



FEATURED STORIES

Bruce Dixon Is New Head of Office of Sustainability

EcoPledge Raises Over \$500 at "Sing It To Puerto Rico"

Outdoors Groups Promote Environmentalism with Student-Led Adventures

How Consumerism Leads to Environmental Injustices

Energy Games and Recyclemania Results Show Promise of Green Awareness

OUR TEAM

This newsletter is a monthly publication by EcoPledge of Boston College.

Questions about our content? Contact us at ecoplege@gmail.com.

Chris Russo, CSOM '19

Editor

Alex Capozziello, MCAS '21

Associate Editor

Alinda Dersjant, MCAS '21

Graphics Editor

Contributors:

Frankie Wilton, MCAS '21

Elizabeth Allen, MCAS '21

Eagle graphic courtesy of Zoe Fanning, MCAS '20

CONNECT



[/BCEcoPledge](#)



[@bcecopledge](#)

The New Leaders of BC Sustainability

Bruce Dixon, New Sustainability Specialist, Will Lead BC's Green Efforts Along With His Team of Enthusiastic Student Interns

By *Chris Russo*

It all started in a cloud of smoke. That's where Bruce Dixon, Boston College's new sustainability and energy specialist, discovered his passion for energy management and the environment.

Dixon, who has worked at BC since 2008, became the head of the university's sustainability office in January after the former director of the office, Bob Pion, retired in August.

Raised by parents who grew up on farms, Dixon learned firsthand about being sustainable by learning about recycling, reuse, and gardening. As a part of a union HVAC/R mechanical staff Dixon repaired commercial and industrial refrigeration equipment which often required the dumping of refrigerants—fluorocarbons that are detrimental to the ozone layer. At that time, it was not yet understood how damaging refrigerants were to the environment.

During one repair job in Quincy, Dixon and his colleagues were removing over 80 pounds of refrigerant from a large system. As the chemicals entered the atmosphere, they began to vaporize and turn into what looked like billow-

ing clouds of smoke. People in the neighborhood were so concerned about the smoke clouds that they called the fire department. The scene became a spectacle to all the residents in the area.

"I remember that for a number of reasons because it really bothered me," Dixon said. "Not only because what we were doing to the ozone and the atmosphere, but also [because] it was just a big waste."

Laws were soon passed that prohibited discharging refrigerants into the atmosphere and terminated the manufacturing and sales chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). These laws also provided regulations for reusing and recycling refrigerants. Dixon became certified in teaching mechanics how to reuse and recycle refrigerants, and it became his passion.

Dixon joined BC's facilities department in 2008 as an HVAC mechanic. He was then promoted to energy management specialist in 2011. In this position, Dixon monitored the energy usage of many of the university's large buildings. Along with the team in the Office of Engineering and Energy, he sought ways to upgrade equipment and make energy usage more efficient.

Dixon and the engineering and energy team are responsible for most of the energy efficiency initiatives that have been made at BC in the last several years. Many of these changes are unknown by the wider community because they were implemented behind the scenes.

On his second day as energy management specialist, Dixon sat in on a meeting between his team, the university president, the executive vice president, and executives from the utility provider Ever-source. BC senior leadership and Dixon's team worked with the utility company by pledging to reduce the university's energy consumption over a period of several years.

Despite his enthusiasm for energy management, Dixon always had a passion for sustainability initiatives that reached farther than energy efficiency. For this reason, he was very excited to step up to the sustainability and energy specialist position in January.

"This is one of the best jobs I've ever had—being able to work with all different types of people

continued on page 2

After Years as Energy Management Specialist, Dixon Lands Sustainability Position

from page 1

for a common cause: to reduce energy, to recycle, to become more sustainable,” Dixon said.

Dixon’s new position entails many of the duties of his previous position, including managing the university’s energy platforms and overseeing an annual auditing process. He is also working with the Office of Capital Construction and the directors of Facilities on the new Schiller Institute and other newly constructed buildings on campus to ensure the buildings are LEED certified.

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a rating system created by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) which evaluates the environmental performance of a building and encourages market transformation towards sustainable design.

All new buildings in the city of Boston are required to have

LEED certification. As a part of Chestnut Hill and Newton, the university is not required to have LEED certified buildings, but Dixon believes it is important to attain this certification for BC’s new buildings in order to communicate that BC is taking steps to make its campus more sustainable. During constructions and renovation, Stokes Hall, 2000 Comm. Ave, 2150 Comm. Ave, and the Schiller Institute have all applied for LEED certification.

