What is Ithaca’s climate impact?

For the past two years, students conducting independent study projects have helped IC measured its contribution to climate change. Using the Clean Air-Cool Planet Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory tool, Alexandra Chesney ’09 determined that, in 2006, the College contributed 49,110 metric tonnes of eCO2 to the atmosphere.

By far the bulk of our climate impact is from “stationary sources”: heating, cooling, and ventilating our buildings, and the electricity used to light rooms and power equipment and appliances. The balance of our emissions comes from our collective commuting and campus transportation activities, along with a combination of other sources.

Paige Davis ’10 has taken over the work of updating the inventory for 2007. The cumulative effort of these students to inventory our emissions - combined with that of Stephanie Hylen ’06, who conducted our first inventory for the years 2000-2005 – means that Ithaca has already met a major goal of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, which President Williams signed in May 2007.

The Presidents Climate Commitment committee, a broad-based representative group headed by vice president for Finance and Administration Carl Sgrecci, is developing the targets, timeline and implementation plans for the College to become a net-zero greenhouse gas emitter.

The Committee is considering a recommendation for a 2% per year reduction plan, which would place Ithaca on a trajectory for an 80% reduction by 2050, a plan similar to several national and international plans.

One Climate Committee recommendation is for the College to amend its Comprehensive Environmental Policy to require campus departments to purchase Energy Star-compliant equipment and appliances where these are available, and to adopt the equivalent of a minimum LEED™ Silver standard for new construction and major renovations.

Open for Business

This spring semester, the School of Business opened for, well, business….

Some of the building’s cool features are:

- design that brings natural light into 90% of the building’s interior;
- passive solar heating to warm spaces;
- natural ventilation to move fresh air in and lift hot air up and out the building top;
- daylight controls that turn lights down or off when there is sufficient natural lighting;
- occupancy sensors that turn lights off when rooms are not in use;
- dual-flush toilets that limit water use and that employ collected rainwater for flushing;
- waterless urinals;
- steel, wood and stone building materials from local sources;
- use of “green” cleaners;
- shower facility for commuters who bike to campus;
- Café that features organic and local foods; and
- the vegetated roof over the first level.

Representatives from Robert A.M. Stern Architects and their engineering partner, Atelier 10, worked with the Office of Facilities to submit all necessary documentation to the Leadership in Environmental and Engineering Design (LEED™) rating system, created by the U.S. Green Building Council, to get this building rated at Platinum - the highest level of high-performance sustainable design. Our LEED™ certification is expected within 4-6 months.

The new building will be formally opened—and named—at a ceremony in April.

Climate Change . . . by the numbers

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Collective Impacts

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Partnerships for Sustainability Education

“Partnerships for Sustainability Education” is the name for the collaboration between Ithaca College faculty and educators from EcoVillage at Ithaca. Among the 2008 goals for the PSE are to develop a distance learning program; connect IC’s education program with PSE’s charter school plans; and to develop a minor in sustainability.

The PSE has also issued a call for proposals for $1,000 curriculum development mini-grants to support work conducted during summer and fall 2008. This year, we encourage applications from the Arts, Music, and Communication. We especially seek a commissioned piece of art, a musical score, photography, or film that could be shown on campus. Curricular development proposal submission by April 11. Complete information, proposal guidelines and forms can be found at: www.ithaca.edu/biology_summer_proposalproc.pdf

Save the Date: The Finger Lakes Project, our sustainability curriculum development training program, will be held in conjunction with the Summer Faculty Institute, from May 20-22.

PSE has begun a Sustainability Brown Bag Series to assist those interested in learning how to infuse sustainability themes into courses. The series will be held on the first Tuesday of each month in the Gerontology Institute conference room, 4th floor of the Center for Health Sciences. Bring your lunch and your ideas.

