

Sustainable Mason

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Inside this issue:

Recycling	2
Transportation	2
Food	2
Energy	3
Academics	3
About us	4
For Students	4

Look inside for more examples of how Mason is "Going Green":

Go Green!
Go Mason!



Mason Commits to Climate Neutrality!

In the summer of 2007, George Mason University President Alan Merten signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, committing Mason to becoming "climate neutral." That means the university is actively taking steps to reduce or offset all CO₂ emissions associated with the university's electricity use, heating, cooling, commuting, and travel.

Real progress has already been made. Mason is saving more than \$1 million every year in utility costs with the help of an energy efficiency contract with Siemens Building Technologies initiated in 2004. Mason's Facilities Department has committed to building all new buildings to the US Green Building Council's LEED Silver standard, which will make them 20-30% more efficient than a standard building.

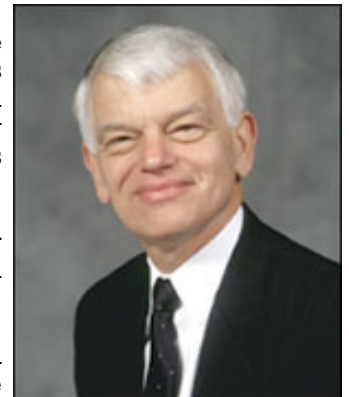
The Sustainability Office has completed a greenhouse gas inventory and is now enlisting the campus community in the development of a Climate Action Plan to identify the most effective ways to further reduce our emissions.

In the meantime, simple steps like turning out lights when leaving a room, powering down computers when not in use, and recycling cans, bottles, and paper make a real difference.

Several hundred members of the Mason community have volunteered to lend support by informing others at Mason how they can reduce their energy use and

greenhouse gas emissions. We call these messengers Climate Champions.

If you'd like to learn more about how to help us meet our climate goals, visit the sustainability website at <http://green.gmu.edu/climate>.



George Mason University President Dr. Alan Merten has committed Mason to climate leadership in higher education through the ACUPCC

About Sustainable Mason

Welcome to the very first edition of *Sustainable Mason*, the periodic newsletter from the George Mason University Office of Sustainability. The purpose of this publication is to highlight the myriad activities folks from across Mason are undertaking to make our school more sustainable.

Although people are doing great things across Mason, space in *Sustainable Mason* is limited, so in this issue we picked several initiatives that we felt represent the great diversity of activities taking place at Mason. In future issues we will cover a wide range of actions going on around Mason.

If you or your department is doing something that you would like highlighted in *Sustainable Mason* please let us know. Or, if you have a question about an environmental topic and you think other people might be wondering the same thing, submit your question to us; in future issues we aim to include a section dedicated to answering your environmental queries.

Finally, we want your suggestions! Our goal is to make Mason the most environmentally friendly school of its size in the country and *Sustainable Mason* is a tool to help us realize that ambition. Help us make Mason synonymous with sustainability! Contact us at gogreen@gmu.edu with questions or suggestions.

Academics



The College of Humanities and Social Sciences has created the Center for Climate Change Communication, the nation's first research center devoted exclusively to addressing the communication challenges associated with global climate change.

Their mission is to conduct public engagement and behavior change research that can be used to improve climate change communication and social marketing programs. To help translate research into practice, we assist other organizations—government agencies, non-profit organizations, and businesses—in developing and

refining their climate change prevention and adaptation programs. Their efforts focus on four strategic areas:

— Engaging a broad range of research experts and business, non-profit and government leaders to identify the most pressing communication and behavior change research questions.

— Conducting communication and behavior change research to learn how best to educate, motivate and assist people and organizations in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the risk of a changing climate.

— Providing technical assistance to a broad range of organizations (in the public, non-profit and private sectors) so as to improve their climate change education, communication, advocacy and behavior change programs.

— Encouraging the development of similar initiatives abroad, especially in nations where effective societal responses are urgently needed to avert climate change (such as China, India, Brazil and Russia).