Although much work goes on regarding sustainability in the administration, Dixon believes the real passion and push for sustainable change has always resided in the student body.

“[Students] don’t understand how effective their voice really is,” he said. “When they do speak, I listen to what they say, and I let my senior leadership know what exactly the students want.”

Some of the students most passionate about sustainability are

the interns for the Office of Sustainability. Although Dixon is technically the head of the office, he believes his interns are the real face of the office because they are the ones interacting with students on a daily basis.

Jillian Pruner, CSOM '21, is one of the interns in the office who works side-by-side with Dixon to interact with the student body. She is also a member of EcoPledge.

“Sustainability has a really unique way to reach such a large number of students,” Pruner said. “I am so honored to be able to work on this team. We get to impact so many students.”

Pruner’s goal is to engage directly with students and explain small sustainable changes they can make in their everyday lives, such as turning off the lights when they leave their dorms.

“The goal is to give as many people the resources they need to succeed sustainably,” she said.

Pruner believes that if people can make changes in small habits, collectively, these changes will add up and lead to large-scale change. She understands that not everyone can be an environmental activist, but she believes that everyone truly wants a greener Earth.

“We are all environmentalists, we just do it in different ways,” Pruner said.

Dixon hopes to build upon the work of his predecessor and expand the university’s sustainable programs.

“I think BC has done a great job [regarding sustainability] in the past 9 years I’ve been here, but we have a lot of work to do,” Dixon said.

The university will continue to evaluate buildings and update them with the most efficient energy technology, Dixon said.

“We as a Jesuit community will grow with sustainability,” he said. “We will grow as the industry grows.”

EcoPledge Holds A Capella Concert, Raises Money for Puerto Rico's Climate Refugees

By Alex Capozziello

On Thursday, March 22, EcoPledge held its first large scale fundraiser, Sing it to Puerto Rico, to raise money for those affected by the devastating and lasting effects of Hurricane Maria. EcoPledge was able to raise over \$500 for charity at the event.

“We wanted to focus on what’s happening in Puerto Rico tonight because we think the damage of Hurricane Maria has been amplified by these environmental injustices and the disregard and neglect of FEMA and politicians and lawmakers in Washington,” said Bronte Kass, copresident of EcoPledge and MCAS '18.

The event began with a brief introduction to the current situation the people of Puerto Rico face. There were then performances by two a cappella groups: the Boston College Common Tones and the Madrigal Singers of Boston College.

Between the two performances, Fernando Lujan, CSOM '20, spoke about his 2018 spring break experience in Puerto Rico, in which he saw the hurricane’s devastation firsthand.

Lujan visited Puerto Rico with the mission of preparing and

delivering food to those affected by the hurricane, but once he arrived, he quickly realized that the issues facing the people of the island were much more dire than he expected. He talked about his experience working with a woman named Silvia who lost her home to the hurricane and was homeless and starving. He saw the plight of hardworking people, like Silvia, who had no state-sponsored assistance or medical care.

Since his visit, Lujan has made it his mission to spread awareness at BC for Puerto Rico and its citizens, a community which he considers to be his second home. According to Lujan, organizations have stopped lending assistance to Puerto Rico since the storm has passed. However, the disaster is far from over—the people of Puerto Rico still require help, he said.

At the end of the event, EcoPledge had raised over \$300 for Heart to Heart International, an organization that provides medical care, supplies, and volunteer teams to Puerto Rico. EcoPledge was also able to help Lujan raise nearly \$300 for his cause, The Puerto Rico Project. Lujan will send these funds directly to those in need.



Outdoors Groups Promote Environmentalism Through Student-Led Adventures

EcoPledge's theme this year is Environmental Health is Human Health. In the fall, we focused on the importance of healthy, sustainable food options by hosting Harvest Fest. Over the winter, we focused on environmental justice and held "Sing It to Puerto Rico," raising over \$500 for the island's climate refugees. This spring, we are aiming our attention at the importance of getting outdoors to be healthy and protecting the health of the environment at the same time. The following is a article about two groups at Boston College who are exploring the outdoors and working to educate students on conservation.



Members of Outdoor Adventures (OA) climbed Mount Katahdin in Maine in the fall.

