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What is Sustainability?

Sustainability is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. To pursue sustainability is to create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations.

This definition implies that there are limits to the amount of available resources and the ability of the earth to absorb human activity. Such confines require the restructuring of our consumption habits to ensure a healthy life and earth for future generations.

Sustainability starts with you

The decisions you make every day on campus affect lives other than your own. This sustainability guide offers strategies for keeping our campus and our world beautiful and ensuring that the Boston College community upholds the motto “ever to excel” by becoming leaders in environmental stewardship and sustainability.



Recycling at Boston College

We encourage practices that reduce consumption, landfill contamination and a throw-away mentality. Reducing, reusing, and recycling can help you, your community, and the environment by saving money, energy, and natural resources.

- Recycling keeps precious resources in the product cycle and stops landfills from growing.
- From a business standpoint, waste is inefficient; recycling saves energy and money by eliminating the need for new materials.
- Most single-use materials, such as plastics, do not biodegrade. With the exception of materials that are incinerated, virtually every piece of plastic ever made still exists in one form or another.

Reduce, Reuse, and Recycling Quick Tips



REDUCE

- Bring a reusable mug to Lower or Mac to cut down on waste and receive a discount on your coffee or fountain beverage
- Use a reusable water bottle to reduce plastic waste and unnecessary spending from bottled water.
- Utilize bottle filling stations and water fountains in the dining halls, Rec Plex, and other locations around campus.
- Print double sided



REUSE

- Use real plates & utensils in the dining halls (where available) when eating there. This helps reduce waste from plastic utensils and paper plates.
- Bring cloth or reusable shopping bags when you go grocery shopping.
- Buy used items when possible, or if you really don't need it, don't buy it.



RECYCLE

- Empty (and rinse when possible) recyclables before recycling them – see what and where to recycle in the next section.

Where Can I Recycle My...?

	What	Where
SINGLE STREAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glass and plastic bottles • Empty, clean cardboard food and drink containers • Aluminum cans: soda, tuna, etc. • Empty, clean, plastic food containers, etc. • Newspapers, magazines, junk mail, cardboard 	<p>Blue Single Stream recycling bins are distributed all around campus. Exterior bins have blue bands near the top.</p> <p>Maroon recycling bins provided in all dorm rooms.</p>
UNIVERSAL WASTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Batteries—Rechargeable and non-alkaline batteries only (regular batteries go in the trash) • Fluorescent light bulb, CFLs • Any mercury containing items 	<p>Batteries can be recycled at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O'Neill Library, Level 2 • St. Clement's Hall, Room 212 • Most residence hall laundry rooms <p>For recycling information on other items, see the Environmental Health & Safety website: www.bc.edu/offices/publicsafety/ehs.html</p>
E-WASTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal electronics (old phone chargers, old laptop chargers, old headphones) • Computers • Printers 	<p>BC work related items can be recycled by putting in a work order: www.bc.edu/offices/facilities/facservices/wo.html</p> <p>For other personal items watch for E-waste recycling events or return items to the retailer where purchased.</p>
INK CARTRIDGES	<p>Ink cartridges for copiers and printers [Hewlett Packard (HP and others)]</p>	<p>Ink cartridges may be recycled at Staples, OfficeMax, and WB Mason, or returned to the manufacturer.</p>

Recycling in the Dining and Residence Halls

McElroy

- Recycle all plastic to-go containers, empty plastic cups, bottles, glass, cereal boxes, milk cartons and yogurt containers in the blue recycle bins.
- Throw out all trash (plastic bags, plastic utensils, dirty paper/plastic plates/bowls & wrappers in the black trash bins.
- Food organics (compost) are located with all waste receptacle bins and should be used to dispose of food scraps, napkins, tea bags, and *unlined* paper products.

Corcoran Commons

Simply put all your trash, recycling, and china on the conveyor belt. It will be sorted for you; composting and recycling are done by Dining Services staff.