Learn more by visiting www.climatechangecommunication.org

Waste vegetable oil from dining halls is being converted to biodiesel

Food

As part of its commitment to increase the sustainability of its operations, food and facilities management company Sodexo recently announced many initiatives for sustainable dining at Mason. Some notable examples:

— All fryer oil is now being professionally micro-filtered to reduce the amount of oil used; when it becomes waste oil, it is removed from campus to be turned into biofuel.

— Only napkins made from 100% recycled material are used at all three Mason campuses in Virginia. These napkins are distributed through single-napkin dispensers designed to significantly reduce napkin use.

— Designed and sold a rigid plastic "Greening Mason" cold beverage bottle (386 to date) for a result of countless plastic water cups not used and 288 fountain drink setups not used.

— Southside Dining, which is 95% sustainable in terms of its waste, opened in September 2008.

For more information about sustainable dining at Mason call 703-993-3314

or go to:

masondining.blogspot.com



Bike to Mason Day 2008

Transportation

Anyone who lives in the Washington D.C. region is familiar with the area's everyday traffic congestion and ongoing transportation issues.

Mason's Transportation Department helps commuters get around a little easier by providing the community a variety of transportation services and options for travel to, from, and between Mason's campuses.

The Transportation Department actively demonstrates some of the benefits of using alternative transit and educates Mason commuters on alternative transportation options available to them. Contact the Transportation Department for more information:

Phone: 703-993-2828
E-mail: transpo@gmu.edu
Web: transportation.gmu.edu

Bike to Mason Day 2008

April 22, 2008, was the FIRST EVER Bike to Mason Day! It was a great success and participants seemed to have a ton of fun!

There were 205 cyclists who stopped by the pit stop in the North Plaza. *Bikes for the World* collected 39 bikes and received \$475 in donations. (See left photo.)

Energy

Energy (comprised mainly of purchased electricity and natural gas for heating) is the most critical component of our carbon footprint. In recent days, our per-unit costs have risen sharply, and will continue to rise into the future. Our Energy Management Department has proactively addressed this issue, reducing our consumption and our costs significantly. We have been able to reduce our overall energy consumption by 15% with the help of a Siemens Building Technologies (SBT) Energy Savings Performance Contract that began in 2004. This contract implemented \$12 million in energy and water-saving projects with an anticipated annual savings of \$1.8 million. As a result of this success, Mason's energy office was asked by the Governor's Office to assist with writing a more aggressive standard for Commonwealth institutions. Under Virginia Governor's Executive Order 48 (2007), all Com-

monwealth institutions who met the 10% reduction goal in Executive Order 54 (2003) must reduce their spending on non-renewable energy consumption by an *additional* 15% by 2010 (that's us). Those institutions that did not meet that goal must reduce their costs by 20% from 2006 consumption levels. To date, Mason has met 75% of the goal mandated by Executive Order 48. The university is working on a second agreement with SBT to find additional projects to save energy on campus.

Facilities has ordered four additional electric vehicles in lieu of gas-powered trucks to add to our existing fleet of three. For more information about Mason's energy programs, please visit: <http://masonenergy.gmu.edu>.



A Siemens employee working with Mason's Energy Office to help conserve energy

Recycling

The university's waste management and recycling collection program was initiated in 1989. In 1990, Virginia required all state agencies to establish waste and recycling collection programs and set minimum recycling rate requirements. Mason established a formal policy responding to the mandate in 1993 and renewed it in 2004. In addition to the operational and planning requirements of the policy, the university is also instructed to "initiate programs in public education and public policy related to solid waste management and recycling."

Mason's recycling program handles many different types of materials including hazardous wastes. Fairfax County Solid Waste hauls away recycling from the Fairfax Campus, and in Arlington, cardboard and mixed paper are removed by Waste Management. Since the Arlington campus has little room for a dumpster due to local construction, the Waste Management and Recycling staff take a large van over there once a week to collect recycling waste.

