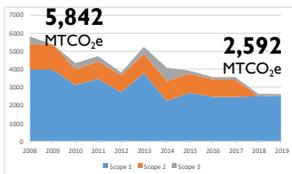


Newsletter of the **Center for Sustainability and the Environment** at Wells College.

We recently updated our greenhouse gas emissions (GHGE) for last fiscal year. We are pleased that our collective efforts to conserve and be more energy efficient, and our purchase of renewable energy credits for 100% of our electricity means that our campus emissions continue to decline. We posted only a slight decline between FY 2018 and this past year, but we have still achieved a 55% decline from our 2008 baseline, well ahead of schedule.



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Wells is nationally recognized for our Sustainability efforts



Wells has again been cited by several national organizations for our sustainability initiatives. Two organizations derive the data they evaluate from the Gold rating Wells earned using the *Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS)*, developed by the *Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)*, the professional organization for collegiate sustainability professionals. We feel that STARS best reflects our comprehensive sustainability efforts; these other national organizations "cherry pick" our STARS data to reflect their own particular areas of focus and interest. Still, it's nice to have these groups think so highly of our work and help to promote our successes to the wider community, especially to prospective students.

In September, *Sierra*, the national magazine of the *Sierra Club*, released its 13th annual "Cool Schools" ranking of North America's greenest colleges and universities; *Sierra* again included Wells in their 2019 "Cool Schools" list. The *Sierra Club* is America's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3.5 million members. Overall, Wells ranked 91st out of the 282 schools evaluated. We were in the top 10 among New York State schools, coming in ahead of a number of much larger schools, including Vassar, Clarkson, Columbia, Syracuse, and Binghamton. Two areas that *Sierra* evaluated in which Wells scored particularly well were Curriculum (36th place) and Sustainable Foods (19th place). *Sierra* explains their methodology as follows: *Our weighting adjustments to STARS scoring reflects the priorities of the Sierra Club, giving more weight to energy, air and climate, and transportation because Sierra believes that progress in these sectors is essential for addressing the climate crisis. In academics, we give greater weight to curriculum over research.*



In October, the *Princeton Review* released its 10th annual *Guide to Green Colleges*, a resource for environmentally aware college applicants. Out of 700 institutions for which the organization's "green team" reviewed data, 413 were selected for inclusion in their 2019 *Guide to Green Colleges*. *Princeton Review* analyzed more than 25 data points, also "cherry picked" from our earlier STARS Gold assessment. Their rating, on a scale of 60–99, offers a measure of a school's performance as an environmentally aware and prepared institution. "Green colleges" assessment includes: 1) whether students have a campus quality of life that is both healthy and sustainable; 2) how well a school is preparing students for employment in the clean-energy economy of the 21st century as well as for citizenship in a world now defined by environmental concerns and opportunities; and 3) how environmentally responsible a school's policies are. This year, Wells improved from 92/99 in 2018 to 93/99. Out of 40 recognized "Green Colleges" in New York, Wells ranked 15th, and was by far the smallest institution in the state to be cited for our strong commitment to sustainability in academics, operations and outreach.

Last, but not least, Wells was awarded four *Marks of Distinction* from *Second Nature*, which works to expand higher education's ability to solve pressing sustainability challenges. Since 2006, *Second Nature's* focus has been on addressing climate change, when they launched the *Presidents' Climate Leadership Commitments*, the world's longest-standing voluntary carbon reduction program. Former President Ryerson was a 2008 *Climate Commitment* signatory. *Marks of Distinction* recognize signatories setting high-performance goals and reporting measurable progress toward those goals. We earned Marks for exceeding the 50% Carbon Reduction threshold; for being "On Track" to meet our goals; for Purchasing over 75% renewable energy; and for joining the "We Are Still In" campaign. Along with 3,500 representatives from all 50 states, large and small businesses, mayors and governors, university presidents, faith leaders, tribal leaders, and cultural institutions, Wells is protesting the planned U.S. withdrawal from the *Paris Climate Accords*, the international agreement to reduce global carbon emissions.



During the Peachtree planting ceremony on September 20th, Dan Hill and Donna Hill Silversmith from the Cayuga Nation helped President Jon Gibraltar, Anthropology professor Ernie Olson, students from the *Introduction to Gardening* class, and numerous other participants plant the newest addition to the developing peach tree grove on the lawn next to the President's residence. This annual peachtree planting activity both honors our strengthening relationship with local members of the Cayuga Nation - the Haudenosaunee Native American tribe on whose ancestral homeland Wells College sits - and commemorates the destruction of over 1500 peach trees in Aurora during the Sullivan Campaign after the American Revolution, a tragic historic act that displaced the Cayuga people from their territory for multiple generations.



