



# Students for a Sustainable Stanford

Fall 16-17 Progress Report

November 2016

## Overview

SSS is off to a strong start for the 2016-2017 Academic Year. We have made some adjustments to build upon the work done by our previous leadership and make SSS a more vibrant community and effective team. We are approaching internal education with more intentionality this year to make sure that our membership has a comprehensive understanding of sustainability issues and its intersection with other social issues. We are doubling down on our community building efforts, since we recognize that a team is more effective and invested in its work when its members build trust and strong relationships with each other. Already, we have seen significant improvements to member retention.

Over the years, SSS has built strong relationships with various institutional partners on campus: the Office of Sustainability, Peninsula Sanitary Service Inc., the School of Earth, Energy & Environmental Sciences, and many more. SSS is excited to announce some new relationships this year. SSS will be serving on the Provost's Committee on Sustainability, which convenes high level leadership from various departments across campus. This month, SSS met with President Tessier-Lavigne and presented our vision for working with the new administration on sustainability challenges. SSS will also be serving on the University Committee on Land & Building Development (UCLBD) in the future. We hope that these partnerships will continue and strengthen in the future so we can work with and encourage Stanford University to pursue ambitious sustainability goals.

Finally, our project groups have been working tirelessly this past year. With Emma Fisher filling our new Director of Strategy position, our approach to projects has been refined to pursue lasting, systemic changes on and off campus. Currently our groups include: Environmental Justice, Food Waste, General Use Permit (GUP), Media, Sustainability Education, and Stanford Carbon Offsets to Reduce Emissions (SCORE).

## Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice team started off the year with our first major project, organizing the Just Transition panel for the Shaking the Foundations progressive lawyering conference. We drew together panelists from four major EJ organizations in the Bay Area -- Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN), the Center for Race, Poverty, and the Environment (CRPE), and the Greenlining Institute -- to discuss how to move forward with an energy transition away from fossil fuels while ensuring justice for communities negatively impacted by the fossil fuel industry.

Since the Environmental Justice team was largely reconfigured this year and consists predominantly of freshmen, our primary effort so far has been to engage in intense internal education and visioning in order to ensure an intersectional approach to our work for the rest

of the year. This included attending the Toxics Tour in East Palo Alto from Youth United for Community Action (YUCA). In turn, we used the education techniques we had developed to facilitate an SSS-wide training on the basics of EJ.

Last week, we had members who felt comfortable volunteer to be point people for organizations (both on campus and in the community) we were interested in possibly partnering with. We are currently in the process of reaching out to these organizations and hope to hear back in the next week or so. Once we have heard back from these organizations, we plan to move forward with additional tangible projects so we can begin work in earnest after the 1st of the year.

## **Food Waste**

We are working both to decrease food waste on campus and increase food access off-campus. To prevent leftover food on campus from going to waste, we plan to institutionalize a system for donating leftovers and composting food waste at dining halls, student events, cafes, athletic events, and dorms. So far, we have worked with members of RD&E, Office of Sustainability, ASSU, SAL, SPOON, and dining hall staff.

Dining Halls: Currently, Stern, Wilbur, and Russo Cafe are donating leftover food. We plan to arrange for Peninsula Food Runners to pick up leftover food from other dining halls as well.

Student Events: We have been working with SAL to change the event registration page to include checkboxes that remind students to get compost bins and arrange for leftover food to be donated. Additionally, the ASSU plans to provide compost bags and food tins (to put donatable food in) to ASSU-funded events. We are creating flyers that the ASSU will distribute to inform students about how to donate food and what food can be donated. Finally, we plan to revive a “free food” email list that students can use to advertise that leftover food is available.

Cafes: One of our longer-term goals is to create a "Green Café" verification that can be awarded to campus cafés that meet sustainability requirements. So far, we've contacted the Santa Clara County Green Businesses program to begin discussing how cafes can become certified “green businesses”. We'll work on creating criteria for a “green cafe”, borrowing from existing criteria that PSSI uses to evaluate cafes.

Student Residences: One of our members created a training activity to teach freshmen how to sort waste and will have it implemented at dorm meetings. We are creating an infographic about how to sort waste.

Off-campus food accessibility: Off campus, we have been working with Collective Roots, an organization in East Palo Alto. We've helped out at one of their farm work days. Moving forward, we plan to work with them and other East Palo Alto community organizations to create an infographic about where residents can access healthy and affordable food options.

