



FEATURED STORIES

Juli Stelmaszyk Joins BC Dining as 'FRESH' Manager

EcoPledge Learns About Carbon Tax Policies from Politicians at MIT Event

Recycling and Composting Expanded to New Locations

Prof. David Storey Discusses Ethical Questions Behind the Issue of Climate Refugees

OUR TEAM

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

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Eagle graphic courtesy of Zoe Fanning, MCAS '20

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BC Dining Hires New Sustainability Manager with 'FRESH' Funds

Juli Stelmaszyk will bring a lifelong passion for food sustainability to the table as BC Dining's newest member

Last year, the Henry P. Kendall Foundation awarded Boston College Dining Services a \$399,705 grant to support a three-year initiative called "FRESH to Table." The initiative, which began this fall, seeks to promote healthy, regional, sustainable food with a focus on community awareness and education. FRESH is taking place exclusively at Corcoran Commons.

The grant supports programming and education for the initiative. The grant also funds a new hire, Juli Stelmaszyk, who started her position as Manager of Regional and Sustainable Food Systems at the end of January. Stelmaszyk is better known by her colleagues as "FRESH Manager."

Stelmaszyk graduated from Northeastern University with a degree in environmental policy. While attending Northeastern, she studied food policy in Rome and worked on a farm.

After spending some time working at a farmers market in Boston, she moved back to Rome and worked as a chef at the Rome Sustainable Food Project. She spent five years in Rome teaching culinary courses. She taught students about the origins of food and the importance of seasonality in the culinary arts. She instilled in them the importance of eating fresh, eating simple, and eating what is in season.

After working as a food gar-



Stelmaszyk will manage BC Dining's three-year "Fresh to Table" initiative in her position.

den sustainability manager at an international boarding school in Rome, Stelmaszyk moved back to Boston in July. Besides working for BC Dining, she also teaches cooking classes at the Boston Public Market.

"My background is an intersection between agriculture, culinary, and education," Stelmaszyk said. "I'm really excited to be here and be able to apply all these experiences to BC Dining."

Stelmaszyk's position involves overseeing the FRESH program and deciding how to best implement the principles of the initiative into Corcoran. The program hopes to contribute to the Kendall Foundation's goal of having 50 percent of New England's food locally sourced by 2060.

With Corcoran serving over 8,000 meals a day, having a tight budget, and many foods having a limited growing season, implementing FRESH policies into the dining hall is not an easy task. Stelmaszyk hopes to connect BC Din-

ing to New England's thriving agricultural community and work with students to see what options they want in the dining hall.

Although Stelmaszyk has only just started her job, she has been impressed by the chefs and staff who are extremely invested in food sustainability.

"It's really amazing how much buy in BC Dining has from the staff—it's crucial," she said. "Everyone I talk to is really excited about FRESH."

While she very much enjoys being hands-on in the kitchen with the chefs, Stelmaszyk is most excited to work with students who share her passion for food, agriculture, and sustainability. She also hopes that instituting change at BC will lead to an impact on a larger scale.

"We need institutional change in our food system," Stelmaszyk said. "One of the reasons I'm excited to be here at such a big institution is because of that possibility for community change."

EVENTS THIS MONTH

Feb. 6 EcoPledge will host a general meeting at 8 p.m. in Gasson 209. All are welcome to attend.

Feb. 13 EcoPledge will hand out air plants in the lobby of McElroy Commons from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Create a home for your air plant at our table by building one out of recycled materials.

Feb. 22 Willis Jenkins, a professor of religion, ethics, and environment at the University of Virginia will give a talk titled "The Ethics of Food and Health of the Planet" in Gasson 100 at 7 p.m. The event is a part of the Park Street Corporation Speaker Series.

Massachusetts Politicians Discuss Proposed Carbon Tax Bills at MIT-Sponsored Event

MIT Climate Action, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's group concerned with climate change, invited members of EcoPledge to attend an event titled "The Future of Climate Policy" on Thursday, Jan 25. The event featured Senator Michael Barrett, from the 3rd Middlesex District, and Representative Jennifer Benson, from the 37th Middlesex District. The two discussed the logistics and reality of implementing carbon policy in the state, with commentary added by several MIT professors.