For more information, please visit our website at: <http://facilities.gmu.edu/physicalplant/recycling>



A student-decorated recycling bin

What might Mason's sustainable campuses look like in 20 years?

This series asks the reader to ponder the various aspects of campus sustainability and how we might get there together. Every issue will provide some basic education and insight into one aspect of campus sustainability and a vision for what we might look like in 20 years as a community if we work together toward common goals.

Next issue: Sustainable Food

The Sustainable Vision Series

Climate Neutrality

What is it? Climate neutrality means that an organization or individual produces *no net greenhouse gas emissions*.

How might "climate neutrality" manifest itself on Mason's campuses?

- Mason employs all possible renewable energy sources before purchasing renewable energy credits to offset remaining emissions, and is climate neutral.
- Policy is set that all new buildings and renovations take advantage of the most efficient technology available to reduce energy consumption.
- Fleet vehicles are all run on biofuels or electricity.
- Mason's campuses are safely walkable and bikable and policy encourages the use of these modes of transportation as well as other public transportation modes.
- All community members do their part to reduce their individual carbon emissions.

Want to know more? Visit <http://green.gmu.edu/climate> to see what you can do!

We need you to get involved!

Calling all Students!

Join the GMU Environmental Awareness Group

The Environmental Awareness Group was formed in Fall 2007 with strong new leadership and a drive to get things done while having a great time doing it. This group has weekly meetings and frequent events. You can join the group yourself or you can choose to partner with their organization to lead an event of your own. Their experience organizing these events can help!



If you would like to get involved with GMUEA, please e-mail jose.gayoso@gmail.com or visit their website at: <http://www.gmu.edu/org/environment>

Join the Climate Action Planning team

If you're interested in making a *real* difference in our carbon footprint, help other students, faculty, and staff come up with practicable policy and technical solutions to get us to climate neutrality. Visit green.gmu.edu/climate/cap.html for more information about this great opportunity.

Calling all Faculty and Staff!

Join or help us recruit students for the Climate Action Planning team

The Climate Action Plan Core Planning Committee needs the help of faculty and staff to staff up our climate action planning subgroups. *Faculty:* We need you and your students! Join our effort yourselves or help us recruit interested students through existing course integration, independent study, or internships-for-credit. *Staff:* If you have some time to learn about and contribute to reducing the emissions footprint of your office and others like yours across campus, ask your manager. If you're interested contact Lenna Storm (lstorm@gmu.edu) or visit our website at green.gmu.edu/climate/cap.html to learn more.

Volunteer to be a Green Rep

Are you frustrated because you seem to be the only one who cares about various green issues within your department? Would you like to join a network of others across Mason who care as much as you do? The Green Reps program is a brand new initiative that will provide that opportunity! By providing a formal structure, standardized tools, and official support from the administration, Green Reps have the opportunity to change Mason for the better by helping the Office of Sustainability disseminate new awareness materials and policy changes and collect feedback and ideas from your peers on how we can do better. Contact Lenna Storm (lstorm@gmu.edu, 703-993-4220) if you're interested in playing this critical role in greening Mason!



Mission Statement

The mission of the Sustainability Office is to use the strengths of George Mason University — innovation, responsiveness, flexibility, and community strength — to provide leadership in environmental, social, and economic stewardship on our campuses and throughout the local and global communities of which we are a part.

Sustainability Office

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Web: <http://green.gmu.edu>

The responsibilities of the Office of Sustainability are too broad and many to list here. If you'd like more information about our programs, please visit our website green.gmu.edu to see what we're all about!

Attention Donors: New Sustainability Program Fund

Interested in supporting our efforts toward sustainability? Make a tax-deductible donation to the Sustainability Program Fund through the Mason Foundation (give.gmu.edu) or contact Sustainability Coordinator Lenna Storm (703-993-4220, lstorm@gmu.edu) for more details. Thanks for your support!