More Innovations in Sustainability-themed Curricula

In his mathematics classes at Ithaca College, associate professor Tom Pfaff incorporates statistical data from official government sources to teach standard techniques like curve-fitting and regression analysis. But Pfaff employs a decidedly non-standard approach to teaching, encouraging his students to “look past the numbers” to read the story those datasets tell about critical sustainability challenges. Pfaff’s unique approach is being adopted by other math faculty. Pfaff was invited to present on his work to secondary math faculty participating in Syracuse University’s Project Advance program. This program certifies high school teachers to teach an SU-approved calculus course at their home high school; students get SU transcript credit for this as opposed to AP credit. The participating teachers are required to attend a yearly certification workshop for SU to certify them. Pfaff was also invited to speak to faculty at Bowdoin College. Pfaff used national energy resource date to develop his talk on “Peak Oil: The Other Problem” as a Sustainability Café in February.

“Exploring A Global Challenge”, the Ithaca Seminar team-taught by faculty from Business, Biology, and Sociology, used the book, “The Low Carbon Diet”, to encourage their students to explore ways to reduce their own climate impacts. The students’ final poster presentations on “carbon wedges” - strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - have been used as an instructional tool for the Climate Commitment committee.

Students in assistant professor Mary Lou Kish’s Fall Strategic Communication class developed ideas to further advance campus sustainability. The “Pledge Green Campaign” devised a program to issue green commitment bracelets to campus community members who pledge to follow a more sustainable lifestyle. “Got Green? An Initiative for a Sustainable World” described a plan to integrate peer-to-peer education into summer orientation, offering multiple activities and tip sheets for incoming students, complete with an video about campus sustainability activities to be filmed by IC students.

Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival

runs from March 31- April 6. View the complete festival schedule at www.ithaca.edu/fleff/

Through April 6th, the Handwerker Gallery is showing “Running the Numbers,” Chris Jordan’s photography documenting American consumption. (Photo: disposable plastic cups) Get “Spotted”! Reuse your beverage mug for refills of soda or coffee in retail operations on campus and you may be handed a “Spotted” card to reward you with a free refill for your effort to minimize waste.
Ithaca College is again participating in RecycleMania, a friendly competition between over 400 colleges to increase their respective recycling rate. We are competing in four categories: Grand Champion (overall recycling rate); Per Capita Classic (pounds of recyclables produced per person); Waste Minimization (which campus can generate the lowest amount of total waste per capita); and the Gorilla Prize (cumulative pounds of recyclables). Since the Mania began on January 27th, Mark Darling, our manager of Recycling and Resource Management, has been tracking and reporting our college stats. At the close of week 2, our overall recycling rate was 35.47%, up from 31.23% in 2007. Darling pointed out that the top school has a 50% recycling rate, something that is achievable for Ithaca if we all “pitch in.” In 2007, our recyclables per capita was 2.57 pounds per person; this year, we’re down to 1.99 pounds per person, which is actually good, since our overall recycling rate is up. We’re producing less waste overall. In the Waste Minimization category, we are at 5.6 pounds per person, down from 8.15 pounds per person last year. We should all consider what we can do to reduce waste, like using recyclable mugs for coffee. In the Gorilla category, we generated a whopping 15,600 pounds of recyclables in week two. Woohoo! Recycle On!

Some great (sustainable) decisions

They did it again! It seems as though every time we turn around, the Bookstore adds more great “green” products and services. We recently spotted a rack of Sigg™ lightweight refillable aluminum water bottles one of our top picks as a safe alternative to bottled water. Sigg’s™ come in cool prints and patterns, and we even noted some IC logo bottles. The Bookstore also issued an Intercom notice of the start of a new feature—dry cleaning drop-off/pick-up service in partnership with Angelo’s Dry Cleaners, the region’s only partnership with Angelo’s Dry Cleaners, the cleaning drop-off/pick-up service in part-

Expansion of Bus Pass Policy

The College announces that all part-time staff members and temporary employees are eligible for an Ithaca College Parking Permit / Bus Pass. If you do not have a pass/permit and you wish to obtain one, please visit our friends at Parking and Traffic Services in the Public Safety/General Services Building. Be sure to bring your ID card! (from HR Connections) This new benefit has been extended to part-time Sodexho dining service workers and to Challenge Industry workers and to Challenge Industry workers and to Challenge Industry workers and to Challenge Industry workers.