"Carbon pricing simply takes the social cost of using [goods] and attempts to add to the original cost, so that we wind up paying what you could say is the 'full cost' of using a fossil fuel," Barrett said, explaining the concept of carbon pricing.

Carbon pricing raises the price of a good in order to reflect the true cost of its carbon footprint. While the increased cost of goods may seem like a burden to businesses and consumers, it allows them to understand the true total cost of an item, reflecting both its economic value and its ecological value. As a result, individual consumers and businesses will be more likely to make more environmentally-conscious decisions when purchasing products.

Two bills on carbon pricing have been introduced within the Massachusetts state legislature: Senate Bill 1821, proposed by Barrett, and House Bill 1726, proposed by Benson.

Barrett's bill is revenue neutral, which means that 100 percent of tax revenues from the carbon pricing will be rebated to state residents and businesses.

Benson's bill is revenue positive, meaning that 80 percent of the carbon pricing will be re-



Brendan Curry & Alex Capozziello, both MCAS '21, (second & third from the left) stand with Sen. Barrett, Rep. Benson, & MIT students.

turned to households and employers, while the other 20 percent will go towards renewable efficiency, green infrastructure projects, and adaptation measures in Massachusetts. Currently, no state funding is set aside for sustainability, therefore by retaining 20 percent of a carbon tax, the state will have funds exclusively for sustainability measures.

For example, municipalities would receive grants to install solar panels on public schools where there is no current funding that exists for such projects. In addition, the bill will not affect the lowest 40 percent of income earners in the state who are citizens unable to benefit from the renewable incentives offered, Benson said.

Benson chose this revenue positive approach, rather than choosing a revenue neutral bill like Barrett, because to only rely on market measures and not develop renewable projects would make it more difficult for the state to get ahead of the problems caused by increased global warm-

ing and increasing environmental destruction.

Having heard from both policy makers regarding their bills on carbon pricing, the panel's esteemed MIT professors weighed in on the pros and cons of carbon pricing in the state.

"I support the idea that any bill is a positive bill [and that] any action is a positive action at this point," said Janelle Knox-Hayes, a professor in MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning.

Chris Knittel, director of the MIT Center for Energy and Environmental Policy Research, agreed with Knox-Hayes.

"Each of these bills would be great, and I'd be happy to have either one of them as law in Massachusetts," Knittel said.

Knittel also said that the issue ultimately comes down to politics. Not only does the word "tax" sometimes unsettles politicians and citizens alike, but the tax would also have an impact on low income consumers in the state.

Marc Breslow, Research and Policy Director for Climate

XChange, an organization that provides policymakers and advocates with information on market-based solutions to climate change, argued that both bills have been structured so that low income individuals and households are not severely affected.

In Barrett's bill, there is an equal rebate for all consumers of carbon-priced goods in the state, which protects low income citizens because, on average, these individuals use less energy, Breslow said.

In Benson's bill, while 20 percent of the money will be directed towards a renewable energy and efficiency fund, all citizens will still be compensated fairly, as the rebate is shifted from higher earners to lower earners, allowing lower income households to remain protected under the new tax.

Members of the panel agreed that they hope Massachusetts will serve as a trailblazer in the movement towards state carbon pricing, leading the way for the potential of federal and international carbon pricing.

Student Enthusiasm and New Tech Allow for Expansion of Composting and Recycling

After a successful run at McElroy Commons, Boston College Dining Services has expanded recycling and composting to Stuart Dining Hall and The Loft @ Addie's in Corcoran Commons this semester.

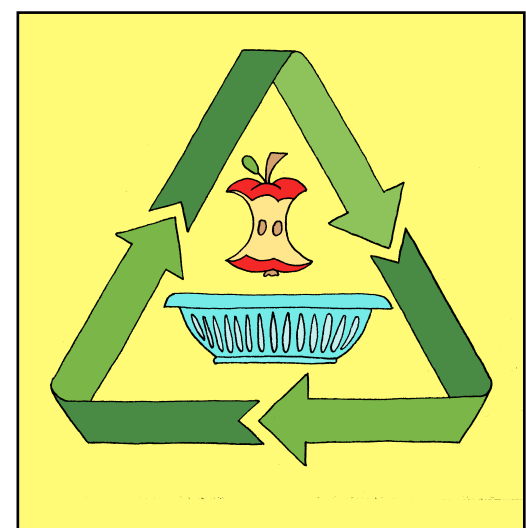
Now, all dining halls compost and recycle pre-consumer waste, which is any food scraps or waste generated before food is served to students. Only Corcoran Commons has the facilities to

properly sort through post-consumer waste behind the scenes.

