of nutrients to the surrounding area. Their research found that the increase in nutrients acts as a fertilizer and results in a shift from the typically dominant heathland (characterized by heaths and shrubs) vegetation to a grass dominated plant life, which causes a change in the make-up of the insect communities that inhabit the land.

Other experiments that Alex and the team conducted included taking a look at the effects of increased precipitation due to climate change and how that will affect the decomposition pathways of the midges on land. They also conducted experiments on the effect of the nutrients described above on the timing of plant flowering around the lake. The data for both of these experiments is still being analyzed. (See photos to follow)
Student Group Spotlight:
Boston College charity: water

Boston College charity: water was founded in 2012 by a group of students who felt there was a need to bring awareness and education about the global water crisis to the Boston College community. They are an official campus chapter of charity: water, a non-profit organization bringing clean and safe drinking water to people in developing nations. This year, Boston College charity: water hopes to raise $20,000 in support of the charity: water 2013 September Campaign that hopes to provide clean water and lavatory systems to 100 villages in Orissa, India.

To find out about how you can get involved or support the campaign, connect with them:

Twitter: @bcharitywater
Instagram: @bcharitywater

Four BC Buildings Achieve Energy Star Certification!

Boston College is proud to announce that Stayer Hall, Cadigan Alumni Center, 129 Lake St. Offices, and Medeiros Hall have achieved Energy Star certification. Buildings that earn the EPA’s Energy Star use 35% less energy and generate 35% fewer greenhouse gas emissions than similar buildings across the nation!

Get connected to The BC Office of Sustainability:

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Read our e-Newsletter and stay up to date with all things BC Green by visiting our website at www.bc.edu/sustainability

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