

HOW TO LIVE SUSTAINABLY AT  
ST. LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY



# Green Guide



ST. LAWRENCE  
UNIVERSITY

# Table of Contents

This “Green Guide” aims to serve as a resource and starting point for living sustainably during your time at St. Lawrence and beyond.

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1-2</b>
<b>Center for the Environment</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Office of Sustainability</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Courses &amp; Education</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Clubs &amp; Organizations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Managing Waste</b>	<b>7-8</b>
<b>Buying Things</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Food</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Water Usage</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Energy Usage</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Cleaning &amp; Laundry</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Additional Helpful Links</b>	<b>15</b>

March 2024 - Made in collaboration with:



INTRODUCTION

# Sustainability is a core value at St. Lawrence

In 2006, St. Lawrence University signed the ACUPCC Presidents' Climate Leadership Commitment (since 2015, known as the Second Nature Presidents' Climate Leadership Commitment). In 2007, a Climate Action Plan (CAP) was completed by the Campus Committee on Sustainability and Carbon Neutrality, or CCSCN. The CAP's stated goal is climate neutrality, or zero net GHG emissions, to be achieved no later than 2040, with 2007 as the baseline year. CCSCN subsequently completed a 2017-2018 Climate Action Work Plan.



On the next page is the Thelomathesian Society Environmental Resolution, ratified by the University's Board of Trustees in spring 2006 (taken from the student handbook). Read the resolution carefully and make an effort to live by the principles instilled within it.

# Thelomathesian Society Environmental Resolution

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Environmental citizenship is a core value of St. Lawrence University. Therefore, it is expected that you, as a Laurentian, will support the importance of environmental stewardship.

**The Resolution:** Whereas St. Lawrence University, in its curriculum within and across many academic departments, asks students through their coursework and research to explore the environmental issues we face as global citizens; and

Whereas St. Lawrence students, through this exploration, will have the foundation to understand and embrace environmental sustainability so that they personally and professionally may meet the needs of their own families, communities and career responsibilities without compromising the ability of the environment to provide for future generations; and

Whereas St. Lawrence administration is committed to procedural, procurement and building efforts aimed at reducing consumption and waste while increasing energy efficiency, efforts that will strengthen the sustainability of the physical plant and demonstrate the University's commitment to environmental stewardship; and

Whereas the University understands the importance of both individual and institutional commitment to living and promoting a more sustainable lifestyle through daily actions as well as comprehensive decisions;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Board of Trustees approves the adoption as one of the University's core values, a commitment to environmental awareness, environmental education and the pursuit of environmental sustainability in its operations; and

Be it further resolved that the Board of Trustees acknowledges the thoughtful and farsighted work of the Thomathesian Society, whose leaders and members have had the central role for the creation of this resolution and its endorsement by all governance constituencies of the University.

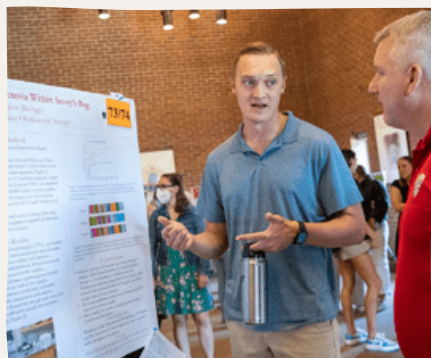


# Center for the Environment

St. Lawrence University's Center for the Environment empowers the next generation of leaders to develop the skills necessary—through education, advocacy, and action—to be agents of change in their communities, the region, and the world.

Combining our existing programs with innovative new initiatives, our Center for the Environment expands on decades of research, teaching, and experiential opportunities for students, and spans the globe—from our beautiful 1,000-acre green campus in the heart of the North Country to our living/learning compound in Nairobi, Kenya.

Regardless of your academic major, you'll work closely with faculty, staff, and alumni who bring expertise on the issues you're most interested in, like climate change, energy, conservation, sustainability, environmental justice, and outdoor leadership.



## Green Innovation Grants

No matter what you're inspired to explore or how you're determined to make our community better, we offer funding for environmental research and innovation on campus so you can turn your ideas into action.

## Environmental Scholars Program

As an Environmental Scholar, you'll join a specialized pre-orientation trip and choose from First-Year Program courses that focus on sustainability, climate change, conservation, or related topics.