Student representatives from BC Dining recently traveled to Save that Stuff, BC's recycle, compost, and waste service company. The students received a tour of the facility and learned how waste is sorted, composted, and recycled. Students were able to see Save that Stuff's new and innovative system which composts organic material. Using high-tech machinery, com-

postable material is churned into a Bio-Slurry that is then anaerobically digested, which creates a gaseous byproduct that is used to power a water management facility in Lawrence.

A staff member of the facility told the students that he often cites BC Dining as the optimal example for other universities to follow, as BC Dining has been quite successful in its recent recycling and composting efforts.



Alinda Dersjant, MCAS '21

Climate Refugees and Ethics: How Climate Change Has Caused Global Displacement

EcoPledge's theme this year is "Environmental Health is Human Health." In the fall, we focused on the importance of healthy, sustainable food options and how eating local food is better for both you and the environment. We hosted Harvest Fest and promoted various sustainable food options in the Boston area.

This winter, EcoPledge will focus on environmental justice, specifically, how climate change has affected the health and livelihood of marginalized groups around the globe. The following is a piece about the ethical questions behind nations stepping in to help climate refugees.

Displacement due to climate change is not a future hypothetical but a current reality, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency. Over 20 million people have been displaced by weather-related sudden onset hazards such as storms, floods, and wildfires each year since 2008. Thousands more have fled their homes due to slow-onset hazards, including droughts and sea level rise.

These climate refugees who have been forcibly displaced by changes in their natural environments are not recognized under international law. No legal system has been developed within the international arena to provide them with assistance.

One reason for this lack of legal recognition, according to David Storey, an assistant professor of philosophy, is an inconvenient feature of the climate change

problem: a particular weather event cannot be attributed with 100 percent certainty to climate change. Scientists agree that changes in climate increase the likelihood and intensity of extreme weather events, but it is difficult to establish causality between these changes and any given event.

Storey also pointed to the preexisting concerns over immigration as another obstacle to recognizing climate refugees under international law. Many countries, including the United States, have been previously hesitant to admit political refugees. A third reason he mentioned is the concern that if the definition of "refugee" is expanded to incorporate environmentally displaced persons, then ability to aid political refugees would be undermined. Scarce resources would be siphoned from aid designated for individuals fleeing war or persecution, which some argue are more grievous cases of injustice.

The ethical question is, do climate refugees have a moral right to be protected by international law? One approach in answering this question, as suggested by Storey, is to construe the right to life, subsistence, and a healthy environment as something that ought to be protected under international legislation.

"It's not just their physical home and source of subsistence they're losing, and their economies, but also their culture and their way of life, and, in some sense, their identity," Storey said.

Since their basic rights are jeopardized, it can be argued that climate refugees ought to be protected under international law.

Another ethical question is what are the moral obligations of

developed countries, which are largely responsible for climate change, in helping those who have suffered the consequences? Storey said that compensation and adaptation are what usually come to mind. But the third piece, the one Storey believes to be most important, is mitigation. With no effort to mitigate emissions, adaptation measures will have to be perpetually ongoing, and the system is likely to become haywire.

"So, arguably it would be better to frontload the costs with mitigation, to try and get renewable energies to scale as quickly as possible to replace fossil fuel energy infrastructure and prevent all of those harms from happening," he said.

The problem that arises here, according to Storey, is one of distributive justice, or how to divide the costs. Historical responsibility is one philosophical approach. This involves adding up all emissions since the industrial revolution and having countries pay proportionally. The sums are so high, however, that this approach becomes impractical.

