



THE ENVIRONMENTAL EAGLE

The Sustainability Newsletter of Boston College

April 2019

FEATURED

BC Students Join Global Climate Strike

Facilities AVP Vacancy Sparks Search for Sustainable Successor

Playa Bowls Opens First MA Location in Brighton

EcoPledge A Capella Fundraiser Fights Back Against CA Wildfires

Katherine Walsh Returns to BC to Share Her Sustainability Story

First Mammal Officially Declared Extinct Due to Climate Change

OUR TEAM

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BOSTON COLLEGE
2019
GREEN
WEEK

Our Blue Planet



April 8-12th

See page 2
for details!



Boston College students gathered in front of the MA State House on Friday, March 15 to protest in favor of more aggressive policy action against climate change.

Boston College Students Join Global Strike Against Climate Change

By Alex Capozziello

Hundreds of students flooded the street outside of the Massachusetts State House on March 15, holding signs and chanting in protest. The students, from both local high schools and universities, skipped class to protest as part of a global demonstration known as the Youth Climate Strike. EcoPledge and Climate Justice of BC were in attendance.

The Youth Climate Strike was inspired by Greta Thunberg, a 16 year old climate activist in Sweden, who has been protesting outside of the Swedish Parliament for months urging

her government to take greater action against climate change. This past December, Thunberg gave a speech at the United Nations Climate Summit where she criticized politicians for not taking greater steps to limit the devastating consequences of global climate change.

Thunberg was recently nominated for the Nobel Peace prize by Freddy André Øvstegård, a member of the Norwegian parliament, and two of his colleagues in the Norwegian Socialist Left Party for her role in organizing the Youth Climate Strike. They believe that

See "STRIKE" page 2

Facilities in Search of Sustainably-minded Successor for AVP

By Chris Joseph

Facilities Services is searching for a new associate vice president after Martin Dugal, former AVP, left the department in December 2018. The position has been open since Dugal's departure. The AVP oversees and approves funding for Office of Sustainability projects.

Dugal supported the office's green initiatives during his time as AVP. Dugal helped orchestrate recycling and refurbishing projects, and in 2015 he collaborated with former Sustainability Director Bob Pion to publish a landmark document of sustainable operations guidelines.

"Marty was a champion of our sustainability efforts here on campus," said Skye Fournier, Office of Sustainability intern and MCAS '19. "It was really encouraging to have strong support from a person with such a crucial position at Boston College."

Sustainability and energy management specialist Bruce Dixon heads the Office of Sustainability. Dixon said that the search for a new AVP presents an opportunity to hire an individual who will continue to support and improve the Office of

See "FACILITIES" page 2

Facilities Associate Vice President Vacancy Sparks Search for New Green Leadership

“FACILITIES” from page 1

Sustainability’s work.

“What we’re looking for is someone who is sustainably aware,” Dixon said. “We recommend to senior leadership to hire someone very similar to Marty Dugal—someone that understands the green groups within our community, and also any other best practices and other sustainable initiatives that he or she can help promote to the University.”

Dan Bourque, vice president of Facilities Services,

shares Dixon’s interest in selecting an AVP who understands the importance of sustainability.

“From our perspective, we would like to have someone that has that sustainable component, so when we start to talk about climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, recycling, carbon footprint—they not only know about that, but they have compassion enough to make recommendations that are for the greater good of our community,” Dixon said.

Fournier, who has been with the Office of Sustainabili-

ty for three years, is excited for what comes next.

“We are looking forward to having a new AVP in the near future and hope that he or she is excited to help our department grow and keep sustainable goals at the heart of the decision making process for all of BC’s future endeavors,” she said. “Now, more than ever, institutions of higher education need to be driven towards the common goal of global sustainability, and it is our hope that our new AVP will be up to this challenge.”



Graphic courtesy of the Office of Sustainability

Hundreds of Students Protest Outside MA State House

“STRIKE” from page 1

this mass movement of young people mobilized by Thunberg could act as a catalyst for greater world peace.

