



Worcester Polytechnic Institute is...
innovatinggreen 

June 23, 2017

Calendar

Aug. 23: New Student Orientation, There is no Planet B

Sept. 11: Zero Net Energy Buildings, Paul Torcellini, National Renewable Energy Center, SL 104, 5 – 6 pm

Sept. 29: Student Clean Energy Symposium and Internship Fair, Mass Clean Energy Center, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm, RCC Odeum

September, date TBD: Drive Electric event

Upcoming Events

New Student Orientation

The members of the class of '21 will get the chance to learn what our diverse student groups are doing about protecting the environment and advancing social justice globally. They will also see what each of them can do to make WPI's campus a model for sustainable living. Sessions will run at 11:15 am and 1:00 pm on August 23.

Learn About Zero Net Energy Buildings

Our Sustainability Seminar Series kicks off on September 11 at 5:00 pm in SL 104 with a

green@wpi

This has been a great year for sustainability at WPI – thanks to strong support from our staff, students, and faculty. By now, I'm sure you've heard that WPI has earned Gold in AASHE's STARS – the premier sustainability ranking system for colleges and universities. We also implemented the Minor in Sustainability Engineering and have just received administration approval for establishment of a "Green Revolving Fund" and for further reduction of our Greenhouse Gas emissions. You can learn about these initiatives below. And don't expect that we'll be complacent in our accomplishments. WPI is a leader in sustainability and strives for constant improvement. What's happening this summer? John and I will be benchmarking progress in utility consumption, looking for ways to improve recycling, implementing our plan to continue reduction of our greenhouse gas emissions, and raising awareness about our commuting options. Our Sustainability Intern, Ashley Choi, is writing the 2017 WPI Sustainability Report; she may be contacting you for information. Watch for the report's release in August!

Liz Tomaszewski

How Much Do We Really Know about Sustainability?

In many respects, WPI is at the forefront of sustainability actions, education, and research. But just how knowledgeable are we about the basics of sustainability? Do we know what sustainability really means? To find out, we have begun to survey our faculty, staff, and students. The first survey was administered in May and received 253 responses: 66 from undergrads, 71 from grad students, 29

presentation by Paul Torcellini from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, and a WPI ME alum.

MassCEC Clean Energy Symposium

This annual event sponsored by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center comes to WPI from Boston this year. It is open to all Massachusetts college students to hear from clean energy industry experts and learn about paid internships in this growing industry. Sept 29, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm, RCC Odeum.

Drive Electric at WPI

We expect to celebrate National Drive Electric Week again on our campus in September! Last year's display of 30-plus electric vehicles, plus the opportunity to test drive BMW, Chevrolet, Nissan, and Cadillac EVs, attracted many WPI community members as well as EV enthusiasts from around Central Massachusetts. We have some exciting surprises for this fall's event, so stay tuned!

Office of Sustainability
John Orr: 508-831-5273
Liz Tomaszewski: 508-831-5454
green@wpi.edu

Send comments and suggestions to
green@wpi.edu



[Find us on Facebook](#)



[Follow us on Twitter](#)

from faculty, and 87 from staff. Our community has a good level of knowledge and understanding of the basics, such as environmental impacts of emissions, and recycling principles. On the topic of the cause of climate change, the WPI community overwhelmingly agrees that human activity is almost completely (49%) or substantially (44%) responsible. But knowledge of the breadth of sustainability concepts is rather weak. For example, only 56% identified "social justice" as an aspect of sustainability. And we need to do a better job in educating our community on sustainability options, such as the discount available at Dunkin' Donuts for using a reusable coffee mug. We will be launching an expanded survey this fall. Please participate!

We Went for the Gold – and Got It

In 2015 WPI joined the [Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System \(STARS\)](#), reporting on our sustainability activities that range from recycling, to campus energy conservation, to global projects, to research in battery, fuel, and photovoltaic technologies. We received a Silver rating which positioned us well among our peers. However, the experience showed us where we could do more, and over the past two years we have used the submission results to help guide our initiatives. As the time for the next submission approached, we reached out to many of you in the WPI community for help in documenting all that we are doing. The results paid off, and we moved up to a Gold rating, as was reported in the [Daily Herd](#). Please follow that link for all the exciting details!



