

SDSTATE SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

April 2018



Earth Day Quiz

Happy Earth Day! Test your knowledge about sustainability efforts on campus. Answers are at the bottom of the newsletter.

True or False

1. Most of the trees that are cut down on campus are chipped and used as mulch in our flower beds.
2. SDSU provides books recycling for students, staff, and faculty.
3. SDSU burns coal as their energy source.
4. Despite more buildings being placed on campus, energy consumption has gone down per square foot.
5. Sustainability is not included in IMAGINE 2023.
6. State policies require all electronics purchased by SDSU to be EnergySTAR certified.
7. Disposable coffee cups cannot be recycled.
8. SDSU does not have any LEED gold buildings.
9. Sustainability only looks at how we care for the environment.
10. Over 400 people have taken the SDState Sustainability Pledge.

More than Just the Environment

Two buzz words are often heard in conversations – sustainability and social justice. People talk about the environment degrading and a need for social justice in the means of better access to nutritious food, sanitation, and peace for all. But what do these two topics have to do with each other? The short answer is everything.

Sustainability looks at the formation of a better more just society by the interdependence of three separate, but closely connected areas – the environment, economy, and society.

In short, environmental sustainability looks at how we care for our planet and the resources it provides. Social sustainability looks at diversity, equity, and ensuring all have access to basic human needs.

You need to have both to achieve both. For example, environmental degradation can decrease water quality. That in turn makes it harder for people to have access to clean water, a basic human need.

It goes the other way, too. Take an example from the book “Sustainability Principles & Practice” by Margaret Robertson. A family lives in the forest and is struggling to feed their children. If they chopped down a plot of trees and grew soy beans, they could sell the beans and make money to feed their family. Chopping down the trees degrades the environment and then makes it harder for the family to grow crops in the long term. However, if there is a way to protect the forest while providing monetary resources for the family, both environmental and social sustainability would be met and both the environment and the family would meet their needs.

While the relationship can be difficult to wrap your head around, it is vitally important. So, next time you hear the words social justice or sustainability, consider how they are related and how they affect each other.



The Big Event

This Saturday, over 60 students came together for the first annual "Big Event"! Students headed out into the community lending a helping hand at various organizations, resident's homes, and businesses to say thank you for everything the Brookings community does for them. A few projects included helping residents haul furniture to the curb, building box gardens at Dakota Prairie, painting stairs at a church, and landscaping. I had the opportunity to speak with several of the organizations students served. The deep, genuine gratitude expressed to the students was heart-warming. Jane Goodall once said, "What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." I truly believe the students made a positive impact!

After 3 hours of volunteering, the students gathered at Good Roots Farm for home-made wood-fired oven pizza.

This event was organized by the Student Sustainability Council.



Climate Change & You

Discussing climate change is often depressing, but there are so many ways that individuals can act to help mitigate climate change. The Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) provides a list of actions, many of which are doable even for college students.

- Unplug all electronics even when they aren't in use. Many devices still pull energy even when they are turned off. According to NRDC, "This 'idle load' across all U.S. households adds up to the output of 50 large power plants in the U.S."
- Buy LED lightbulbs. They are more expensive to buy, but they save energy and money in the long run.
- Walk or bike instead of driving to reduce pollution generated by fuel. For the times when driving is a must, ensure the car's tires are inflated properly to maximize miles per gallon of gas.

Climate change is an international crisis, but together, by our individual actions, we can make a difference.

Earth Day Quiz Answers:

1) True. 2) True – check this [link](#) for how to do so. 3) False – SDSU stopped burning coal in Feb. 2012 and now burns natural gas as their main energy source. 4) True – This is due in part to several efforts including more efficient equipment and operations. 5) False – Sustainability is included in goal #4! 6) True. 7) True – there is a waxy substance that lines the coffee cups and makes them unrecyclable. 8) False – SDSU has 1 LEED gold (Dykhouse) and 12 LEED silver buildings. 9) False – sustainability looks at the interconnection of a healthy natural environment, a prosperous economy, and equitable access to basic human needs. 10) True – the sustainability pledge remains open and can be signed [here!](#)

Sustainability Tidbits

End-of-Semester Sustainability Tips

- Sell your books back so someone else can use them. If you can't sell it, recycle it at one of the book [drop-off locations](#).
- Donate any furniture, clothing, or household goods that are in decent condition. Donate unopened non-perishable food to the Food Pantry.
- Place unwanted notes and tests in the recycling bin (remember to remove any binding!).

Office Recycling Update!

Early this semester, Facilities & Services added individual recycling bins to offices across campus. In November, campus recycled 10 tons of single stream recycling. In January, 11 tons were recycled. In February and March, single stream weights jumped to 15 and 17 tons respectively for each month. The spring waste audit data showed minimal contamination too! We have not reached our 25% recycling rate goal, but we have most definitely made a positive improvement! High fives to all for your dedication to recycling. I cannot wait to see our recycling numbers when the Residential Life individual room recycling bins are added!

Earth Hour 2018

On March 24, SDSU joined millions across the world in turning off lights to show support for fighting climate change. Forty people attended the campus event hosted by the Sustainability Specialist and SPCM 434 class. Glow-in-the-dark games, popcorn, and raffle prizes were enjoyed by all!

Get Involved

Follow SDState Sustainability on Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram @SustainSDState.

SDState Sustainability website. www.sdstate.edu/sustainability

Contact the Sustainability Specialist at 605-688-6821 or via [e-mail](#).