



College of Saint Benedict Sustainability Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2020

Student Highlights from COP25 in Madrid

The international climate movement has witnessed a major increase in youth activism over the past few years, and CSB/SJU students are raising their voice in solidarity. This past December, twenty-one CSB/SJU students traveled to Madrid, Spain and took part in the 2019 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), also known as the Conference of the Parties (COP25). While at COP25, students conducted research on various aspects of the conference and UN climate convenings. Senior Chemistry major and Pre-Med student, Quinlen Marshall, researched the relationship between climate change and human health. He attended a case study presentation from Nigerian health professionals who described their working conditions in Lagos and the effects of climate change on their work. He also observed the youth presence at the conference and believes that, "this COP, more than any other, will be known for its involvement of the youth..."

Fellow senior and Peace Studies major, Leonardo Cumplido, focused his research on the connection between Indigenous Peoples and Renewable Energy in Latin America. After listening to panels and speaking directly with Latin American activists and Indigenous leaders, he gained a new perspective on the ongoing fight for climate change. "As an audience member, just listening to it, I felt that pain. I can't say I know what it is, but I can feel a pain that they [Indigenous Peoples] deserve more, that they deserve the right to be recognized more." While COP25 was meant to be an opportunity for developing global climate policy, CSB sophomore, Elena Lozano noted how, "a lot of talk was about the next COP and what was going to happen at COP26 and not focusing on what we can do now." She researched climate-induced displacement and attended a panel of young adults from small-island nations in the Caribbean that described this displacement as part of their lived reality. Lozano recognizes the urgency of these and other issues and left feeling inspired by the activism and passion of the youth she engaged with at the conference.

The opportunity to attend annual COP convenings is made possible by the Environmental Studies Department. Students who take part in this experiential learning have the opportunity to conduct and share original research from the conference at both CSB/SJU and their home communities.

Changes coming to CSB Campus

- Maverick Metering Appliance - A pilot program for Aurora Hall to monitor residential energy use.
- Wellhead Protection Plan - A partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health focused on a clean water protection plan for campus.
- Waste Audit – Decreasing the number of outdoor dumpsters and reducing the number of garbage collections each week. This will lower greenhouse gas emissions produced by garbage trucks and eliminate unnecessary spending for CSB.
- CSB Grounds – In the planning stages of updating HAB and Clemens courtyards. This project will reduce mowing and maintenance needs, in addition to providing a green space where students and staff can gather!

A Sustainable Clemens Perk Story!



Congratulations to Clemens Perk for their latest sustainability story! The Perk introduced a new bring-your-own-mug program just two years ago, and the program has been a tremendous success! In the first two years of the program 5,761 paper and plastic cups were saved, not including the accompanying lids, sleeves, and straws. From August to December 2019, the Perk saved a combined total of 2,305 single-use cups. A huge shout-out to Clemens Perk for their student-run initiative and to the students, faculty, and staff who come prepared with their re-useable coffee containers!



UPCOMING SUSTAINABILITY-RELATED EVENTS

February 22, 2020
Snow Art Challenge
CSB Mall
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

April 19-24, 2020
Week of Sustainability
(look to emails for daily events
and programming)

April 22, 2020
Celebration of the
50th Anniversary of
Earth Day

Divestment Campaign at CSB

What is divestment? Divestment is the process of taking endowments out of fossil fuel industries and re-investing those funds in more socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable industries. It has become a worldwide movement and many colleges and universities have divested throughout the United States.

What has been done at CSB? The Climate Action Club that has recently been rebranded as the Climate Justice Club initiated this campaign in Fall 2017. The argument is that divestment would be a reflection of the Benedictine Values that are striven for at this institution. The campaign's focus on economic considerations include research from the *North American Journal on Economics and Finance* providing evidence that divested portfolios perform just as well as non-divested ones. The Climate Justice Club argues that divested funds can be re-invested into emerging renewable energy markets and provide an opportunity for growth.

What is happening now? There has been increasing support for divestment at CSB, with endorsements from the CSB Sustainability Council and St. Ben's and St. John's Senates. The Climate Justice Club's campaign goal is to have a plan for divesting from fossil-fuel industries by May 2020. It is now being presented to and considered by the CSB administration and investment committee.

Congratulations to the 2019 Fall 'Cut the Current' Winners!

The upper-class halls in Lottie, Margretta, and Brian won the "Cut the Current" challenge this past fall decreasing their energy use by 16.3%! West Apartments took second place with a 15.4% reduction and Centennial Commons took third with 10%. Overall, our campus saw a reduction in energy use of 15,064 kWh (10.2%) the equivalent of 2.3 passenger cars driven for one year! Thank you to all who participated in this year's "Cut the Current," and to those who make active efforts to reduce their energy consumption every day. With the new semester underway, we hope students continue to look for sustainable ways to make a positive difference on our campus and community!



Meet the Staff...



Margeaux Pederson '21 is currently working on our Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and conducting outreach and educational programming for clubs and departments on campus.



Makaela Turner '21 is updating the office website and social media outlets and hopes to connect with a greater body of students and community members through these networks.



Betsy Ruckman '23 is our newly-hired Zero Waste Assistant and is excited to begin working in the office on campus-wide projects to monitor and diminish waste.