Daniels Residents Improve Their Recycling

We knew that the recycling rates were higher in student residences with in-room recycling and collection areas in the common areas (East Hall and Faraday), so it made sense to try the same model in one of the older residential buildings. With an average recycling rate of only 17% based on the last three waste audits, Daniels Hall was a perfect location to pilot recycling bins in the dorm rooms. In August 2016, waste and recycling bins were placed in each room and a waste/recycling station was located on each floor. This did result in a recycling rate increase in Daniels. At the end of the year a survey was conducted to collect students' input on this change. The survey results were quite encouraging, with 96%

of the respondents indicating that they made use of the program, and 93% recommending that it be expanded to other residence halls. However, only 67% of the responses indicated that the communication surrounding the program was effective, so we have some work to do in this area.

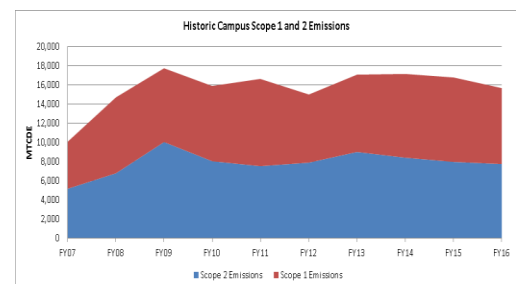
We Now Have a Green Revolving Fund

Meghan Trahan '17, along with other students committed to environmental responsibility, developed and championed a plan for WPI to implement energy and resource conservation projects on an ongoing basis, with financial savings replenishing a fund to support future projects. Thanks to support from President Laurie Leshin, CFO Jeff Solomon, and the Facilities Department, we now have this fund at WPI. These "Green Revolving Funds" have been successfully implemented at other universities and have demonstrated the ability to conserve resources, protect the environment, and also save money. A key element of the fund is community participation in identifying projects, both large and small, that have a combination of sustainability impact and financial savings. Watch for the announcement of opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to participate with suggestions and also as members of the steering committee.

Our Greenhouse Gas Emissions Are Going DOWN

The recent Sustainability Literacy Survey (see above) showed that the WPI community is knowledgeable regarding the climate impacts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions. As part of our Plan for Sustainability, we have been working to reduce those emissions, and we have just established a goal of achieving a 20% reduction by FY25 in our on-campus and electricity-related emissions from their FY14 values. Our

emissions currently compare very well to peer institutions, and we are committed to further reductions. These efforts are supported by the newly established Green Revolving Fund. In an overall sense, WPI's Plan for Sustainability integrates our institutional research and education mission with our operational practices to help guide our resource



allocation. For example, resources devoted to education and research activities on sustainability topics can have tremendous long-term global impacts on the environment, complementing our own operational efforts. Details of the GHG Reduction Plan implementation are being finalized and the plan will be on the [WPI Sustainability website](#) soon.

Improve Your Commute!

A MassRIDES promotional event, Try-It Day, was held on campus on June 20 to help improve your commute and reduce the number of solo drivers on our roads. MassRIDES along with the WRTA (Worcester's bus system) visited the Rubin Campus Center on June 7 and June 14 to raise awareness about transportation options and incentives to use them. Thanks to all who participated and learned that there really are convenient alternatives to driving your own car to campus every day! Participants in the MassRIDES program earn rewards for using an alternative method of commuting and have an Emergency Ride Home Program available to them.

Bikeshare Update

The Gompei's Gears bikes were all cleaned and tuned up in advance of Season Two of the bikeshare program, launched on April 14. Currently the program boasts nearly 1400 registered members and an average checkout rate of over two checkouts per bike per day. Usage of the bikes is lower in the summer, so availability is good! Why not take one of these bikes for a spin during your lunch break! Check out the bikeshare site [here](#).

Your WPI Purchasing Can Be Green

The purchasing habits of WPI faculty and staff can have a significant impact on sustainability. It makes sense to minimize the amount of packing material coming to campus by consolidating purchases where possible, and to consider the life cycle costs and impacts of major purchases. To help improve our practices, a voluntary Green Purchasing Policy is currently in the review process. [You can read the draft here](#); your input is most welcome!