Meet **Kaya Perry '22**, a sustainability major and business minor who transferred to Wells

from Cayuga Community College this past fall. Kaya is serving as our Sustainability Program Assistant, a work-study position helping the Center director replace *Installments* and post sustainability event flyers. For her final project for the *Introduction to Sustainability* class, Kaya analyzed the feasibility of converting some of the personal care products sold at the campus store to more sustainable options. She also got an early start on her spring semester internship to organize the *Wells College Seed Exchange* by contacting more than four dozen seed companies to request donations.



Kinga M. Stryzowska-Hill, visiting assistant professor of Environmental Science, was invited to join

the board of directors for *Discover Cayuga Lake*, which operates the Floating Classroom. With her background in wetland ecology, Kinga brings experience and knowledge to that board.

New courses approved for Spring



ENVR 285 *Special Topic: Introduction to Geographic Information Systems II*

This is the second of a two-course sequence introducing students to Geographic Information Systems (GIS). This course introduces advanced concepts of GIS, specifically for ArcGIS Pro. It is designed to build on knowledge of analytical cartography and continue exposing students to how geographic information can be used to answer questions and to solve problems in natural resource management, environmental assessment, urban planning, business, marketing, real estate, law enforcement, and emergency preparedness. Students will build on concepts learned in GIS I and explore more advanced topics and techniques such as raster analysis, modeling, 3D analysis, and network analysis. This course will be taught by Kinga M. Stryzowska-Hill, Visiting assistant professor of Environmental Science

ART 385 *Special Topic: Stitched Fiber*

An introduction to hand-stitched fiber processes including embroidery, sewing construction, crochet, and knitting. Applications to contemporary art practice will be emphasized, with ties to understanding Fiber's relationship to craft, gender, DIY culture and industrial production systems. Taught by associate professor of Studio Art Katie Waugh

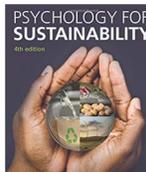


BIOL 116L *Plants!*

Plant blindness has become a large problem in modern society, with students unsure of basic plant biology and identification of even the most common plants. This course will explore basic plant biology and the importance of plants to our lives. Emphasis will be placed on the common plants found in our region. Taught by professor of Biology and Environmental Science Jackie Schnurr

ENVR 285L *Special Topic: Water Quality Monitoring*

This course is designed to provide an understanding of the most commonly monitored water quality parameters, their properties, measurement techniques, and the design of monitoring protocols. We will focus on surface water bodies (e.g. rivers and lakes) and the way to assess the status of their biological and physio-chemical properties by means of sampling, indicators, and laboratory analysis. Anthropogenic perturbations (sewage effluents, agricultural practices) and their effects on water quality, as well as regulatory frameworks will be considered. Taught by assistant professor of Env. Science Kinga Hill



SUS 385 *Special Topic: Psychology of Sustainability*

This required course for Sustainability majors explores research and theory on the interactions between human behavior and the environment. The goal of the course is to examine ways in which increased understanding of human behavior may be the key to creating solutions to sustainability problems. Students will be encouraged to think critically about ways in which psychological perspectives may provide insights into creating a sustainable future for the planet and its inhabitants. Projects will focus on the Wells campus and surrounding community. This course was formerly taught as *Psychology of Environmental Sustainability* by emeritus professor of Psychology Milene Morfei; this spring course will be taught as a Sustainability course by Marian Brown

Sustainability-related Class Projects

Wells Campus Greens held a Sustainable Costume Making workshop in the Sommer Center on October 27th as the kick-off event for the week-long *Wells-O-Ween* festivities. **Shannon Simmons '20**, Greens co-president (center right in photo), organized the event as her individual final project for her SUS 101 *Introduction to Sustainability* class. Attendees made costumes from repurposed materials.



Speaking of repurposed materials, assistant professor of biology Christina Schmidt again charged student teams in her *Biology of Organisms* class with creating cell models using found materials. The Sustainability Center director incented the best entries with cash prizes. The grand prize-winning team of **Maria Munoz-Ochoa '23** and **Olivia Maish '23** created an intricate plant cell model using beach glass, shells and stones found along the lakeshore along with various man-made materials culled from campus trash and recycling bins.



We were impressed with the senior thesis project of Business major **Koi Guilbeaux**. She analyzed "*Sustainability and Ethics in the Fashion Industry*", comparing two fashion brands familiar to our Gen Z students: *Forever 21* and *Reformation*. The first company is notable in the "fast fashion" apparel industry for inexpensive clothing made using questionable manufacturing practices, while the latter focuses on sustainability as part of its brand. Koi noted that while *Reformation* has experienced slow but steady growth in market share, *Forever 21*, which had been extremely successful, recently filed for bankruptcy.