Hillside

- Recycle all plastic cold cups, hot drink sleeves, drink lids, bottles, cans & milk cartons, etc. in the round single stream recycling hole in the wall.
- Compost compostable plates, food scraps, and napkins in slot at the wall
- Throw out drink cups with wax coated insides, straws and wrappers.

Chocolate Bar (Stokes)

- Recycle all items listed above in McElroy
- Throw out dirty napkins, straws, hot cups with wax coated insides and dirty paper/plastic plates.

Lyons

- Recycle all items listed above in McElroy
- Throw out napkins, straws, and drink cups with wax coated insides, dirty paper and plastic plates/bowls

Stuart

- Recycle all empty, plastic to-go containers, empty plastic cups, bottles, glass, cereal boxes, milk cartons and yogurt containers in the blue recycle bins.
- Throw out all trash (food waste, plastic bags, plastic utensils, dirty paper/plastic plates/bowls and wrappers) in the black trash bins.
- Organics Recycling bins are located with all waste receptacle bins and should be used to dispose of food scraps, napkins, tea bags, and unlined paper products.

All classrooms and offices have recycling/trash bins. Outside trash bins are paired with recycling bins.

*For a detailed list of items to be recycled see Office of Sustainability website, "[Where Can I Recycle My...?](#)"

Residence Halls Quick Tips

- Large Recycling totes are located in every residence hall, either on the first floor of the building, or by the floor trash rooms.
- Collect all recyclables in your dorm/apartment/suite and recycle them in the single-stream recycling totes.
- All residential hall rooms, suites, and apartments have blue or maroon individual bins for recycling. When full, empty in the larger recycle bins within the residence hall.
- You can always bring your own recycle bins or improvise! For example, reuse paper bags or old boxes.
- Bring your own trash bin for your room.

Dining Hall Signage



Items such as glass contaminated with dirt or food waste, ceramics, and incandescent light bulbs should not go in your recycling bin.

Note: Cardboard pizza boxes with grease residue should be thrown in the trash.

At BC Dining, our partner, Save That Stuff, collects all pre-consumer food waste as compost. This includes fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, bones, eggshells, and dairy products. Lower Dining Hall does post-consumer, as well as pre-consumer composting.

Food scraps may also go to a facility that processes materials for energy and composts the residue material.

New front-of-house composting in Mac.

BC has single stream recycling, so if it is recyclable throw it in one of those blue bins!

Not sure if it is recyclable? When in doubt, look for a recycle symbol somewhere on the item.

Green cleaning tips —reduce indoor pollution

Traditional household cleaners contain an incredible amount of toxins. That's why Boston College's housekeeping staff are committed to using Green Seal approved cleaning products when cleaning buildings on campus. There are policies in place to ensure that these green products are used everywhere possible.

- Studies show that the air inside our homes is often 70 times more polluted than the air outside, due to the build-up of chemicals from household cleaners. Traditional household cleaners contain an incredible amount of toxins, ranging from chemicals that trigger asthma to those linked to cancer.
- Some products are marketed as green products even if they are not, if you are unsure about how green a cleaning product is—read the label.
- Green cleaners are just as effective as conventional ones and are safe for your health and the environment.

Green Cleaning Quick Tips

- Buy green seal approved products or products which use plant based and eco-friendly ingredients.
- Make homemade cleaners using a mixture of baking soda and water, or vinegar and water, to scrub counter tops and showers.
- Rinse and recycle all plastic containers.

Emission reduction and energy conservation

Boston College is committed to conserving energy and reducing emissions. Gross emissions have decreased on campus since 2007 despite overall campus growth.

- BC has purchased electricity (Scope 2 –see below) constitutes 36% of campus emissions.
- BC emitted over 70,000 tons of CO₂ equivalent in the 2015-2016 academic year
- That is as much as 14,000 round trip flights from Boston to Dubai or as much as 15 space shuttle flights.