## Green Internships

We know the value hands-on experience can have. With our new green internships, you'll explore your interests, apply your knowledge to real-world experiences, and prepare for a career that excites and inspires you.



The CFE is new and evolving, so stay tuned for more opportunities to come!

# Office of Sustainability

The Assistant Director of Sustainability and Energy Management position resides within Facilities and Operations, and more specifically, the Office of Sustainability. In this role, the Director:

1. Works with the CCSCN on achieving the CAP and leading the university on our broader campus sustainability options and goals.
2. Identifies and prioritizes both short- and long-term strategies needed to reach university goals outlined in the CAP.
3. Collects, analyzes and reports out on all data as a measure of the university's sustainability goals such as annual GHG inventory and third-party surveys such as AASHE STARS.
4. Works directly with facilities managers and consultants on projects that support the University's climate goals.
5. Works closely with others to develop and maintain a comprehensive energy management plan in conjunction with the CAP and university sustainability initiative to help advance and support the University's goal to become a leader in environmental excellence among higher education.
6. Establishes and maintains connections with the First Year programs, the Sustainability Program, and Student Life groups on sustainability initiatives.
7. Acts as a resource for both research and development for students, student groups, and supports faculty and staff departments.

Some of our recent projects!



# Courses and Education

Students are required to complete at least one unit that meets the learning goals of environmental literacy courses. Courses that fulfill the EL requirement may also fulfill other general education requirements. FYS courses may be approved for EL credit; FYP courses cannot. The Academic Affairs Committee will approve courses for EL credit. EL courses are at least one unit and at least 50 percent of the course's content must achieve the learning goals for Environmental Literacy, as described below:

1. Environmental Literacy Courses have primary learning goals in which students, through multiple opportunities and classroom instruction, develop:

- a. a recognition of the consequences of human activities on natural systems; and/or
- b. an awareness of the cultural, economic, and political forces that affect environmental policies; and/or
- c. an understanding of natural systems and/or the impacts they can have on the environment, human life, health, and welfare.



There are many sustainability related courses to choose from each semester. **Sustainability is important to consider in all academic and career fields. No matter your degree or career aspirations, sustainability literacy and environmental awareness are applicable and critical.**

Some examples of sustainability related courses that have been offered include:

- Environmental Conservation in Africa
- Environmental Economics
- Ecopoetry
- Architecture and Ecology
- Issues in Environmental Health
- Climate Change Politics & Advocacy
- Math and Social Justice
- Adirondack Natural History & Environment
- Energy and the Environment
- Religion and Ecology
- Communicating Sustainability

Outside of coursework, there are many other ways to get informed about sustainability issues. Keep an eye out for webinars, presentations on campus, environmental-related art shows, and other offerings.

# Clubs & Student Organizations



Another way to educate yourself about sustainability on campus, and to get involved in taking action, is to join environmental clubs and organizations. Clubs and organizations host events, activities, and table, providing plenty of opportunities to get engaged! A few examples of current groups are below:



## **Environmental Action Organization**

SLU EAO is an environmental advocacy organization with three main focuses: reducing the university's carbon footprint, promoting sustainability initiatives on campus, and environmental education. EAO achieves this by taking on various projects around campus and in the wider community related to the many environmental issues our world faces today. EAO also hosts educational events to better inform the local community and press for sustainable change.



## **SLU Close the Loop + the Barn Goods Thrift Store**

We are an initiative aiming to reduce waste on campus through education and creating a culture of exchange! We collect donations of pre-loved clothes, host swap events and workshops, and hope to help cultivate intentional consumption at St. Lawrence. The Barn Good Thrift Store is St. Lawrence University's very own thrift store! Completely ran by students affiliated with Close The Loop, the store provides people in the SLU and Canton community with a chance to participate in circular, sustainable exchange with the goal of reducing waste and expressing your individuality and style at very cheap prices.



## **The Green House Low Impact Living Theme Cottage**

The Green House seeks to foster and encourage a low-impact, local lifestyle on the St. Lawrence University campus and beyond. We host vegetarian and locally sourced dinners every week, run sustainability and food-focused workshops, and work farm hours at Birdsfoot farm as a part of our community shared agriculture (CSA) program. We throw Pumpkin Palooza in the Fall and the North Country Folk Festival in the Spring!