That's a Re-Leaf...

Since Wells joined their *Print ReLeaf* program in July 2017, Toshiba, our print management partner, has planted over 135 trees in our name. In fiscal year '18-19, we printed over 445,000 pages, equal to 53 trees replanted. *Print ReLeaf's* U.S. partner, *Trees, Water & People*, works directly with natives of the Oglala Lakota tribe to plant our trees on their Pine Ridge reservation. This three-way partnership program to reforest tribal lands combats a wide range of environmental and social challenges. Planting trees sequesters carbon and develops opportunities for Pine Ridge residents.



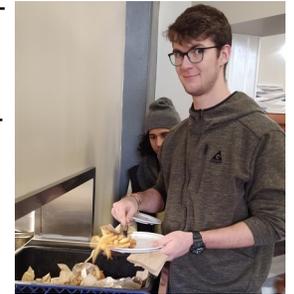
E-Waste Collection

EWASTE+, the company with whom the Information Technology group contracts for electronic waste collection, sent the results of their most recent pickup: 888 pounds of electronic waste, including monitors and flat panel screens, laptops and computers, and miscellaneous electronic equipment, were collected from campus. The company certifies that it destroys all computer hard drives to ensure that no personal or college data still on those drives is accessible to others. *EWASTE+* also conforms to federal and state standards under the *NYS Electronic Equipment Recycling & Reuse Act* to ensure proper handling of electronic waste materials to prevent negative environmental or human health impacts.



Composting Program Update

In fiscal year 2018-19, Wells collected 366 full 64-gallon totes of compostable food waste from our Dining Hall, the *Well*, and the *GRIND Café*. Using EPA volume-to-weight conversion factors, this equals 54,900 pounds - 27.45 tons - of food waste diverted from landfill trash. The renovations made to the Dining Hall dish room this summer - providing smaller compost collection tubs for plate scraping, with Dining staffers removing contaminants before those tubs are emptied into the totes on the loading dock - mean we make *Natural Upcycling*, our compost hauler, much happier.



Sharing our 3R Successes

The *New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse and Recycling (NYSAR3)* included a story about our outdoor trash/recycling bins in the Summer issue of their e-newsletter. We purchased those three containers with a grant from *NYSAR3's* College Council of which Wells is a member. The organization also ran a story about our Fall *Sustain-a-Cell* competition (see pg 2) in their October issue.



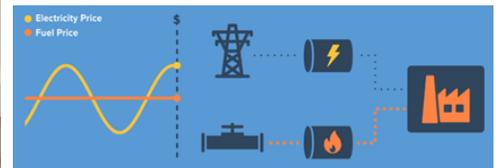
Fill 'er up

Our latest water bottle fill station was installed as part of the Dining Hall renovation project over the summer. This *Elkay EZH2O* fill station was conveniently placed right in the entryway to the Dining Hall so patrons can fill up their water bottles on their way out. This location has already proved to be quite popular, with 1,425 fills registered during this Fall semester.



Wells to pilot new technology

For several months, we have been working with a new company, *Medley Thermal*, to develop a full-scale pilot of their "dynamic electrification" system. The gist of this project is that we will install an electric boiler in parallel with our steam boilers, and using *Medley's* proprietary software, will switch between the steam boiler and the electric boiler during periods when electricity costs and grid emissions are low; the projected savings in both areas are quite attractive.



Recycling Program Changes

This past fiscal year, we recycled 152 tons of material (paper, glass bottles, metal cans, plastics, food waste), representing an impressive 51% diversion rate. However, changes in the global recycling industry are being felt at Wells this fall. Because domestic markets for most recyclable plastics bottomed out, due to Chinese importers refusing to accept U.S. materials for recycling, we were forced to shift our campus messaging about what is now landfill trash to include "single use plastic" materials (cups, plates, utensils, take-out boxes, and most packaging items). We



expect that this change will significantly alter our trash and recycling statistics for this fiscal year.

Bookstore adds "green" items

This fall, we spotted several new items being offered in the campus store, including the package of reusable metal straws (useful as the *GRIND Café* is no longer providing straws for their cold drinks) and these nifty cork-covered *Landmark* notebooks.



Round and round they go...

Rich Kloster, bookstore manager, estimated that about 40% of the textbooks offered for sale this fall were recycled, carrying the yellow "USED" sticker and a significantly lower purchase price. At the end of the semester, 149 pounds of no-longer-needed books were purchased back from our students, even books purchased from on-line retailers. Used texts that do not have further use for Spring classes here are sent to *NBS (Nebraska Book Company)* for resale on other campuses.