## **General Use Permit (GUP)**

The GUP group on sustainable construction is interested in exploring the possibility of Stanford committing to freeze new greenhouse gas emissions as the first crucial step towards transitioning to a carbon neutral future. As Stanford is looking to construct residential as well as academic spaces through the General Use Permit process, we are working on advocating for a policy of 'no net new carbon' to be adopted to mitigate all emissions that will arise as a result. Thus far, we have been working on building a strong team structure within SSS as well as conducting the research necessary to back our idea. We are excited to work with the county administration as well as the university towards making this a reality.

## **Media**

SSS's first fully-fledged media team is off to a great start. Emma Hutchinson, our Director of Media, is leading a nine-person media team to communicate the mission and publicize the work of SSS throughout the greater Stanford community. Our media team has six working groups: social media, photo, graphic design, website, calendar, and blog. In terms of social media, we have revamped our Facebook page, increasing the frequency and variety of our posts, gaining over 100 new likes, and using it as a leverage point and relationship builder with other organizations on campus. We have also started a Twitter page for SSS, and have focused on building relationships and participating in conversations so far this quarter. On photo team, we have three experienced photographers that are collecting "stock photos" that are owned by SSS and can be used for the website and social media. The photographers are also documenting the activities of the entire SSS community and project groups. Our graphic designer creates posters, infographics, and other images for use on our website and social media platforms. Our website specialist is redesigning the home page of our website to be more dynamic and user-friendly, as well as updating and streamlining many of the other areas of the website. Our calendar team is collecting information about environmental and social justice events across campus and inputting them into a [Google calendar](#) that can be easily shared across campus and added to students' individual Google accounts. This is one of the ways that SSS is tangibly connecting with social justice groups on campus and actively expanding the definition and application of sustainability. Lastly, we will be launching "Voices from the Tree: The SSS Blog" on November 29th, which will be a platform for Stanford students to publish writing about intersectional environmental issues on a wide variety of topics. We are delighted to have such a large and robust media team, and we will continue to use these resources to give SSS a stronger voice and a bigger influence on and off campus.

## **Sustainability Education**

The sustainability education project focuses on improving awareness of sustainability issues among the student body and equipping them with the specific tools and knowledge

necessary to address these issues. So far, we have successfully made several changes to Stanford's New Student Orientation (NSO) which include: the addition of sustainability-related articles in Stanford's summer blog for incoming students and Stanford's parent newsletter, modifications to the incoming student packing list and Zero Waste Lunch event, and the creation of a team of sustainability-themed move-in volunteers. We have met with various people/groups around campus, and have presented some ideas to the Vice Provost's Committee for Sustainability. We are also helping to advertise I-Earth, which is a website created by an Earth Systems professor that helps students find sustainability-related courses that can satisfy general education requirements.

Looking forward, we plan to continue to work with the organizers of NSO as well as the Office of Sustainability to continue to improve NSO. We are also very interested in sustainability education after NSO, and want to find ways to keep discussions alive for the entire school year. We think that promising ways to do so might be to have sustainability-focused dorm staff positions and/or have more sustainability-related dorm events/programming. We are currently discussing these ideas with a wide range of people around Stanford, including Sea Gill, who works for Stanford R&DE, Martine Johannsen, who is a pilot student "sustainability manager" in a row house, and Jeffrey Ball, who is a resident fellow spearheading sustainable education in student dorms.

### **Stanford Carbon Offsets to Reduce Emissions (SCORE):**

Coming off of last year's carbon offset pilot program for athletic team flights, SCORE has been meeting with administrators across campus to discuss possible routes to stable funding and eventually institutionalization of an athletic carbon offset program. It has quickly become clear that, as a student group, SSS will not be allowed to fundraise for SCORE in any context, and that Stanford Athletics is not yet ready to agree to offsetting carbon themselves. Therefore, we are currently focused on reaching out to schools and professional athletic programs that are leaders in sustainability. We hope to collect data on quantifiable benefits that their programs have seen since implementing sustainable practices, as well as qualitative information on challenges, benefits, insights, and advice. We will use this information to write a "pitch" / "business case" for why Stanford Athletics would benefit from adopting SCORE and other sustainable practices. We have already made connections with CU Boulder, the Green Sports Alliance, and NRDC's green sports initiative, and gained some very valuable insights. We believe we have a good angle to approach this from, and we are hopeful that the Office of Sustainability's increasingly strong presence in the Athletic Department will only benefit our case. We are working very closely with the Office of Sustainability this year, and we hope that our different approaches to making Athletics more sustainable can complement and reinforce one another.