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Spring 2015 Update on the University's Environmental Stewardship

Earth Day Edition

April 22, 2015

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

Today, we join our community in celebrating Earth Day and our commitment to sustainability. Columbia makes strides both large and small, from pilot projects to industry-leading research, toward reducing the University's environmental footprint. Programs that touch upon everything from waste reduction to energy conservation help us move the needle toward a more sustainable place to live, learn and work. Please take a moment to read about the rich variety of initiatives underway.

Sincerely,

Robert Kasdin

Senior Executive Vice President, Columbia University

Initiatives



2015-2016 Green Fund Projects Announced

Now entering its second year, the Columbia University Green Fund- a \$25,000 fund sponsored by Columbia Dining, Housing and University Event Management to support student-led sustainability projects on campus- recently announced the funding of three projects for the 2015-2016 academic year. 1) "Break the Ice" will focus on efficient energy use in campus labs; 2) "Sustain-a-Bottle" will install water bottle filling stations to minimize plastic bottle waste; and 3) ECO Zero Waste Challenge will encourage students to recycle properly by performing waste audits and marketing campaigns.

Last week, students presented to University faculty and administrators findings and insights from this past year's projects, which focused on recycling, alternative energy and water conservation.

[Read more](#) about the new projects



Cool Columbia Launches!

Cool Columbia, a campaign to create a culture of conservation among residents in University housing, launched February 10th. The program, a study conducted by Environmental Stewardship and the [Center for Research on Environmental Decisions](#) (CRED), aims to assess attitudes and perceptions surrounding energy usage for tenants in University Apartment Housing. Participants receive energy saving tips every month, as well as tools such as power strips and LED lightbulbs as part of a commitment to take simple steps to reduce our collective carbon footprint.

Photo: Raymond Crookes from CRED tabling in Butler Hall to recruit participants for the Cool Columbia study.



Initiative on Extreme Weather and Climate

The [Columbia Initiative on Extreme Weather and Climate](#), a cross-disciplinary collaboration between a variety of centers, research groups and individuals from across the University, launched in February. Under the leadership of Professor Adam Sobel, the mission of the Initiative is focused on understanding the risks to human life and property from extreme weather events, both in the present and future climates, and



New Sustainable Finance Certificate

The Earth Institute and Columbia University's School of Continuing Education recently developed the Certification of Professional Achievement in Sustainable Finance to meet the growing demand for professionals who have interdisciplinary training and a comprehensive understanding of corporate sustainability and financial principles. This certification will introduce concepts of sustainability economics, investment, accounting, risk management, and communication to provide sophisticated training at the nexus of sustainability and financial management.

Photo: Travis Bradford moderating a panel with Frank Barbarino, Michael Davis, Sonal Mahida, Kevin Parker and Amy Springsteel at the Columbia Club on February 4, 2015, to announce the new certificate program.

Awards & Recognition



Columbia University Awarded STARS Gold Rating

Columbia recently submitted the 2015 Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) Report, sponsored by the [Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education](#) (AASHE). For the second time, Columbia will receive a **gold** rating, which is the second to highest rating. [Read the report.](#)



Joe Ienuso Wins Corporate Social Responsibility Award for "*Excellence in the Promotion of Workplace Diversity*"

One of the most important trends in business today, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) encompasses everything from philanthropy to environmentalism to the treatment of workers in the developing world. City & State Reports announced its first group of Corporate Social Responsibility award winners for New York's Real Estate, Construction & Housing sector. Columbia's Executive Vice President for Facilities and Operations- Joe Ienuso- was the recipient of the award for Excellence in the Promotion of Workplace Diversity for his commitment to corporate responsibility and impacting large scale change, from diversifying the workforce to mandating

work processes that help create a greener and cleaner environment, and many other socially responsible achievements in between. The awards were presented March 31st at a special breakfast ceremony at John Jay College. [Read more.](#)

The Princeton Review's

THE CENTER
FOR GREEN SCHOOLS



GUIDE TO 322 GREEN COLLEGES

Columbia chosen as one of The Princeton Review's "Green Colleges"

Columbia was chosen as one of the 353 schools featured in *The Princeton Review's Guide to 353 Green Colleges: 2015 Edition*. [Read more!](#)



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Columbia named one of "17 Amazing Green College Campuses"

Columbia was named one of "17 Amazing Green College Campuses" by Mother Nature Network, which highlighted the University's [Green Fund](#), award-winning [laboratory waste solvent recycling program](#) and annual [reuse events](#) to demonstrate how Columbia truly stands out as a sustainability leader in higher education. [Read the article.](#)

Measuring Success



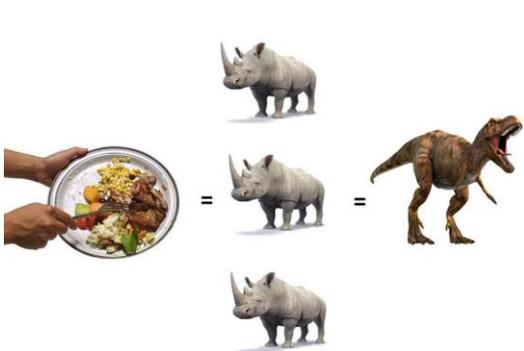
Ruggles Wins the 2015 Campus Conservation nationals Energy Challenge

Every year, Columbia participates in the Campus Conservation Nationals (CCN), which challenges students to reduce the energy consumption in their residence hall from its 2014 baseline. Students track their performance using a new online, [real-time energy dashboard](#). The 2015 CCN Challenge ran from March 26th through April 9th, with 13 of the Residence Halls competing to win. The challenge ended with the EcoRep's GreenFest celebration, and recognized Ruggles Hall residents for their 15% reduction in electricity usage, beating out Woodbridge and River, who came in 2nd and 3rd place, respectively. Collectively, the residence halls reduced energy usage by **4.7%**, saving **17,156 kWh** of electricity, or **11.8 Metric tons of CO₂**...The equivalent of the annual greenhouse gas emissions from almost 3 cars!



Recycle a Bottle, Dress a Grad!

At the graduation ceremonies this year, all of the undergraduate and Masters gowns are made from 100% recycled bottles. Each gown is made from 46 bottles. For every 100 students wearing a 'green gown' at graduation, **4,600 bottles** are kept out of the landfill. [Read more](#) about how the gowns are made.



DSNY Organic Collection Pilot: *John Jay Dining Hall & 560 Riverside*

Beginning in late November of 2014, Columbia Dining began an *organic collection pilot* with Environmental Stewardship and the Department of Sanitation, New York (DSNY) to help reduce the amount of food waste going into our landfills. In less than three short months, John Jay Dining Hall has collected and composted over **13,000 lbs. of food waste**, the equivalent weight of three rhinos, or a tyrannosaurus rex.



A composting pilot is also taking place in 560 Riverside Drive, a residential apartment building, in partnership with DSNY. In the first 12 weeks of the program, residents produced 136 lbs. of organics per week with a 7% participation rate, reducing the amount of refuse bags set out for collection by 8%, and the weight of the average refuse bag by 36%.