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Wells Center for
Sustainability and
the Environment



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Marian Brown, Sustainability Center, co-presented "Deep Energy Savings through Efficiency As a Service", with reps from each of our project partners (Trane, Metrus Energy, and NYSERDA's Real Time Energy Management program) at the State of NY Sustainability conference in Rochester in November. Brown was very humbled to be honored by her peers with the Sustainability Leadership Excellence Award at that conference.

Sustainability is a decision-making framework for continuous improvement that mindfully takes into account the social, environmental, and economic impacts of our choices.

Sustainability Outreach Activities



On November 7, the Center for Sustainability and the Environment hosted the End-of-the-Year Report for the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network (CLWN), the Finger Lakes Institute (FLI), and their partner organizations that have been working diligently to address the

local infestation of the highly-invasive, aquatic plant called *Hydrilla*. This 20-acre infestation was discovered three years ago by Wells Campus Greens on a fall bonding cruise aboard the *Discover Cayuga Lake Floating Classroom*; before that, the only known *Hydrilla* infestations were localized near Ithaca. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been applying herbicides to stem the Aurora infestation; the CLWN works with lakeside homeowners and businesses to educate them about how to identify and report sightings of *Hydrilla*. FLI places Watercraft Stewards at boat launches around the lake to educate recreational boaters and fishermen on the need to clean their vessels and properly dispose of bilgewater after removing watercraft from the lake, to prevent accidental transmission of *Hydrilla* between areas on Cayuga Lake or among other Finger Lakes. The good news: this Aurora infestation has been fairly well-controlled after three years of treatment. The bad news: other significant infestations of *Hydrilla* have since been discovered in other areas of Cayuga Lake. (Photo: Rich Rudy from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reports on 2019 season results).

We observed the *Campus Crunch* during lunch on October 24. This event commemorates *National Food Day* each year. Wells was one of 19 New York campuses participating this year. Hallmark Dining partnered with the Center for Sustainability to provide local apples and cider, and apple crisp made from local apples. These goodies were set up in the dining hall entry, so even those not buying lunch that day could participate. 164 "Crunch-ers" (22 faculty/staff, 3 off-campus, 139 students) each pledged to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, beating our 2018 record of 120 Crunch participants. Well done, all!



Speaking of apples, Wells Campus Greens went on a very inclement late October day to the SHARE Farm in Union Springs to pick apples for their annual apple pie fundraiser. Greens raised over \$200 from the sale of prepared pies and apple crisps to the community; they will use the proceeds to support the purchase of food for the campus food pantry.

Scarlett Lonsky '23 won the "Victor Frankenstein Prize for Best Reuse of Materials" in the Hallowe'en costume contest sponsored by the Science faculty. Contest rules dictated that the competing entries had to somehow relate to science. Scarlett described her costume as follows: "Anubis, was the Egyptian god of embalming- one of the earliest human anatomy fascinations, that led to steps in medicinal/surgical science." To win the \$50 cash prize the Center for Sustainability awarded for the best reuse of materials, Scarlett provided this list of materials she used to create her stylish Anubis mask: Popsicle sticks, cardboard, "old cola thing", paper cups, and mail packaging foam.



The HeatSmart CNY team was all smiles after a very well-attended workshop at Memorial City Hall in Auburn, showcasing that historic building's 15-year-old, very successful integration of geothermal heat pump technology. This workshop was geared primarily to regional architects, engineers, property developers and business owners. Marian Brown, director of the Center for Sustainability has been serving on the steering committee for this regional, grass-roots education campaign about the environmental, economic, and occupant comfort benefits of moving from fossil-fuel based heating systems for residences and businesses to ground- or air-source heat pump technology. HeatSmart CNY is a community outreach program that connects interested parties to local heating and cooling and energy efficiency experts who

offer the latest clean energy technologies. These community outreach campaigns are volunteer-led, supported by local sustainability groups and municipalities. HeatSmart CNY is by far the largest among 14 such community outreach campaigns throughout the state, supported with funding from the New York Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). Members of the steering committee shown above: Lindsay Speer, HeatSmart CNY campaign manager; Brown; John Shaheen, engineer; William Sundquist, faculty at SUNY ESF; Ellyn Lenz, campaign volunteer; and Chris Carrick, energy manager for Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board, the planning organization which has been overseeing this and other efforts throughout the five counties comprising the Central New York region: Cayuga, Onondaga, Oswego, Cortland, and Madison. Brown took the lead in organizing this HeatSmart CNY workshop and several residential open houses throughout Cayuga County this fall.