

Fall is a time of change, of contemplation and of anticipation. We hope all students have settled in and are gearing up for winter and all that comes with the shorter days and cooler nights. But fall is also an exciting time on campus! At the Sustainability Council, we are planning events, campus greening projects and much more.

The Sustainability Council membership consists of faculty, administrators and students. We would like to welcome new students into our active group. If interested, please contact the founder and chair, Dr. Eileen Poiani at epoiani@saintpeters.edu.

Saint Peter's University receives two awards for sustainability



Dr. Eugene Cornacchia, President of Saint Peter's University, and Dr. Eileen Poiani, Chair of the Sustainability Council

Saint Peter's University recently received two awards for its accomplishments in educating about sustainability and implementing sustainable practices at the university, which were led by the Sustainability Council.

In September at the 2023 NYC Green School Conference, Saint Peter's received the **International Green University Award** "in recognition of its outstanding contribution towards fostering a culture of environmental responsibility within the academic community and accepting accountability to the pupils and responsibility to the planet." The award was presented by Green

Mentors, which has a Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

The conference took place during the 78th session of the UN General Assembly and focused on the global discourse about sustainability and environmental education. At the conference, Dr. Eileen L. Poiani, Chair of the Sustainability Council, gave an invited presentation entitled ***Energizing the Earth through Education***, showcasing sustainability programs at Saint Peter's that relate to "care for our common home."



Dr. Eileen Poiani, Chair of the Sustainability Council, presented at the NYC Green School Conference in September.

Over the summer, The Catholic Climate Covenant gave an Honorable Mention to Saint Peter's for the **2023 U.S. Laudato Si' Champion Awards** "for outstanding achievements by a Catholic institution in environmental sustainability and stewardship." This is the first time that the Champion Awards have been given. The university is also a participant in Pope Francis' 7-Year Journey Towards Integral Ecology.

-Dr. Eileen Poiani, Chair of the Sustainability Council

Spring 2024 courses that address environmentalism, sustainability and climate

At Saint Peter's this spring, there are many courses students can take that address issues of sustainability and climate justice. Check out the following and talk with your advisor about which you can fit into your schedule!

BI-310 Ecology
BI-312 / EV-312 Biology of Global Change
BI-330 Environmental Health
EV-102 Introduction to Climate Change
PO-155 / SJ-155 Politics of Climate Disruption
TH-304 Ecological Ethics and Religious Environmentalism
AT-313 Evolution, Ecology & Adaptation

Upcoming event: Become intimate with the imminent “Microplastic Menace” threat before us



"Microplastic" by Oregon State University is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/).

“Microplastic Menace” is a presentation by biology students and Dr. Laura Twersky on the effects of microplastics on wildlife and humans. Students will talk about their research on MPs using the model organism, *Xenopus laevis* (clawed frog). Dr. Twersky’s students first presented this research on microplastic effects at a Conservation Science meeting at the American Museum of Natural History in early October.

Ways to reduce exposure to microplastics will also be discussed. For more information on microplastics, [The New Yorker recently published a devastating piece](#).

When: Thursday, Nov. 9 at 12 p.m.

Where: Gannon Lecture Hall.

Updates from our very own Cura Farms



Did you know that there's a farm on campus? [Cura Farms](#), located on the first floor of the Mac Mahon Student Center, has been growing lettuce, tomatoes and herbs for nearly a year—this January marks a full year of harvesting food. So far the farm has grown and donated 160 pounds of leafy greens to the campus kitchen and dining services for special events.

CURA (center for urban research in agriculture) utilizes what's called "tower gardening," which is a state-of-the-art vertical aeroponic growing system. Next time you're at the Nest, peek through

the glass windows into the hydroponic farm and you'll see a group of towers, each connected to a water supply line that pumps nutrient-filled water into the reservoirs at the base of each tower. LED lights are another crucial component of the towers, providing the light plants need to grow.

The lab, which also employs 9 student workers, was built using funds from the PODER grant. For more information, see this [article in the Saint Peter's Tribune](#).

Here's a sampling of what we have grown:

Lettuce varieties: Little gem, Prizehead, Grand rapids, Big boston, Paris island, Great Lakes, Buttle Crunch, Oak Leaf, Simpson elite, Burpee bibb, Black seeded simpson, Lolla Rossa
Herbs: Genovese Basil, Cilantro, Peppermint, Mint

-Dr. Brandy Garrett-Kluthe, Associate Professor of Biology and Director of Environmental Studies

Who's who on the Sustainability Council

Dr. Eileen L. Poiani (Chair of SC)	Special Assistant to the President
Dr. Yosra M. Badiei	Associate Professor of Chemistry
Dr. Brandy Garrett-Kluthe	Associate Professor of Biology
Dr. William Gutsch	Distinguished Professor of the College of Arts and Sciences (Retired)
Rev. John Hyatt, S.J.	St. Aedan's: The Saint Peter's University Church
Prof. Georgia Kral (Editor of the Peacock Planet)	Instructor of Communication & Media Culture Director of Student Media
Prof. Mary Anne Gallagher- Landi	Instructor of Mathematics and Statistics
Gregory Nasser	Director of the Institute for STEM Experiential Learning
Prof. Philip Sookram	Assistant Professor of Accountancy
Dr. Laura Twersky	Professor of Biology
Dr. Katherine Wydner	Associate Professor of Biology/ Health Careers Advisor
Steven Couras	Director of Residence Life
Vijay Kumar Reddy Voddi	Director of Data Science Programs
Luke Amoakoh	Class of 2025
Jazmyne Andujar	Class of 2024

Genesis Serpas	Class of 2027
Maraya Cruz	Class of 2025 President of SAVE
Isabelle Bautista	Class of 2025

Words to inspire action...

“We must care for nature so that nature may care for us.”

-Pope Frances

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- *Our Vision: The Sustainability Council supports a broad, holistic vision of sustainability, framing our work in pluralism and integrating the right of well-being today to that of future generations.*
 - *Our Mission: The Sustainability Council, composed of a broad representation from the university community, initiates and implements institutional, academic and community programs that identify, inspire and foster sustainable practices and behaviors.*

Your feedback, photos, event notices and story ideas are always welcome. Please email them to Peacock Planet editor Georgia Kral at gkral@saintpeters.edu

Saint Peter's University Sustainability Council

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