Photo Courtesy of Outdoor Adventures

By Frankie Wilton

Seeking to enhance Boston College social life, Outdoor Adventures (OA) and the Outdoor Club of BC (OCBC) have made it their missions to encourage students to explore the wilderness. Both clubs work to promote healthy and active lifestyles on campus while also educating students about conservation.

OA, run through the Plex, has been led by Eli Crispell, assistant director of campus recreation, since the fall of 2012. Before joining BC full time, Crispell worked with prominent outdoor planning agencies the American Canoe Organization and Outward Bound. Though Crispell is largely responsible for the coordination and organization of OA's trips, he

relies heavily on his student leaders, who facilitate trips and educate their peers about the outdoors.

In the past academic year alone, OA has coordinated trips to Mount Katahdin, Acadia National Park, Mount Liberty, and Hammond Pond for activities such as hiking, backpacking, rock climbing, and paddle-boarding.

According to Yueming Chen, a student leader since her freshman year and MCAS '20, as the weather warms up, the organization seeks to get more students outside for kayaking and hiking, as well as teaching lessons about conservation and respecting nature.

Chen said that at high altitudes the alpine environment is extremely fragile, so she explains

to students how important it is to walk on the path rather than wandering off, potentially harming the environment. This set of rules will hold especially critical for OA students as the club embarks on a trip to Iceland this summer.

"Our main goal is to leave [the environment] how we found it," Chen said.

Just like OA, OCBC also understands the importance of protecting the environment and embraces the idea of leave-no-trace. This idea encourages students to be mindful of their impact while exploring nature with either group. By leaving the environment how they found it, students can enjoy nature without harming it for future use.

"Global climate change and

deforestation are problems because people do not know what they are destroying," OCBC's website states. "By helping young men and women spend more time in nature, we are working to eliminate this problem and moving towards a better future."

Past trips for OCBC include whale watching in the Boston Harbor, ice skating in the Boston Common, and rock climbing at Hammond Pond. In addition to weekly rock climbing trips at Central Rock Gym in Watertown, OCBC wants to go horseback riding and take more hikes in the upcoming months as the weather gets warmer.

Ultimately, both groups would like to see students get break the "BC bubble" and explore the outdoors.

EVENTS THIS MONTH

Tues. April 17 BC Dining's pop up event "Trash Dinner" with a film screening of "Just Eat It" at 6 p.m. in the Walsh Function Room.

Wed. April 18 EcoPledge's cultural cookbook showcase at 6 p.m. in the first floor lounge of 2150 Comm. Ave.

Fri. April 20 Earth Day Fair 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. on the Academic Quad featuring some very special surprise guests.

Sat. April 28 All are welcome to join EcoPledge's final volunteer event of the semester, pitch in and pick up with the Charles River Watershed Association from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Email ecopledge@gmail.com for further details.

The Externalities of Consumerism Cause Both Human and Environmental Injustices

An Opinion Piece
By Alinda Dersjant

Overcrowded sweatshops in Bangladesh, air pollution from factories, and the harmful effects of production dyes on the health of workers are just a few of the ways in which the production of low-cost goods in developing countries has severely impacted the quality of life of the people living there. The production of low-cost goods has also resulted in harmful environmental consequences, making the issue both a human and environmental injustice.

While reports in the media and citizen activism have helped raise awareness about the negative consequences of the production of fashion items, these consequences remain nearly invisible to consumers.

