

University Expanded Its Sustainability Initiatives in 2011

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As the year draws to a close, UVA Today will look back at milestones, achievements, trends and big stories of 2011. To share your 2011 thoughts, visit the [UVA Today News Blog](#) or send us a tweet @uva using hashtag #uva2011.

December 16, 2011 — The University of Virginia extended its commitment to **sustainability** this year by establishing an interdisciplinary minor in global sustainability, creating an employee network called Sustainability Partners and launching a "**See Why**" campaign to encourage greener habits among staff, faculty and students. In June, the **Board of Visitors** affirmed its support by approving a **sustainability resolution**.

A look at some of the University's major sustainability headlines of 2011:

• **McCormick Road Residence Houses Win Energy Challenge**

Nov. 9 — U.Va.'s McCormick Road residence halls reduced their electric use by 19 percent to top their rival U.Va. housing areas in this year's energy challenge.

• **U.Va. Joins ACC Team in Federally Sponsored Clean Energy Business Challenge**

Nov. 4 — U.Va. and its Atlantic Coast Conference partners are launching a new Clean Energy Business Challenge, encouraging students throughout the Southeast to develop successful business plans and create new clean energy companies.

• **U.Va. Class Project Leads to Hand-Built Mongolian Greenhouse**

Oct. 19 — An assignment born in a U.Va. classroom grew into an international development project this summer when an interdisciplinary group of students traveled to a former Soviet-era spa in rural Mongolia to build a greenhouse made mostly of discarded glass vodka bottles.

• **Staff, Faculty and Students Are Reminded to Use Less, Reuse More**

Sept. 8 — Leaving a room? Flip the switch. Washing your hands? Try just one paper towel. Throwing away an item? Reuse if you can. The savings seem small, but they contribute to sustainability goals at the University, according to a recently launched promotion.

• **Board Endorses 'Planning Framework' for Future Academical Village Work**

June 10 — The Board of Visitors unanimously approved a resolution committing the University to cutting greenhouse gas emissions to 250,000 metric tons or less by 2025 — which is 25 percent below 2009 emission levels. Without reduction efforts, such emissions would be projected to rise to 380,000 tons in that time frame, meaning the University must find ways to cut 130,000 tons in the next 15 years.

• **Faculty Senate Backs Sustainability Statement**

April 22 — The University's **Faculty Senate** unanimously endorsed a statement on sustainability to be presented to the **Board of Visitors**. The statement, drafted by the Presidential Committee on Sustainability, calls for the University to reduce its annual greenhouse gas emissions to a maximum of 250,000 metric tons by 2025 — 25 percent below the University's 2009 emissions levels and more than a third less than is projected under current conditions.

• **U.Va. Named Virginia's Recycling Gorilla in Annual Competition**

April 20 — U.Va. placed first in the state for overall recycling in this year's RecycleMania competition. U.Va. received the Gorilla Prize for the commonwealth, with 653,880 pounds of total recycling collected during a 10-week period.

• **U.Va. Launches Interdisciplinary Minor in Global Sustainability**

Feb. 11 — U.Va. has launched an interdisciplinary minor in global sustainability, open to students from all the undergraduate schools at the University.

• **Employees' Network Will Support Sustainability at U.Va.**

Feb. 4 — A group of University employees is launching Sustainability Partners, a network of volunteers interested in promoting environmentally responsible practices on Grounds and in the community.

— *By Matt Kelly*

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