According to CNN, worldwide demonstrations against climate inaction were scheduled in 123 countries, with 2,052 individual events taking place. CNN estimates that hundreds of thousands of students turned out for the event, demanding that elected officials develop aggressive policies to address the threat of climate change.

Among other popular demands, students wanted to see politicians declare a national emergency on climate change, create policies to reduce carbon emissions and move away from such intense fossil fuel dependency, show increased support of renewable energies, and require schools to incorporate climate change curriculum into their education plans.

In Boston and across the US, students specifically demanded that their elected officials support the Green New Deal, a comprehensive proposal that combines Franklin D. Roosevelt’s economic stimulus approach while also addressing the modern challenge of climate change and economic



A group shot of Boston College students at the Youth Climate Strike representing several BC organizations, including EcoPledge and Climate Justice of BC.

inequalities. The proposal was championed by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA).

As the protest at the State House in Boston began to dissipate, members of the Sunshine Movement, a group of young people seeking to curb climate change, encouraged student protesters to accompany them into the State House to lobby their local representatives in support of the Green New Deal. Members of the group provided helpful guidelines and information sheets to aid first-time lobbyists

in asking their representatives to enact more comprehensive green policies in MA.

“It was so amazing to look around the crowd and see that we were some of the oldest people there,” said Molly Funk, EcoPledge member and MCAS ’22. “I was so impressed by how passionate and knowledgeable these kids were about advocating for a green future. I left the strike feeling so hopeful about the potential for this youth-driven movement to gain momentum and redefine the conversation about climate action.”

CALENDAR GREEN WEEK

MONDAY

ADOPT AN AIR PLANT
with EcoPledge

11:00 am–1:00 pm | Mac Lobby

TUESDAY

THE OCEAN IS COMING
Panel on Climate Adaptation
in the City of Boston

With Carling Hay, Chris Busch,
and Kate Bubriski

12:00–1:00 pm | Devlin 201

GREEN WEEK TRIVIA

Trivia night with CAB

7:00 pm | Cushing 001

WEDNESDAY

MISSION BLUE

Sylvia Earle Documentary
Screening & Snacks

6:00–9:00 pm

Walsh Function Room

Tickets: \$5 from meal plan

THURSDAY

KNOW YOUR FISHERMEN

Seafood Cooking Class with
Real Food & BC Dining

5:00–7:30 pm | Lyons Dining Hall

Tickets: \$18 from meal plan

FRIDAY

EARTH DAY FAIR

10:00 am–3:00 pm | Stokes Lawn

“Welcome to Pineappleland”—Playa Bowls Opens First MA Location in Brighton

By Alex Capozziello

It all started on a sidewalk in front of a pizza shop. Now, with over 65 locations nationwide, Playa Bowls has opened its first Massachusetts location in Brighton—directly across Commonwealth Avenue from Boston College’s main campus.

The new Playa Bowls location sits between Crazy Dough’s and El Pelón, offering students a diverse plant-based menu in a perfect spot to cater to BC students. The new franchise location was opened by five BC alums, John Castiglione ’05, Hung Lam ’06, Dana Nentin ’05, Sarosh Nentin ’05, and David Swanson ’05. The group spent the last year preparing to open the new store, which offers new healthy food options for BC students and the local community.

“The best part about opening Playa Bowls has been the opportunity to be back in the community, to provide a healthy food alternative for students, and to meet and connect with current students,” Lam said.

According to Lam, each bowl and smoothie is packed with the freshest and highest quality ingredients, with all fruits and vegetables fresh and cut daily. Each menu item is created using a superfood base, such as acai, pitaya, chia seeds, coconuts, kale, or bananas. The acai bowl, which is Playa Bowls’ best seller, is loaded with nutritious antioxidants which have a wide range of health



Photo by Nikki Kearney

Left: A look inside the new Brighton Playa Bowls location, where the walls and tables have been carefully created with refurbished woods and the ceiling decorated with reclaimed metal. Right: Two Playa Bowls rich in freshly cut fruits and loaded with antioxidants.

benefits. Almost all of Playa Bowls’ products are fruit or vegetable based and are loaded with vitamins, fiber, protein, and other energy boosting ingredients. The products are created with sustainability and community in mind—even the bowl that the customer’s meal is served in.