# Managing Waste



Trash not only takes up space in landfills and pollutes the ocean, but it contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. You can help reduce waste produced on campus. One way to learn more is by taking Professor Lori Clark's Taming Trash course. And, check out @sluclosetheoop on Instagram to stay informed about workshops, swap events, and the Barn Goods Thrift store.

## The first step is to reduce!

As we discuss below, recycling is often very ineffective in the US. The best thing we can all do is reduce the amount of waste we produce in the first place. Don't buy things you don't need, and look for package free options, or packaging made of recycled + recyclable materials. Bring your own reusable water and coffee containers, and avoid single use takeout food containers.

To avoid waste from dining facilities, **participate in the reusable takeout container system**. Pay \$5 once during the semester to receive a container. Each time you use it, you can bring it back to Dana Dining Hall and exchange it for a clean one or a token that can be redeemed for a clean container at a later date.

When you do produce waste, make sure that your waste ends up in the proper waste bin. See the section below on recycling. For special wastes, like batteries and electronics, contact **University Environmental Health & Safety** (315) 229-5105 or **Facilities Operations** (315) 229-5105. E-waste from home can be dropped in the blue bin at the Canton Town Barn on Stiles Ave. The Brewer Bookstore, IT Help Desk at ODY, the Newell lobby by the Fitness Center, the Chemistry stockroom in Johnson 328, and Office Services in Vilas Hall have special boxes for spent rechargeable batteries.

## Plastics & Recycling

What can and can't be recycled varies based on where you live and what company collects your recyclables. Always do your research when you move someplace new! **See the next page for what can be recycled here at SLU. Do not bag your recyclables!** Don't contaminate the recycling bins with food scraps, plastic bags, or wrappers. When in doubt, throw it out! Recycling is tricky - only 9% of plastic produced has ever been recycled.

## Food Waste

See the section on page 9 for more information about food waste and how St. Lawrence composts.

## Clothing & Dorm Supplies

The best way to not end up with excess clothing, or unwanted dorm supplies or decorations at the end of the year is to not purchase them. If you know you won't be able to bring a mini fridge or microwave home at the end of the semester, see if your roommate can, or if you can store them to use again next year. When you do find yourself with items you'd like to get rid of, see if you can thrift them, trade/donate to another student, or participate in the SLUReuse event at the end of the year. You can also find information about recycling electronics and appliances by reaching out to Environmental Health & Safety or Facilities Operations.





# Our Local Recycling

## ZERO-SORT<sup>®</sup> RECYCLING

TOSS ALL CLEAN & EMPTY RECYCLABLES INTO THIS CONTAINER

### CARDBOARD/PAPER



**Corrugated Cardboard**  
(Wavy center layer)



**Boxboard**  
(Dry-food boxes, egg cartons, & rolls)



**Junk Mail, Periodicals, & Office Paper**  
(Paper bags, envelopes, & catalogs)

### PLASTIC



**Plastic Bottles, Jugs, Tub, & Lids**  
(Empty kitchen, laundry, & bath containers)

### METAL



**Aluminum & Steel Cans**  
(Foil & empty food & beverage cans)

### GLASS



**Glass Bottles & Jars**  
(Empty food & beverage bottles & jars)

### NOT ACCEPTED

Plastic bags, bagged recyclables, clothing/textiles, food waste/liquids, tanglers such as rope or hoses, scrap metal, batteries of any kind, electronics, wood, medical waste, hazardous materials, explosives, toys, hangers, shoes, waxy cups or plates, food bags or wrappers, plastic wrap or film, shrink wrap, tarps, diapers, human/pet or yard waste, tires or rubber, Styrofoam™, napkins, paper towels, tissues, plastic utensils, register tape, condiment packets, straws, stirrers, coffee pods, ceramics, or baking glass



**ZERO-SORT<sup>®</sup>**  
RECYCLING  
a casella service

For recycling tips and resources, visit

[casella.com/recyclebetter](http://casella.com/recyclebetter) • 800-CASELLA

# Buying Things

SLU ReUse Event

One of the biggest ways you can live more sustainably is by buying less stuff. Every product you purchase has an **entire life cycle** — the materials sourced and extracted, transportation, production, packaging, further transportation, end use, and how it is disposed of. The impact of an item is determined by so much more than if it can be recycled or composted. This is a lot to consider when purchasing an item. Oftentimes, the best question to ask yourself is if you really need it. Then, can you get it second-hand or from a sustainable source?

