



# Students for a Sustainable Stanford

Winter/Spring 16-17 Progress Report

April 2017

## Overview

SSS entered 2017 carrying strong momentum that has only increased. Our four main project groups - **Environmental Justice**, **Food Waste**, **the General Use Permit**, and **Sustainability Education** - have carried over from the fall and continue to make great progress towards their ambitious, long-term goals. All of the projects that we have chosen to take on this year were identified as strategic opportunities to make lasting, systemic, institutional changes affecting Stanford and beyond. Additionally, our new **Media Team** has continued to grow, the annual **Schneider Lecture** was a huge success, we initiated a **Zero Waste Week**, and we are continuing to make progress in pushing for our three long-term administrative goals for the university: a **Path to Zero Carbon**, **Sustainability in Athletics**, and **Comprehensive Sustainability Education**.

We are also very excited to announce next year's **Leadership Team**, which will be transitioning into their roles over the course of this quarter. The 2017-2018 leadership slate is:

**Co-Directors:** Erin Pang and Chris LeBoa

**Director of Strategy:** Sierra Garcia

**Media Officers:** Becca Nelson and Deirdre Francks

**Internal Community Officer:** Andrea Contreras

**External Community Officer\*:** Amulya Yerrapotu

**Operations Officer:** John Zhao

**Schneider Lecture Coordinators:** Maeve Givens, Elena Press, and Kira Smiley

**Projects and Project Coordinators:** TBA!

\*The External Community Officer role is a new position intended to help SSS engage more deeply with outside organizations, both on and off campus.

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## Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice Project Group has remained busy with several of the projects we started in the fall. We have been continuing to follow up with the city of Palo Alto regarding the transfer of water rights to East Palo Alto, and although the agreement seems to have been delayed, it appears likely that a final agreement will be reached in April. We have also been working with SSS's Food Waste/Food Justice group and Collective Roots to construct an infographic to help connect East Palo Alto residents with organizations that can provide access to healthy food.

We have also initiated several new projects that will continue into the spring, many in collaboration with Michelle Daher from the city of East Palo Alto. These include planning an environmental education component for East Palo Alto's Earth Day celebration in April, for which we will be hosting a beach clean-up and then using the collected materials to construct a piece of artwork, helping to teach students about ocean health. We are also working with CS + Social Good to connect Stanford CS students with the city of East Palo Alto to create software linking traffic cameras to air quality sensors, helping to pinpoint pollution "hot spots" that can be controlled by infrastructure investment or traffic restrictions. Finally, we are launching a fundraiser in early spring quarter to pay for home energy efficiency improvements for East Palo Alto residents.

## **Food Waste**

Dining Hall Food Donations: We worked with R&DE to start leftover food donations from Florence Moore and Lakeside dining halls--we weighed and logged food donations organized and coordinated pickups with Peninsula Food Runners at these two dining halls. In winter quarter, 432 lbs of food were donated from Florence Moore, as well as an unquantified amount from Lakeside. In addition, we have continued working with SPOON to ensure consistent food pickups from Russo Cafe, Law School Cafe, Faculty Club, and Wilbur. The total amount donated from these locations during Winter Quarter was 3794.5 lbs!

Green Student Events: We worked with ASSU representatives and the Office of Sustainability to create a process to encourage student groups to meet sustainability standards (including composting, recycling, and donating leftover food) when holding ASSU-funded events. We worked on constructing these guidelines by modifying the existing recommendations for large, non-student group events, and we expect the guidelines to be implemented next quarter.

Athletics Food Donations: We have had student volunteers pick up leftover concessions from several basketball games to donate. Moving forward, we plan to implement a system for having local organizations pick up leftovers directly from the games.

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

Our General Use Permit Greenhouse Gas working group was established with an intent to examine Stanford's proposed mitigation measures for the emissions its new construction will produce and advocate more ambitious policies towards this mitigation. Through the year, the group has undertaken intensive research on Stanford's General Use Permit process, read innumerable university and county documents from the past 17 years, and met with county officials as well as university administrators to understand the context in which the current GUP process is taking place.

Alongside, the group has analyzed a variety of alternate mitigation policies and based on this research, decided to advocate for options such as carbon neutrality for all new construction amongst others. In the process, we have submitted comments and attended scoping meetings. The group is now operating as a sub-entity under a larger coalition of 6 different student groups organizing around the GUP called SCOPE2035 (Stanford Coalition for Planning an Equitable 2035) and looks forward to continuing its work into the next year as the process continues.

## **Sustainability Education**

The education group's goal is to improve student awareness of and engagement with issues related to sustainability. We are making efforts towards this goal in two areas: residences and classes. With respect to residences, we have and will continue to work with R&DE on their sustainability-related dorm initiatives, which include the creation of a freshman sustainability intern position in Wilbur as well as the expansion of the Sustainability Manager (SM) position in various dorms. Roble Hall and their RF, Jeff Ball, are also ramping up the Roble Living Laboratory for Sustainability program which will integrate sustainability into the dorm's culture through speaker series, a sustainable garden and service projects. We hope to find productive collaborations with Jeff in that space as well.