Playa Bowls uses ECO Products brand bowls, cups, spoons, lids, and straws to serve its products in an effort to minimize its environmental footprint. These items are made from 100 percent renewable resources and several are made using PLA, a plant-based plastic. When customers are finished with their food they can recycle or com-

post their containers and cutlery, as they are BPI-certified compostable.

Even the restaurant was designed with the environment in mind. According to Lam, 50 percent of the materials used to build the store itself are sourced from reclaimed and refurbished materials. Both the wood on the walls and the metal ceilings are examples of these efforts to use reclaimed and refurbished materials. Additionally, the location is outfitted with 100 percent LED lighting.

Playa Bowls also seeks to hire employees locally to foster community relations. According to Lam, roughly 90 percent of employees at

the Brighton location are current BC students.

Lam said that Playa Bowls is always looking for new, innovative solutions to increase efficiency and reduce waste. As the restaurant continues to acclimate to the local community, Lam hopes to develop strong relationships and further the restaurant’s sustainability efforts.

“It’s really great to be back,” Lam said. “All the students that work here are so reliable—every student that we meet is so great and proactive. We can’t think of everything, but if you guys come, we are always open to ideas about how to better serve the community.”

EcoPledge A Capella Event Raises Hundreds in Fight Against California Wildfires

By Alinda Dersjant

EcoPledge partnered with three Boston College a cappella groups for its second annual a cappella fundraiser on Tuesday, March 19. This year’s event raised awareness for the devastating 2018 California wildfires and featured The Sharps, The Common Tones, and The Heightsmen. In total, ticket sales and donations raised over 400 dollars, with all proceeds going directly to the California Community Foundation’s

Wildlife Relief Fund.

“Last fall’s California wildfires were amongst the most devastating wildfires known today—nearly 2 million acres were burnt and over 100 people were killed,” Brendan Curry, EcoPledge member and MCAS ’21, said at the start of the event.

The California Community Foundation’s Wildlife Relief Fund supports those who were displaced, lost their homes and belongings, or lost employment as a result of the intense wildfires.

“The California Community Foundation provides monetary assistance for physical and mental health problems, building homes, and providing medical care and supplies,” said Ellen Kang, EcoPledge’s director of events and MCAS ’20.

According to NBC News, the state of California lost 18 million trees in 2018 alone—largely due to ongoing droughts for which climate change is to blame. National Geographic reported that climate change has caused the cyclical droughts that were part

of California’s normal climate to last for extended periods of time, causing wildfires to rage year-round.

Halfway through the concert, the audience was presented with some detailed information on the California wildfires through pictures taken by Conevery Valencius, a history professor at BC. She visited Southern California with several other environmental historians and witnessed first-hand the devastating

Continued on page 4

From page 3

effects of the wildfires. Hills that had previously been forested were completely bare. In one conversation with several local firefighters, Valencius was told that the wildfires had aggressively evolved from their historic records. Twenty years ago, there would have been a fire season in California. Now, fire is a constant threat, the firefighters said.

“Frequent small fires are part of the evolutionary history of California, and they are part of its historic ecosystems,” Kang said. “But climate change is making West Coast fires more frequent, hotter, and more dangerous.”

The settlement of people in high-risk areas also compounds the threat of increased wildfire intensity and frequency in California. More

distressing, according to the Fourth National Climate Assessment from 2018, wildfires—like many disasters caused by climate change—affect the poor most severely. The poor tend to live in high-risk wildfire areas and lack the financial means to adapt their situations, which makes them more vulnerable to the effects of the wildfires. As a result of these findings, the California Community Foundation’s Wildfire Relief Fund focuses support on those who are most severely affected by intense wildfires.

As the wildfires rage on, supporting groups such as the California Community Foundation’s Wildfire Relief Fund are crucial to raise both awareness and money to aid against dangerous wildfires. At BC, EcoPledge, The Sharps, The Common Tones, and The Heightsmen worked to support the cause with lightheart-



The Heightsmen performing at EcoPledge’s A Cappella fundraiser to raise awareness for the ongoing California wildfires.

ed a capella songs. Except—perhaps—the song No Roots, covered by The Sharps, that eerily reminded

the careful listener of the effects of wildfires—“I have got no roots, but my home was never on the ground.”