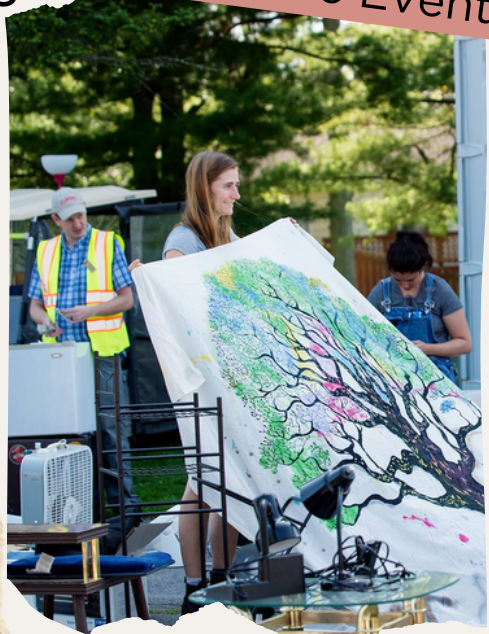
**1) Start from “no.” Convince yourself why you need to buy an item instead of the other way around.**

**2) Ask yourself if you can use or repurpose something that you already own.**

**3) Can you borrow something from a friend?**

**4) Check out the Barn Goods Thrift Store and other second hand shops.**

**5) Look for third party certification labels, such as 1% for the Planet, Certified B Corporation, Global Organic Textile Standard, or Rainforest Alliance.**





# Food

Just like the products we buy, the food we eat has an entire life cycle to consider, and it impacts much more than just our personal health and wellbeing. For example, “producing 100 grams of protein from peas emits just 0.4 kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>eq). To get the same amount of protein from beef, emissions would be nearly 90 times higher, at 35 kgCO<sub>2</sub>eq.”<sup>2</sup> Meat production also uses more water and takes up more land than the production of most fruits and vegetables.

## Ways you can reduce your impact

- 1) Participate in Meatless Monday, and try to reduce the amount of meat and dairy you eat over all. Not everyone needs to become vegan or vegetarian, but reducing meat consumption by a small amount can have a large impact.
- 2) Don't take more food than you can eat at the dining hall, and if shopping for yourself at the grocery store, don't overbuy and let food go bad before you get to eat it.
- 3) If purchasing produce for yourself, try to pick items that are in-season, local, or that have been shipped from less far away. A Farmers Market is held at the Canton Village Green on Tuesdays and Fridays, 9am-2pm in the spring and summer.
- 4) Compost your food waste in the bins located in the student center!

St. Lawrence serves local produce, has a reusable takeout container program, and composts pre-consumer waste (i.e. food scraps from food prep). Food waste is brought to the aerated windrows by the stables.



2. Hannah Ritchie (2020) - "Less meat is nearly always better than sustainable meat, to reduce your carbon footprint" Published online at OurWorldInData.org. Retrieved from: <https://ourworldindata.org/less-meat-or-sustainable-meat> [Online Resource]



# Water Usage

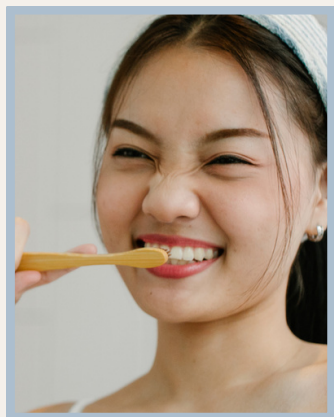
In the North Country, we are lucky to have abundant sources of water. However, that doesn't mean that we should take water for granted! We can all work to reduce our water usage on campus.



## Take shorter showers

See if you can aim for four minutes! A great way to time yourself is finding a song or two that add up to four minutes in length.

