



Sustainability in the Co-Curriculum

COA is an institution focused on human ecology – how humans interact with our natural, social, and built environments. As such, students are actively engaged in examining our interactions with our campus, community, and world, both in class and out. Here are some examples of the many ways that students are engaged in sustainability-related efforts outside of class.

- The student-led **Campus Committee for Sustainability** meets weekly to address a wide range of sustainability initiatives on-campus. The committee has been involved with efforts ranging from installation of clotheslines at student residences and improving on-campus compost systems, to installing solar-powered car charging stations and leading the campus effort to divest from fossil fuels.
- **Earth in Brackets [earth]** is a platform for students to become informed about and involved in international environmental processes and treaty negotiations. The group meets weekly, and at least once each year students participate in international UN-affiliated conventions, primarily focused on climate change.
- The **Zero Waste Club** meets weekly to work on and learn about waste reduction issues. Its goal is to educate its members and the college community about the local (campus and broader community) waste management system and zero-waste options/alternatives such as community composting, bag bans, etc. The group was involved in a campus-wide waste audit as a starting point to inform efforts to reduce and eliminate waste across the campus. In addition, they conduct research, host film screenings, and go on field trips to local waste-related facilities.
- The **Student Framework for Environmental and Social Justice** works to provide a framework and support system for students interested in getting involved in local, state-wide and national campaigns and movements for environmental and social justice. In fall 2014, members organized a large delegation of COA students to travel from Maine to New York for the People's Climate March.
- The **Food Group** is a committee dedicated to looking at the sustainability of campus food offerings in our dining hall and cafe. Recently this group was involved with the removal of a juice machine from our dining hall, due to political and environmental concerns.

- **Vegetarian/Vegan Club** creates a community for vegan, vegetarian, and veg-curious students and helps build awareness of vegetarian and vegan issues in the greater COA community.
- The **Sustainable Investment Group** was formed in January 2015, and is composed of students, faculty, and staff at the college. The group oversees a small portion of the college's endowment, and is responsible for making socially and ecologically conscious investment decisions for this fund. The committee is also a place for dialogue, research, and action related to the college's sustainable investment policies and practices. This initiative is student-led, but students, faculty, and staff work together collaboratively on the effort and on the committee.
- Students coordinate use of the college's **plug-in electric car**, which is available to students to sign-out for driving to appointments off-campus.
- COA students have been coordinating a **Farm to School program at the local elementary/middle school** for the past three years to introduce 6th grade students to the importance of sustainable food systems through experiential learning. Working once a week throughout the school year with a sixth grade Science and Social Studies teacher, COA students teach fifty middle school students about farming and where food comes. Through fun, hands-on activities, and field trips to local farms and Maine's Common Ground Country Fair, the students have taught about many sustainable food systems themes including: Maine agriculture, food systems, soil health and composting, cooking and food preservation, animal care, and the science of gardening. Students are also involved with the planning and construction of a school greenhouse and the implementation of a schoolwide composting effort at the elementary/middle school.
- There are **numerous student employment opportunities**, both work-study and non-work-study, that focus on sustainability. Student workers: manage the campus composting system where all of our dining hall food waste is composted, along with compost-able waste from dorms and paper towels from bathrooms; maintain the college's composting toilet system; work on all aspects of production on our organic farms; organically manage the campus gardens and landscape; coordinate recycling; coordinate the sustainable food systems program; track energy use on campus; track sustainability in dining hall food purchases; etc.