Alumni Sustainability Trailblazer Katherine Walsh Returns to Share Her Story

By Gennaro Covelli

Boston College alumni and former EcoPledge member Katherine Walsh ’08 returned to BC in March for an event sponsored by the Environmental Studies Department and a BC environmental alumni group to speak to students about her post-grad career in sustainability. Walsh recounted her journey at BC and how it carved the path to her current career as the sustainability and environmental resources manager for Boston Public Schools (BPS). Walsh also attended EcoPledge’s first-ever alumni reunion on Saturday, March 30th to share her wisdom with the club.

Like many students, Walsh was involved in several organizations on campus, including Appa, EcoPledge, and the Undergraduate Government of Boston College (UGBC). Her sophomore year, Walsh declared an Environmental Geoscience minor to explore her interest in environmentalism.

When Hurricane Katrina devastated the South in 2005, Walsh and UBGC organized a trip to bring BC students to aid families along the coast of the Mississippi River. Observing the sheer magnitude of destruction along the Gulf Coast, Walsh noticed that everyone was equally impacted, but that not everyone could recover from the event. Wealthier families bounced back

within months, while impoverished families faced harsher outcomes of displacement. Here, Walsh became aware of the issue of wealth disparity during environmental disasters, which furthered her environmental interest.

In EcoPledge, Walsh developed a knack for advocacy work for sustainability. Her involvement with the club helped to polish several skills that would help her in her future endeavors—budget management, public speaking, leadership experience, and knowledge regarding public policy.

Upon graduating in 2008, the recent housing crash had made the job market scarce and difficult to navigate. Despite ample experience and a polished CV, Walsh struggled to find a job. Walsh questioned her decision to attend college and pay for an education that did not help her land a job. After two grueling years filling out around 130 job applications and sitting through 40 interviews, Walsh landed a job as a Special Education teacher. While teaching was not the dream job Walsh expected, she was grateful for the experience nonetheless.

Walsh’s experience as an educator aided in her next position as the coordinator of the Green Initiative Fund at University of California Berkeley (UCB). At UCB, Walsh gathered the necessary funds and grants to establish a Student Environmental Resource Center. As



Boston College alumni Katherine Walsh ’08 poses for a photo alongside EcoPledge’s E-Board at the first annual EcoPledge alumni reunion event.

one of the largest and most notable research schools in Northern California at the time, UCB’s new environmental resource center provided crucial resources for young academic researchers to gather the necessary environmental studies to conduct their own research and projects.

Now, Walsh’s career has landed her as the sustainability and environmental resources manager for BPS. In this role, Walsh provides strategic planning and implementation in the areas of water, waste reduction, climate and energy, health, green infrastructure, and environmental education for over 150 schools in the greater Boston area. Here, Walsh is able to spread her passion for environmental sustainability most effectively to hundreds students and

teachers.

Despite the rough start posed by the 2008 recession, Walsh faced the tenuous journey with enthusiasm and drive, ultimately landing her to the position she holds today. According to Walsh, when things are difficult, leaning on one’s community and friends will play a crucial role in finding the way.

Walsh expressed the value of communication in her career. Through her experiences at BC to her time at UCB, Walsh polished her communication and collaboration skills. She also expressed the importance of getting to know people on a personal level.

“Being a good member of your community is key,” Walsh explained. “People are counting on you... they want you to make change.”

First Mammal Species Officially Declared Extinct as a Result of Climate Change

By Eva Laxo

National Geographic reported in 2016 that the Bramble Cay melomy, a small rodent living on an island off the coast of Australia, was likely the first mammal to go extinct due to climate change. As of February 2019, the government of Australia officially recognized and confirmed the species as extinct.

Endemic to Bramble Cay, an isolated island in the eastern Torres Strait of the Great Barrier Reef, this small rodent was last seen in 2009. All subsequent attempts to trap or encounter the Bramble Cay melomy have failed.