*Bonus tip: use bar soaps/shampoo bars — they have less packaging and are more concentrated than liquids (i.e. less water used to produce them!)*



## Don't leave water running while brushing your teeth or doing dishes.

When you are brushing your teeth, or scrubbing your hands for 20 seconds, turn the faucet off. While doing dishes, an easy way to reduce water usage is to fill a bowl or pot that you are cleaning with a bit of soapy water, or filling the sink with a bit of water. Turn the faucet on when rinsing off each dish, and off while you are cleaning.

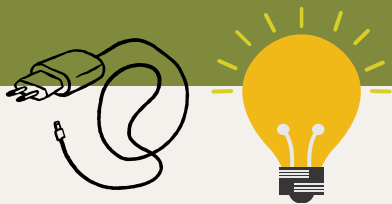
If you notice a leaky faucet, let **Facilities Operations** know! <https://www.stlawu.edu/offices/facilities-operations/work-orders>



## Don't buy plastic water bottles — use reusables instead.

Plastic water bottles use water in the production process (more than what actually ends up in the bottle). Water from plastic water bottles also tends to have higher levels of microplastics than tap water. Canton tap water is routinely tested and meets all State drinking water health standards. For more information, click [here](#), or contact the University's **Environmental Health and Safety** department. There are filtered water bottle filling stations in the student center as well!



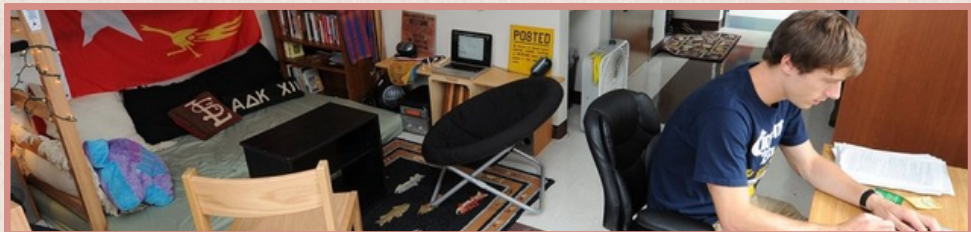


# Energy Usage

Heating dorms, running fans in the warmer months, charging electronic appliances, turning on the lights — these all use energy. And energy use comes with utility bills and greenhouse gas emissions. So, how can you decrease your impact while living on campus?

- 1) Turn lights off when you leave your room, or when there is enough sunlight.
- 2) Avoid excess light decorations like LED string lights and LED signs (though, LEDs are the most efficient light bulbs!) and other decor that has to be plugged in.
- 3) Use a powerstrip that can be turned on and off for chargers, computer monitors, etc. Turn off the powerstrip when not in use.
- 4) If you don't use a powerstrip, don't leave your phone or laptop chargers plugged in when not in use.
- 5) In the winter, if the heat is too hot in your room, let **Facilities Operations** know instead of leaving windows open. <https://www.stlawu.edu/offices/facilities-operations/work-orders>
- 6) If there are any issues with drafts or poor insulation, let **Facilities Operations** know.
- 7) If you are using a fan to cool your room, remember to turn it off and unplug it when you leave your room.
- 8) In the warmer months, open windows at night to let in cool air, and close them during the day to help keep your space cool.
- 9) Use window shades to insulate windows and keep in heat in the winter time, or to block out heat from the sun when it's hot out.
- 10) Take shorter, cooler showers.
- 11) Wash clothes in cold water, and use reusable dryer balls to shorten dryer time. (Your clothes likely do not need the entire hour to dry.)

**In general, think about your energy use and ways that you can decrease it. Spend time unplugged when you can, read a book, and hang out outside.**





# Cleaning & Laundry

How you clean your clothing and your dorm are two areas where you can work to minimize your environmental footprint.

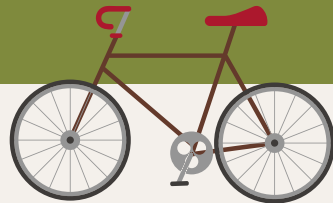
## Cleaning

- 1) You can use a 1:1 white vinegar to water ratio to clean most surfaces (don't use on your electronics screens).
- 2) If purchasing cleaning sprays, look for the EPA Safer Choice label.
- 3) Skip the paper towels and cleaning wipes. Use reusable cleaning cloths/towels that you can throw in the laundry. (Try to use old towels or cloths that you have instead of purchasing new ones!)
- 4) Avoid/limit aerosol air freshener sprays and other air fresheners.

