Power Generation on Campus

Did you know that Saint John’s has significant power-generating capability right on campus? There are actually several different energy sources used at SJU. Fortunately, coal is no longer burned at our power plant. The decision to eliminate coal power on campus was made for both economic and environmental sustainability reasons. Coal burning ceased in December of 2013, and those boilers have since been removed from campus. Instead of burning coal, natural gas is now used to generate much of the power needs of our campus. The shift from coal to natural gas dramatically reduced the university’s greenhouse gas emissions. SJU operates a “co-generation power plant.” This means that the natural gas-powered boilers create steam. That steam first runs through a turbine which produces 20-25 percent of the campus’ electricity needs. The steam then goes on to either heat or cool the buildings. The co-generation facility makes energy production both more efficient and economical.

The solar field at Saint John’s was constructed in 2009 as another on-campus energy source. The roughly four acre solar field generates about four percent of the campus’ annual electricity demand. Through the use of greener energy options like solar and natural gas, Saint John’s is actively taking steps towards its goal of carbon neutrality by 2035.

Welcome

The SJU Office of Sustainability would like to welcome all of the CSB/SJU community as another academic year begins! We’re happy that you have decided to learn more about sustainability efforts, events, and projects happening on campus. Our newsletter aims to shed light on how the Saint John’s community is promoting and practicing sustainable behaviors, and how you, as a member of the Johnnie community, can get involved.

The Mission of Our Office

The SJU Office of Sustainability was established in 2009 in an effort to provide our campus community with the necessary tools to live a sustainably, both while on campus and after graduation. As a university, we have the duty to prepare students to be responsible citizens. As a Benedictine institution, we take seriously our commitment to stewardship and to incorporating the goals of sustainability into every facet of campus life.
Introductory Letter from the Fellow
The Office of Sustainability recently welcomed me to be the new fellow to help guide the various sustainability efforts around this campus. I am extraordinarily excited for the opportunity to make some positive changes. I just graduated from Saint John’s in May 2014 where I studied political science and environmental studies. In my senior year at SJU, I worked in the Office of Sustainability as a student project manager, so I am looking forward to continuing several projects from last year and adding even more! In addition to my work at Saint John’s, I have also interned in Bosnia-Herzegovina with an NGO that works with youth to promote the preservation of biodiversity, environmental education, and endangered species protection in the region. During summer 2013, I spent several months working with the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy in Saint Paul in their land use and transportation department.

I have high hopes for this year and I believe we will be able to accomplish a lot. I cannot make these changes by myself, however. Big changes require the entire community to work together, so we all need to strive to be more sustainable in our everyday lives. I look forward to hearing the ideas that you have and seeing what we can accomplish.

Sincerely,

Jacob Saffert — SJU Sustainability Fellow

Is Your Room Certified Yet?
During the spring semester of 2014, the Green Room Certification program was launched. The program was created to get students to think about their energy usage and other consumption habits. Participants can request an energy audit of their room to find out how much energy they use on a day-to-day basis. Students also get tips on how to live more sustainably in their dormitories and apartments.

The Green Room Certification program also forms a connection between the Office of Sustainability and students. Our office receives project suggestions and feedback on our programs directly from the students. By completing the certification process, students formalize their commitment to sustainability, help our office improve, and pledge to further reduce consumption.

For more information and to get your room certified, simply go to the “Sustainability at Saint John’s” page on the CSB/SJU site and click on “What You Can Do.”

Do you have suggestions for us, ideas for a sustainability project, or any comments? Email us at sjusustainoffice@csbsju.edu.

What’s Up With Saint John’s Sustainability is a bimonthly production of the Saint John’s Office of Sustainability.

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