Extreme water level rise around the island is the main contributor to the rodent species' extinction. According to National Geographic, the island is at most ten feet above sea level, and as a result of anthropogenic climate change and severe weather events in the area, the Bramble Cay melomy has lost 97 percent of its previous habitat due to flooding.



Graphic by Alinda Dersjant

National Geographic also found that in the last century, global sea level has risen almost eight inches. The rapid increase in sea level rise and subsequent loss of land area habitat will continue to have a destructive impact on island-dwelling species like the Bramble Cay melomy. As

island habitats shrink, isolated species come closer to the threat of extinction.

While the Bramble Cay melomy is the first species to be officially recognized as extinct due to climate change, it is likely not the last species to meet this fate. According to a journal by John Wiens published on PLOS Biology in 2016, climate-related ecological changes account for the local extinctions of hundreds of species—including mammals. Wiens predicts that these extinction rates will become worse in the coming decades as the intensity of climate change increases.

According to Boston College sociology and environmental studies professor Jennifer Kelly, the impact of climate change on species globally sheds light on the multi-faceted approach that is now necessary to begin to mediate the consequences of anthropogenic climate change.

Kelly has spent her career researching the interactions between jaguars and humans in

Costa Rica. In relation to her research, Kelly rated the impact of anthropogenic climate change on species extinction rates as the third largest threat to jaguar populations. In regards to relocation efforts, Kelly explained that the nature of big cats makes relocation difficult to undertake. Usually, these cats die shortly after being moved to a new location. Other species also face similar issues when threatened with habitat loss, as for many species relocation is not a feasible option.

Hundreds of species, including mammals such as the jaguar and the now extinct Bramble Cay melomy, face grave danger from anthropogenic climate change. To combat the further loss of biodiversity, it is crucial that individuals continue to consider their impact on the environment and how to best reduce their carbon footprint. Otherwise, species will continue to find themselves up to their necks in the devastating effects of climate change.

Perspectives on Climate Change: Faculty Panel Reiterates Urgency for Action

By Christy Liu

“Climate change is the biggest market failure the world has ever seen, and by definition it is cheaper to solve that market failure than not,” sociology professor Juliet Schor said. “It will always be cheaper to address climate change than to let it continue.”

Schor, along with earth and environmental sciences professor Jeremy Shakun, international studies professor Nichola Minott, and theology professor Andrea Vicini, SJ, shared their interdisciplinary perspectives on climate change at a panel event hosted by Catholic Relief Services student ambassadors on March 27. The panel was moderated by Tara Pisani-Gareau, the acting director of the Environmental Studies Department.

According to Schor, who studied economics prior to sociol-

ogy, the fossil fuel industry has cast a wide net over various interest groups and has captured the support of various government agencies and politicians. As a result, addressing climate change and implementing sustainable alternatives to current fossil fuel energies is extremely difficult. Where policy fails, Schor believes economic theories and benefits could incentivize people to combat climate change.

Gareau highlighted the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report which showed global warming of above 1.5 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels, caused by human activity. She addressed the issues of increasing rates of sea level rise and carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere as adverse effects of this climate shift.

According to Shakun, if the world were to see an average global



Professor Schor poses the notion that it will always be cheaper to address climate change than to let it continue.

temperature rise of over 4 degrees Celsius, the world would become unrecognizable compared to its current state by 2100. Such warming would cause global temperatures to increase, shifting equator-level temperatures outward

to higher and lower latitudes. For example, Boston would feel like Virginia, Virginia would feel like Northern Florida, and so on. These changes would have global rami-

Continued on page 6

From page 5

fications, including the complete melting of the Arctic.

The consequences of global warming have an uneven impact on various demographics of people, Vicini added. According to Vicini, the sick and poor suffer the most. In the Global South, people deal with polluted air and water, while also eating food that has been diminished by pollution—which negatively impacts children’s nutrition, growth, and immune systems. In 2015, approximately 9 million people died from pollution alone.