With respect to classes, we are working with the instructor of CS 181 (Computers, Ethics, and Policy) to incorporate "tech and sustainability" as a topic for one of the lectures this spring. We plan to touch on some of the facts and some of the difficult questions that relate to how the technology industry impacts the environment such as environmental opportunities in the tech industry, the impact of the "cloud" and the impact of electronic waste. This is an exciting starting point for incorporating more sustainability-related themes into general coursework at Stanford because every CS major must take this class and over half of Stanford's undergraduates are CS majors. In the future we hope to work with more professors from different departments to further our long term goal of making undergrads more literate in their understanding of modern sustainability challenges, especially as they apply to their field of interest.

## **Media Team Updates**

Over the past two quarters, our inaugural ten-person media team has revamped and increased SSS communications dramatically. Expanding our social media outlets has given us broader reach on and off campus while improving partnerships with community and campus organizations. We have increased the quality and reach of our Facebook page, and have added Twitter and Instagram pages. We also created a campus sustainability calendar, putting all environmental events in one place and reaching out to social justice and cultural groups for events to expand the definition of sustainability on campus. We have revamped and updated

our website, and our graphic designer has created many high-impact graphics for our campaigns and events. Our photographers have captured various SSS events while building a robust stock photo collection for use on our website and social media. Lastly, this past quarter, we launched our blog, [\*Voices from the Tree\*](#), which publishes student pieces once per week on intersectional sustainability topics. Our media team has been able to really scale up communications this year, expanding the outreach and visibility of SSS on and off campus.

## **Stephen H. Schneider Memorial Lecture**

We held the Stephen H. Schneider Memorial Lecture on March 7th, 2017 with Dr. John Holdren, Obama's chief science and technology advisor. The lecture attracted over 500 students and community members, who actively participated in the Q&A session. While on campus, Dr. Holdren also attended a reception at the Faculty Club with a small group of student leaders, who had the opportunity to ask him questions in a more intimate setting. The lecture was a resounding success!

## **Zero Waste Initiatives**

Over 100 students signed a pledge to join our first annual Zero Waste Week Challenge - a week in which participants tried to produce no waste, received emails with interesting facts and tips, had the chance to win several reusable prizes, and were invited to partake in several events during the week. One of these events, entitled "Greening the Crimson Tide: A Talk on Eco-Menstruation" was held in partnership with the Women's Community Center, and was a lively discussion on zero-waste menstrual products that are available. One of these options, menstrual cups, will now be sold at a discounted rate on campus. Although normally in the \$40-50 range, we were able to bargain with leading menstrual cup companies and convinced Sckoon to provide us with 150 cups for only \$12 apiece. They will be sold this quarter at Stanford's Sexual Health Peer Resource Center (SHPRC). We look forward to doing an education and outreach push this quarter!

## **Administrative Goals**

SSS Directors have been pursuing high-level administrative changes to achieve these three goals: a presidential pledge for a university-wide Path to Zero Carbon, comprehensive sustainability education on campus, and cultivating a culture of sustainability leadership in Stanford Athletics.

We have been approaching these goals comprehensively, from all avenues available to us. We have met with the new Climate Task Force, the Provost Committee on Sustainability, the Tessier-Lavigne administration, and many other relevant faculty members to discuss these goals, understand their stances on these issues, and identify opportunities for change. One of

these main opportunities is the Long Range Planning Process, to which SSS will be submitting several proposals.

On the sustainability education front, we have worked with our Sustainability Education project group to explore the possibility of implementing a new WAYS or sustainability “in the major” requirement, adding programming to NSO, etc. In general, these approaches have been hindered by the complexity and bureaucracy associated with NSO and sweeping academic requirements. Our best opportunities to reach students seem to be by targeting specific classes (like CS181, see above) and residences. On the latter point, we met with Shari Palmer, Associate Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education, regarding a new frosh residence program being initiated by Harry Elam. The program will focus on “identity and citizenship.” Especially with regards to citizenship, our location in the Bay Area and responsibility to be global environmental stewards are very relevant to themes of environmental justice and sustainability. As a next step, we are trying to meet with members of the Faculty Residential Cabinet and residence program board this coming quarter in order to make sure sustainability and environmental justice are a part of this program.

In terms of Athletics, the SCORE group compiled case studies on how leading sustainable athletic departments in the PAC-12 and around the country have achieved success, and on the benefits they have seen as a result. Several themes emerged from this research: serious sustainable action tended to follow university-wide presidential carbon-goals, stem from buy-in among high-level administrators (creating a culture of sustainability), and require successful promotion. Knowing this, we have chosen to push for the hiring of a Chief Sustainability Officer within Stanford Athletics, a high-level position with financial power and a seat at the decision-making table, which would address existing issues with both efficiency and culture. We have been working closely with Moira Hafer in the Office of Sustainability on this effort and will be meeting with the Athletic Director, Bernard Muir, this quarter.