## Laundry

- 1) Look for detergents with the EPA Safer Choice label. Laundry detergent sheets are a great alternative to liquid detergent in plastic jugs.
- 2) Wash laundry on the cold water setting. Leave the washer door open when you are done to air out!
- 3) Use reusable dryer balls (tennis balls work too!) instead of dryer sheets to reduce waste and dryer times. Your clothes likely do not need the entire hour to dry. And make sure to clean the lint screen!
- 4) If space allows, use a drying rack to let clothes hang dry instead of using the dryer when possible.





# Transportation

St. Lawrence is a walking campus. According to the Motor Vehicle and Parking Policy, “All of us - students, faculty, staff and visitors - should be confident of the freedom to walk from place to place without interference from cars, motorcycles and other vehicles. We also believe that a walking campus is more consistent with our commitment to the environment. Therefore, we have established procedures for registering and parking vehicles on campus to assure the safety of students, faculty, staff and visiting drivers and pedestrians on campus.”

**One way you can easily reduce your impact on the environment is by walking or biking everywhere on campus. Don't have your own bike? Check out the Green Bikes program!**

“The Green Bikes Program has been running on our campus since 2004. The bikes are available for loan to SLU students, faculty and staff during the spring, summer and fall. To borrow a bike (and helmet and lock) just stop by the Launders Science Library's circulation desk. The program is an initiative to make bikes readily available to the campus community while encouraging healthy and sustainable modes of transportation.”

**But what about getting around off campus?**

The Price Chopper Grocery store is about a 20 minute walk from the Sullivan Student Center. Park Bros. Bagels & Coffee, the American Theatre, Nature's Storehouse, pizza shops, and more in the Village of Canton are about a 15 minute walk.

Thelmo sponsors free shuttles to Walmart every-other Sunday throughout the academic year, with signups required.

When you have to drive, try to carpool when possible. St. Lawrence County Public Transit also has bus lines that travel to Potsdam, Ogdensburg, Norwood, and more.

<https://www.slcnypublictransit.com/transit-schedules>

**Most importantly, take a second to consider your impact before any trip you make, and if there is a more sustainable way to get there.**



# Additional Helpful Links

**SLU Office of Sustainability (OoS)** resides within Facilities and Operations, on the far South end of campus at Scarlet & Brown Drive. OoS establishes and maintains connections with campus sustainability programs and curriculum, as well as Canton and St. Lawrence County sustainability initiatives. OoS serves as a resource for both research and development for students, student groups, and support of faculty and staff departments. OoS collects, analyzes and reports on all data and metrics supporting the University's sustainability and energy goals, such as the GHG Emissions Inventory and AASHE STARS report. [www.stlawu.edu/offices/facilities-operations/sustainability](http://www.stlawu.edu/offices/facilities-operations/sustainability)

**SLU Facilities and Operations (FacOps)** is responsible for the physical assets of the University to ensure safe, reliable, clean and well-maintained facilities, buildings and grounds for students, faculty, staff and visitors in support of the University's mission of learning, discovery and outreach. FacOps maintains over 1.9 million square feet in over 94 buildings across 1000 acres. Submit non-emergency work orders at [www.stlawu.edu/offices/facilities-operations/work-orders](http://www.stlawu.edu/offices/facilities-operations/work-orders) For emergencies, call (315) 229-5555.

**SLU Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)** The mission of St. Lawrence University is to provide an inspiring and demanding undergraduate education in the liberal arts to students selected for their seriousness of purpose and intellectual promise. Consistent with this mission, EHS has an unequivocal commitment to the health and safety of its employees, students and the community in which we work, teach and live. [www.stlawu.edu/offices/environmental-health-and-safety](http://www.stlawu.edu/offices/environmental-health-and-safety)

**Canton Sustainability Committee** was established in the spring of 2014. A student participating in SLU's Sustainability Semester undertook the coordination of the new committee as the community-based learning (CBL) component of the Semester. Prospective committee participants were identified and general plans for getting the committee off the ground were set. The first meeting was held on April 22, 2014 - Earth Day. [cantonny.gov/government/village/boards-and-committees](http://cantonny.gov/government/village/boards-and-committees)

Be a part of making SLU a more sustainable campus!