According to Vicini, part of the solution to climate change

is to produce foods while reducing carbon emissions, to encourage healthy lifestyles, and to confront the problem of pollution. He also recognized the work that BC has contributed to climate change research, noting the development of advanced research resources available at the University’s new Global Health Conservatory.

Minott also stressed the notion that climate change affects various demographics unevenly and its consequences not fully felt for decades. According to Minott, the uneven distribution of effects and its distance from the present make broad momentum for climate action difficult to achieve. Like Schor, Minott believes that the alignment of economic inter-

ests and incentivizing people to consider long term benefits are key to combating climate change.

“You have to think in terms of long term,” Minott said. “The immediate cost is still not going to compare to business as usual going forward. It is many times worse if it continues on this trajectory rather than absorbing the initial costs and pivoting in order to get to the goals we have set for ourselves and the goals that are necessary to save our home.”

According to Minott, countries must work together to reach an agreement on climate action and keep one another accountable to their promises. She linked the complicated levels of interests related to climate policies, dis-

cussing how various businesses, trade unions, interest groups, and NGOs shape the results of policy decisions. In the case of carbon dioxide pollution, it is difficult to create compelling economic incentives due to these conflicting interests. However, some compromise is necessary if there is to be any chance of turning the tide against climate change.

Shakun emphasized that the present is humanity’s best and possibly only shot to make a final, last ditch effort before the ramifications of climate change pass the point of no return.

“Your generation, these next several decades, that is where the curve bends or does not bend,” Shakun said.

Asia Spotlight: Singapore Sustains its Nickname as Asia’s Greenest City

By Laura Kain

Despite being one of the most densely populated countries in the world, the island city-state of Singapore is considered Asia’s Greenest City—primarily due to Singapore’s sustainability goals and environmental initiatives that aim to reduce environmental and resource strain. The island itself has no natural resources, and as a result, Singapore’s government seeks to uphold a sustainable economy. Singapore has supported a sustainable economy by investing in alternative energy technologies, committing to green development, and maintaining critical relations with other countries.

Singapore’s low-lying coastal community puts it at risk for catastrophic rising sea levels caused by a changing climate—which effectively incentivizes the island to create sustainable solutions. Through careful urban planning and design, and with more than 47 percent green cover, the country essentially acts as a model for sustainable initiatives that other cities should follow.

Teo Chee Hean, Singapore’s deputy prime minister and coordinating minister for national security, spoke at the 2017 Eco-



Graphic by Alinda Dersjant

sperity conference in Singapore. Here, Hean stated that Singapore is committed to maintaining an eco-friendly environment, upholding a thriving economy, and creating a green platform for business investors.

“I have also just launched a Public Sector Sustainability Plan, which will catalyse sustainable practices, generate demand for green products and services, and encourage our public officers to think green,” Hean said at the conference.

Due to Singapore’s year-round tropical climate, harness-

ing power from the sun through solar panels has been deemed by the Energy Market Authority as a critical renewable energy source. Currently, Singapore is involved in cutting-edge research regarding solar photovoltaics, a technology which converts solar radiation into electricity through the use of semiconductors. This technology is aimed to improve the country’s energy intensity, or the amount of energy consumed for its GDP, by 35 percent by 2030.

According to Singapore’s Tourism Board, the island has

the world’s largest floating solar photovoltaic test-bed, operating in the north of the island. Costing over \$11 million, the testing site will assess the cost effectiveness and efficiency of solar photovoltaics being implemented in the city. Previous research has shown floating solar photovoltaic systems to be up to 20 percent more efficient than rooftop models—which is critical in a small island community where rooftop space is limited and the energy needs of 5.6 million people need to be met.

Signing onto the Paris Accord in 2016 and demonstrating support for the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Singapore continues to push for a greener future. According to Hean, Singapore has agreed to reduce its carbon emissions from 2005 levels by 36 percent by 2030 through the adoption of additional green technologies and carbon taxes. At the 2017 Ecosperity conference, he also said that Singapore plans to implement a carbon tax in 2019 so that individuals harming the environment will pay the appropriate price for their actions, in hopes to institute a greater environmental stewardship amongst Singapore’s citizens.