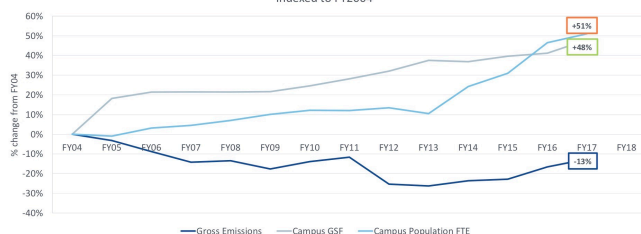
The following are examples of measures taken by Boston College and the Engineering and Energy Department to reduce energy use:

- Purchasing green electricity. In 2017, BC's green power was generated from the following sources: approximately 92% from hydro, 3.5 % from municipal trash, 3% from solar, and 1.5% from wind.
- Committing to design new buildings according to LEED silver standards. LEED – Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design, www.usgbc.org/leed.
- Upgrading equipment yearly to optimize efficiency.
- Replacing standard lighting to LED across campus.
- Implementing enhanced system controls to monitor and adjust building conditions.

Great Improvements Despite Growing Campus

Space and Users have increased at a higher rate than emissions

Change in Emissions vs. Change in Campus Size and Population Indexed to FY2004



Energy Conservation Quick Tips

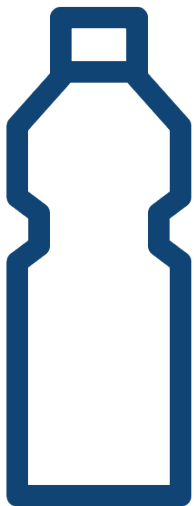
- Turn off the lights / TV when not in use.
- Open the blinds during the day to utilize natural light.
- Switch out incandescent and fluorescent light bulbs with LEDs.
- Set your thermostat between 68F and 74F in rooms with heat controls (when possible).
- Keep windows closed when your heat is on. If you need to cool your room, turn the heat off or set it to a lower temperature.
- Unplug chargers or turn a power strip off when you're not actively charging devices.
- Power Down computers and printers when you're not using them
- Use EnergyStar appliances when possible. EnergyStar appliances use 50% less energy than standard appliances. Look for the blue label on TVs, speakers, DVD players, lightbulbs, and more.
- Report temperature control issues, both in your own residence hall and in other BC buildings around campus, to the Work Order Center. Submit work orders through Agora Portal under My Services – Facilities Work Requests or through the Autodesk BIM 360 Ops app.
- Save energy by using the “colors” setting on washing machines, and only wash full loads.

Water Conservation

- Only 1% of Earth's water is suitable for drinking, so it is imperative that we conserve as much of it as we can.
- **BC consumed over 134 million gallons of water in the 2018 fiscal year. That is 14,336 gallons per undergraduate student.**
- BC Facilities has been working to reduce our water footprint by installing low flow shower heads, low flow toilets, and improved irrigation control systems.
- The Thomas More Apartments at 2150 Commonwealth Ave have a greywater system that recycles water from showers and sinks and uses it to flush the toilets in the building.

50% of bottled water is repackaged tap water. Drink tap water, not bottled water

- Tap water is regulated by strict Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards, whereas bottled water is regulated by less strict FDA standards which do not require testing for E. Coli.



- Tap water in Boston is extremely clean and costs only 10 cents for every 5 gallons, contrasted with water bottles which are about \$47 for 5 gallons of the same, or lesser, quality water.
- Visit the Boston College sustainability page to view monthly Boston water quality reports from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority and see how clean our water is!

Water Conservation Quick Tips

- Take shorter showers
- Don't do laundry until you have a full load.
- Don't use the toilet as a trash can! Toss tissues and waste into trash cans to avoid unnecessary flushes.
- Turn off the sink when brushing your teeth or scrubbing dishes. Leaving the water running can waste up to 3 gallons per minute.
- Submit a work order for leaks in sinks and showers so that they can be repaired.
- Drink tap, not bottled. Or, purchase a water filter, if necessary. Most traditional style residence halls have a filtered water station in the bathrooms.



Get your hands green

There are many environmental and sustainability-oriented organizations and programs on campus, so it is easy to get involved.

EcoPledge

A student-led organization that educates the BC community about environmental issues and how we can live more sustainably. They often host films, lectures, and annual celebratory events like HarvestFest and Green Week.