"The big challenge is where the rubber of morality and justice

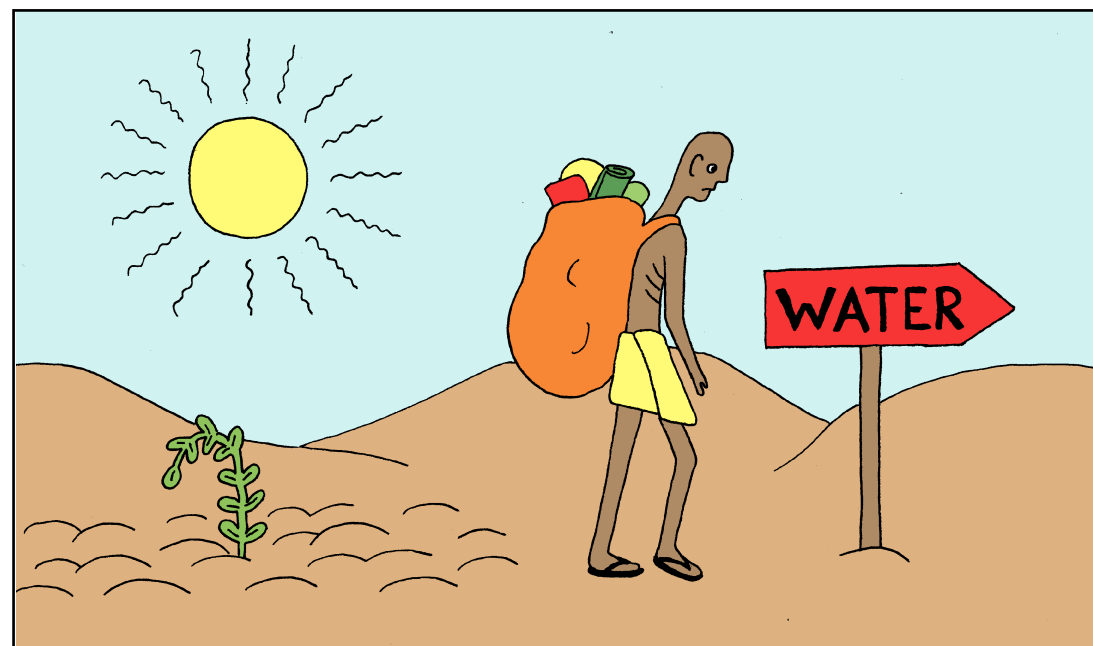
concerns hit the road of economic and political feasibility concerns," Storey said.

When asked what one can do to affect positive change, Storey remained optimistic. He encourages taking political action. Implementing policy, which has the capacity to shift consumption, requires political will.

"So getting involved in politics, whether it's at the local level or the state level, and developing your muscles, your identity as a political agent, I think, is a big part of the issue," he said.

However, in identifying the most important action for students to take, Storey echoed Environmental Protection Agency climate scientist Alan Cimorelli's advice: learn. Learning is an investment, Storey said. Being educated means that, in the future, one will be informed and will be able to talk about the issue when in a leadership position, whether in economic policy or in a non-governmental organization.

"[It's exciting] to be a part of learning and thinking about it—being a small part of dealing with the problem," Storey said. "It's a global human project in some sense."



Alinda Dersjant, MCAS '21

FROM THE OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Energy Games Are Back!

The Office of Sustainability will once again be holding The Energy Games this year! Due to the previous high participation of freshmen in the past, this year the competition will focus on the freshman residence halls. The games will begin on February 12 and last until March 3. The residence halls will strive to reduce their electrical consumption during this time. Freshmen are invited to check the status of their hall via social media, The Office of Sustainability's website, and emails from their resident assistants. The winning dorm will use the saved money from its electrical consumption to donate to a local sustainable charity.

Recyclemania 2018

Recyclemania is an annual competition in which colleges across the U.S. compete to see who can recycle the most. It runs for 8 weeks, starting February 4. Each week BC's trash and recycled waste are measured, and the aim is to lower trash weights and increase recycled weights. In 2016, BC came 97th out of 207 schools. In 2017, BC came 67th out of 190 schools. This is a campus wide event, so everybody's participation matters! We hope to continue to improve our rankings. Results will be posted on the Office of Sustainability's Facebook page weekly.