

Saint Mary's College of California

Saint Mary's Digital Commons

Sustainability Report

6-22-2022

2021-2022 Sustainability Committee Annual Report to the President

Saint Mary's College of California

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The following end of year letter serves as the 2021-2022 Saint Mary's Sustainability Annual Report.



Earth Month 2022

Please join us for events throughout April...

1	FAIR TRADE FRIDAY W/ GREEN GAELS + SUSTAINABILITY
9-12pm	Mission & Ministry
1	FREE STORE POP UP SHOP
12-2pm	De La Salle Lawn
2	PAINT THE "SMC" GREEN & TEAL
10am	Meet at De La Salle Lawn
5	HIKE TO THE CROSS W/ GREEN GAELS
1pm	Meet at De La Salle Lawn
6	ATHLETES, INTERCULTURAL CENTER, FREE STORE POP UP
12-2pm	De La Salle Lawn
20	LOCKING ARMS FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
5:30pm	SF Commonwealth Club
21	TOUR OF MOUNT DIABLO RESOURCE RECOVERY
3pm	Concord, CA
21	A CONVERSATION WITH ERNESTO CHRISTIAN ENKERLIN HOEFLICH
5pm	Hogerty Lounge
22	WEIGH THE WASTE
Lunchtime	Oliver Hall
23	RIVER OF WORDS FESTIVAL & LA SALLE FEST
27	FREE STORE @ DENIM DAY
11am	De La Salle Lawn
28	MENDING AND FEMINIST POCKETS: CRAFTING AS ACTIVISM
10:30	CWGE

LINK IN BIO @smcsustainability



15TH ANNIVERSARY OF SIERRA'S

THE COOLEST SCHOOLS

2007-2021



The Mission & Ministry Center with THE GREEN GAELS & OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY invites you to

Fair Trade Friday

For Free Coffee, Tea, Hot Chocolate & Raffle Prizes

April 1, 9 am - 12 pm in the MMC

Learn about:

- Upcoming Earth Month events
- Sustainability initiatives at SMC
- How Fair Trade = Environmental sustainability
- Fair Trade & sustainable paper products

EARTH DAY is EVERY DAY with Fair Trade!

Contact: Roshan Thomas RT14@stmarys-co.edu





June 22, 2022

Dear President Plumb,

This letter is intended to highlight several notable achievements, as well as future plans of the President's Sustainability Committee. Thanks to the leadership of faculty, staff, and students, many of whom dedicate time and energy beyond their regular service obligations and responsibilities, the College continues to reach new sustainability milestones despite significant obstacles. We write this against the backdrop of the Sixth UN IPCC's Assessment – the bleakest warning on climate change yet. Many in our Saint Mary's community have personally felt the increasingly disastrous effects of climate change – losing homes, evacuating from fires and floods, as well as the health impacts of our changing climate and atmosphere. Grounded in our Catholic, Lasallian values, our Committee's work aims to fulfill the College's Climate Action Plan and advance sustainability goals with an acknowledgment and urgency that any further delay will make already-devastating environmental impacts more severe.

This year's work began before students arrived back on campus. In July and again in August, members of the Committee convened a hyflex Sustainability Summit to revisit our vision, purpose, priorities, and governance structure. Rich discussion generated a reconstitution of the Committee's membership, roles, and responsibilities. What resulted was **new Faculty Handbook language**, which the Academic Senate adopted on November 17, 2021, and will be updated in the 2022-2023 Faculty Handbook.

Once new membership and structure were approved, and new co-chairs appointed, the Committee launched its work in several key areas:

Food

With a new food service contract on the horizon, the Committee revisited and drafted the College's **Sustainable Food Plan**. The plan incorporates sustainable practices into the day-to-day operations of the college dining services in an effort to reduce emissions, address inequities and build a more resilient, healthier community at Saint Mary's and beyond.