Real Food BC

The goal of Real Food BC is to promote the purchasing of food from local, green, humane sources in order to support localized food production and to reduce carbon emissions that result from long-distance food shipments. They run a garden behind the Connolly House on Hammond Street to provide locally-grown produce for student events.

Climate Justice @ Boston College

A group that aims to educate about the dangers of climate change and how students can be agents for change, unite with local and national climate activists to strengthen social support for climate justice, and engage the BC community about activism—including fossil fuel divestment.

UGBC Student Initiatives

Environment & Sustainability Caucus sponsors film screenings, guest speakers, and a spring thrift store event.

Green Ambassador

A fun, paid opportunity on game days to help improve recycling and educate fans about sustainable initiatives. If interested, watch for announcements at the beginning of the semester.

Green your degree

Bring your interest in environmental issues into the classroom with a major or minor in Environmental Studies or Environmental Geoscience!

Environmental Studies Program

An interdisciplinary curriculum that offers various perspectives on sustainability from faculty and courses across the university. The Environmental Studies minor is designed to complement any undergraduate major and everyone can partake.

Admission to the major is by competitive application at the end of freshmen year.

The goals of the major are to provide students with:

- The knowledge and perspective to cultivate rewarding lives as responsible citizens of the planet
- A deep understanding of the scientific, political, and cultural aspects of the world's environmental challenges
- The tools and creativity necessary to envision and implement paths to sustainable solutions
- A solid background for environmentally related graduate programs and/or careers in business, education, law, policy, planning, government, or research

Green Your Degree Quick Tips

Explore classes centered in sustainability in various departments such as:

- Global Implications of Climate Change
- People and Nature
- Environmental Management
- Environmental Economics & Policy
- Environmental Ethics
- Sustainable Agriculture
- And many more! Check out the [Environmental Studies Webpage](#)

Environmental Geoscience Department

A BS program designed for students who want to work professionally in earth and/or environmental science, or obtain a foundation in preparation for post-graduate work in earth sciences, environmental law and policy, resource management, environmental education, or research.

Certificate in Sustainability

A six-course online program offered by the Woods College of Advancing Studies. The program focuses on both science and policy and is designed for those seeking to explore subject areas related to climate change, the effects of shifting population and demographics, and the limits of natural resources.

Green your lifestyle

Here are some other ways you can incorporate sustainability into your life at BC.

Join the Sustainability Living & Learning Community

Located in Reservoir Apartments, this is a community for sophomores interested in exploring the broad topic of sustainability, engaging in service, and being part of a new opportunity to promote environmental awareness. Apply through Residential Life in the Spring.

Eat at Addies

Located on the second floor of Corcoran Commons, The Loft @ Addie's serves local, sustainable foods such as custom flatbreads and handmade veggie burgers, as well as specialty fair trade coffee drinks.

Other dining halls offer healthy and sustainably prepared meal choices.

For more information visit www.bc.edu/sustainability

Green your commute

Boston College's busses use at least 5% biofuel and natural gas and travel all around the Main Campus, Newton Campus, Commonwealth Ave, and to and from the Chestnut Hill Mall.

- For information on the bus schedule and stops, check out the website for the Office of Transportation, or download the free app TransLoc on your phone.
- Riding the BC Bus shuttle is a convenient and easy way to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution around campus.
- Go Electric! BC offers an EV charging station on the 2nd level of the Commonwealth Ave. Garage.

Green Commuting Quick Tips

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk or bike to close locations.
- Use the T instead of individual cars when possible. Student MBTA passes are available at a discount and can be purchased in advance for the entire semester. For more information, visit www.bc.edu/transportation or stop by Student Services in Lyons Hall.
- Rideshare if you are using a car.
- Visit the commuting tab on the [BC sustainability webpage](http://www.bc.edu/sustainability) for more ideas and information about green commuting.

This guide was created in 2016 and revised in 2019 by the Boston College Office of Sustainability to provide students, faculty, and staff with answers to questions about living and working sustainably on BC's campus.

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Icons: Noun Project

For more information visit: www.bc.edu/sustainability

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