The negative impacts that

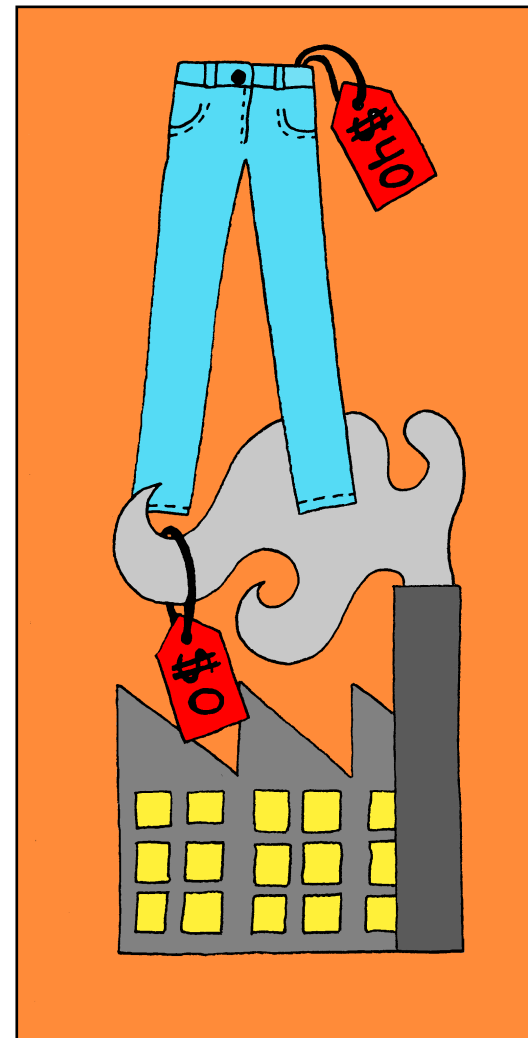
companies—and consumers indirectly—do not pay for in the cost for an item or service are known as externalities. Large corporations exploit these externalities in order to maximize profits.

Corporations are able to use cheap labor and dispose of environmentally harmful materials more easily in developing countries, where less strict environmental and social regulations exist. As a result, low-income workers and their communities pay the price for externalities such as environmental degradation and declining human health, which can result from water and air pollution.

While consumers in economically successful countries do not directly pay for the consequences of externalities on low-income countries, some consumers choose to take action for ethical reasons. However, it is

difficult to discern which products impose the most severe externalities, making it hard for production-conscious consumers to take action. Price is not always an accurate indicator of externalities. Even some expensive brands use cheap labor in sweatshops to assemble products at the lowest production cost.

According to the *Journal of Industrial Ecology*, consumption at the household level has caused between 60 and 80 percent of global environmental degradation. This shows that by choosing to purchase fewer, or more durable and environmentally-responsible products, consumers can reduce the impacts of production on the global environment. Consumers have the responsibility to make decisions not based solely on brand preference, but rather on a preference to care for their common home—Earth.



Alinda Dersjant, MCAS'21

FROM THE OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Participation in Recyclemania and Energy Games Brings Green Awareness to Campus

By Liz Allen

One of the main goals of the Office of Sustainability is to encourage students to be mindful of how their habits impact the environment. To achieve this goal, the office annually participates in two competitions: Recyclemania and the Energy Games. BC's participation in these competitions allows students to directly get involved with sustainability and learn how their actions impact sustainable initiatives at the university.

"The really cool thing about a sustainability office for a university is that you have the ability to make small habits in a student's life," said Jillian Pruner, an intern for the office and CSOM '21.

These small habits come in the form of recycling, turning off the lights, and other small changes that can make a large impact on reducing BC's footprint.

Recyclemania is competition that takes place in the United States and Canada, with 289 uni-

versities participating in the northeast and around 40 schools in Massachusetts alone. The competition requires that schools keep track of their waste, and the winning schools get national recognition and awards made from recyclable materials, in spirit of the cause. The program lasts for 8 weeks, running from February 5 to April 1.

The competition splits the rankings into different categories that track waste, including per capita classic and diversion.

The per capita classic category ranks schools by how much recycled material there is per student. In 2017, BC finished in 23rd place, with 30.82 pounds of per capita recycling at the end of the 8 weeks.

BC was ranked 24th in this category in this year's competition, as of March 24, with 22.8 pounds of per-capita recycling.

The diversion category focuses on how much waste is recycled, or "diverted," from the waste total. Last year's results had BC in

67th place, with 43.4 percent of its waste being recycled.

At the seven week mark in this year's competition, BC was ranked 65th in this category, with 39.4 percent of its waste being diverted as recycling.

The Energy Games is held during the same time as Recyclemania. The Energy Games works to challenge students in the freshman dorms to decrease their energy usage over the 8 week competition. The goal of this initiative is to encourage green habits in the

freshman class and to get people excited about living more sustainably.

The Energy Games ended at midnight on March 17. Keyes took first place, CLFX took second place, and Duchesne took third. Keyes will be awarded an Energy Games trophy and will get the chance to donate the money they saved from conserving energy to a sustainable cause.

"Changes in small habits can have monumental results," Pruner said.

Keep up with the Office on social media by clicking below!



/OfficeOfSustainability



@bostoncollegesustainability