Curricular and Co-Curricular

Integrating sustainability into the curriculum and co-curricular activities has been a top priority of the Committee since its inception. In the fall, our Sustainability Committee co-chairs submitted a proposal to integrate **sustainability and environmental justice in the core curriculum**. The proposal outlined a potential new learning outcome as well as several ways sustainability aligns with and could enhance core curriculum requirements. In Spring 2022, the Sustainability Committee partnered with EES 120 Sustainability, a community engagement course, supporting several projects advancing zero waste, food security, energy and reuse projects on campus. In the Fall, members of our Committee discussed and drafted effective and relevant ways of **relaunching the Sustainability Living Learning Community**, focusing on first years and an emphasis on “blurring the boundaries” of the classroom, residential environments, and co-curricular activities. The Sustainability LLC hopes to relaunch in Fall 2023.

Energy

The Sustainability Committee is committed to finding cost-effective ways to reduce energy use while advancing climate action goals. For the past three years, members of our Committee have prioritized energy-savings projects, monitored energy usage more consistently, and engaged our campus community in energy conservation through the guidance of Marin Clean Energy and CLEAResult’s Strategic Energy Management (SEM) program. In year one of the program, the College reduced electricity usage by over 4% and natural gas usage by 12% by implementing 14 low- and no-cost behavioral, retro-commissioning, and operational activities – including establishing regular service and maintenance protocols, and scheduling all HVAC air handlers according to occupancy rather than letting them run continuously. Through the SEM program’s cash incentives, we have received over \$68,000 in checks for energy reduction and milestones.

Another top priority for the Committee is pursuing on-site renewable energy for the College. For several years, a working group of the Sustainability Committee has worked tirelessly to collect data relating to the feasibility of low-carbon, cash-flow positive, on-site renewable energy systems for the college. After procuring multiple bids from solar vendors, exploring our financing options, doing site tours, conducting internal analyses on our electricity rates, tariffs and usage, we found that solar photovoltaic systems plus the option for backup battery power offer a net positive financial opportunity for the college while simultaneously providing several co-benefits. The installation of solar PV systems on sites throughout our sunny 420-acre campus has and will continue to remain a key initiative of the Committee. The Committee supports a phased installation approach, starting with a proof of concept for ground-mounted or rooftop solar on the Alioto Recreation Center in summer 2023, and if deemed feasible, expand to additional campus sites.

Transportation

Our final Committee meeting of the year focused on Transportation. Commuting is the third-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions at Saint Mary's, accounting for approximately 2,817 Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide equivalent, or 20% of all emissions (2018 Sightlines Data). A transportation survey conducted in 2018 found that while 12% of Saint Mary's students carpool and around 3% bike, bus and/or BART to campus, the remaining commute to and from school in single-occupancy vehicles. Our Committee hopes to collaboratively work with Public Safety & Transportation to encourage and incentivize alternative modes of transportation.

Throughout the year, various members of our Committee devoted time and energy to advancing sustainability in their offices, departments, and cross-campus initiatives. For example, members of our Committee have worked on developing the **2023 Strategic Plan**, including *Theme 6: Sustainability & Environmental Justice*, to ensure our sustainability and climate action goals are aligned with campus-wide goals and priorities. Committee members also found creative ways to integrate sustainability and climate action into campus-wide events, like the SMC Community Day.

Next year, we will be submitting our fourth Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Sustainability Tracking and Assessment Report (**STARS**). In 2020, Saint Mary's was thrilled to achieve a Gold STARS ranking; we hope to maintain this designation during our 2023 submission. Our participation in this program provides invaluable benchmarking as well as national recognition for Saint Mary's sustainability achievements. Because of this data collection effort, we are consistently recognized as one of Princeton Review's "Green Schools" and listed in Sierra Club's annual "Cool Schools" rankings.

We appreciate your continued support of these critical initiatives, and we look forward to continuing this work throughout the summer and next academic year.

Sincerely,

The 2021-2022 Sustainability Committee

Roy Wensley, Co-Chair

Ann Drevno

Corey Cook

Michael Marchetti

Sonya Schuh-Huerta

Michal Strahilevitz

Brittany Royer

Maya Patel

Manisha Anantharaman, Co-Chair

Anthony Garrison

Jennifer Pigza
Carol Ann Gittens
Elizabeth Davis

Roy Wensley
Frances Sweeney
Michael Beseda