Challenge your tastebuds...

We are holding “Water Challenges,” taste-testing bottled spring water; bottled Aquafina®, purified municipal water from a Latham NY source; and our own tap water, which is treated water from Cayuga Lake obtained from the Bolton Point system. During a November Challenge, our tap water prevailed with 48% preferring it to either spring water or Aquafina (26% each). During our most recent Challenge - conducted during Dining’s Food Frenzy - campus tap water was the hands-down winner, with 59% preferring its taste over spring water (21%) or Aquafina® (20%).

Monitor the meter...

Thanks to a collaboration between the Office of Facilities, Day Automation Inc, and Information Technology Services, a new website has been created to display the actual energy use of all our “submetered” campus buildings. The system allows you to view energy use over periods you select or compare energy use between buildings. Check out how your building is performing, click on: www.ithaca.edu/metering

Monitor the meter...

Change is inevitable. Growth is optional. Positive growth is intentional.
Takin’ it to the Streets…

In January, Visiting Distinguished Scholar Dr. Sandra Steingraber presented briefings to both the U.S. House of Representatives and to the Senate on her publication titled “The Falling Age of Puberty.” The Breast Cancer Fund supported Steingraber’s appearance before Congress to explore the connections between fetal and childhood exposures to chemical contaminants, early puberty and later life breast cancer. Steingraber, acclaimed author of “Living Downstream” and acknowledged expert on the subject of toxic trespass and the health impacts of environmental pollutants, is in high demand for national and international presentations. Steingraber has also authored articles for national magazines like Ms. and Orion.

Jeff Scott and Julie Whitten from Ithaca College Dining Services and Marian Brown from the Office of the Provost have been invited to present on Ithaca’s success “Integrating Sustainability into Dining Services” at the North Atlantic conference of the Society for College and University Planning at Yale University in New Haven in March. Dining Services has underwritten the “teachable edibles” foods for this year’s Sustainability Café series.

Rick Couture, Associate Vice President for Facilities, will present “Developing a Sustainable Campus: A Tale of Two Buildings” at the Smart and Sustainable Campuses Conference at the University of MD in April. Couture will present on the planning, design and construction of our two LEED Platinum buildings along with Jennifer Stone, senior associate with Robert A.M. Stern Architects, the principal architect for the School of Business, and Anthony Christianson, Director of Design for HOLT Architects, architect for the Gateway project. Jeff Scott will also present a session on sustainability in dining services for this national sustainability conference.

Tune in to “Your Impact” on WICB-FM (91.7) for reports on local, regional and national sustainability issues twice a month at 5pm on Sundays. “Your Impact” is also streamed live on the web, so you can listen on-line at www.wicb.org.

Alumni Going to Waste

Three Ithaca alumni can be found, hard at work, at Tompkins County Solid Waste Management Division. Solid Waste Manager Barb Eckstrom refers to Assistant Recycling Specialist Kat McCarthy ’06 as “Mini-Me” and has assigned her to coordinate the new Finger Lakes Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Consortium, a multi-sector collaboration of organizations and institutions of which Ithaca College is a member. Amanda Block ’07, as Project Assistant, provides research support for Finger Lakes Buy Green and other assignments.

Stephanie Egan ’06, TCSWs Communications Assistant, coordinated the highly successful America Recycles Day event at Pyramid Mall in November, which was the largest such local event to date. Eckstrom raves about the quality of Ithaca College students who have served at TCSW.

Two more IC grads are also working in solid waste: Beth Gardiner ’05 works in solid waste management for the City of Boston, and Andres (Garik) Perez-Charneco ’06 provides web support for the national RecycleMania program.


News Briefs

Visit the “Exploring Positive Growth—The Sustainability Initiative” display at Ed Tech Day in the Campus Center on March 27.

Kristin LiBritz, Employer Relations Coordinator for Career Services, announces that the annual Jobs and Career Fair on Tuesday, April 1st will feature a number of “green” employers.

We’re on the Web!

Visit the Sustainability at Ithaca website at www.ithaca.edu/sustainability

This newsletter has been produced on recycled paper.