

The Sundial

Issue 5 | Fall 2023

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Cover photo by Griffin O'Rourke

Letter from the Editor



The
Sundial

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Dear Sundial readers,

This final issue of the Sundial's magazine for the fall semester has stories connected to sustainability and the environment. As we come to the end of the semester and year, we can reflect on what has been accomplished, as well as the setbacks this year. During this time, most of us are thinking about what we want to change in the new year. We should take a moment to review what damage has been done to our environment and the urgency we should start advocating for in the new year.

Currently, fossil fuel emissions are increasing and contributing to global warming, plastic pollution is consuming our oceans, habitats are dying, deforestation is climbing, sea levels are rising still, fast fashion is growing more popular and laws are being passed allowing businesses to pollute our air.

To me, it is important to be aware that the Earth is facing irreversible damage and it is time to take action. Small or big, we should be advocating for our only home. We should be fighting for more laws to protect our environment and encourage more sustainable measures to be applied. We should be advocating and supporting the parts of the world that need our help. We should be educating ourselves and others on how climate change and environmental damage is a very real thing and we need to take action against it.

The following stories address how our campus has been pushing for more sustainable measures and trailblazing cleaner energy in classrooms, how Los Angeles is one of the highest-ranked cities in releasing pollution, and how we can make change happen on or near campus.

Climate anxiety is a real thing and I hope reading how effective our campus has been in going green will spark a passion in you to make change. I hope these stories bring to light many issues we are or could be working on.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maya Morales".

On the Road to Sustainability

WRITTEN BY BEN WALKER

California State University, Northridge has recently been making strides toward becoming a more sustainable campus thanks to the leadership and combined efforts of administrators, staff and students of all backgrounds who are passionate about realizing sustainability.

With a student body of around 35,000 and more than 4,000 employees, CSUN uses more energy annually than the average MLB stadium does per season. Last year, the campus used over 40 million kilowatts of electricity, according to Austin Eriksson, the director of energy and sustainability at CSUN's facilities, planning, design and construction department. Thus, making the campus more sustainable is critical.

The now six-year-old Sustainability Center serves as the campus hub for sustainability and environmentalism. The building itself is the first and only of its kind in the CSU system. No other CSU campus has a dedicated sustainability building, and what is perhaps even more impressive is that the Sustainability Center is the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-platinum building in the CSU system as well, according to the acting director of the Institute for Sustainability, Sarah Johnson. Essentially, the building is not only incredibly energy efficient, but it also meets nearly all of its energy needs with its own solar panels.

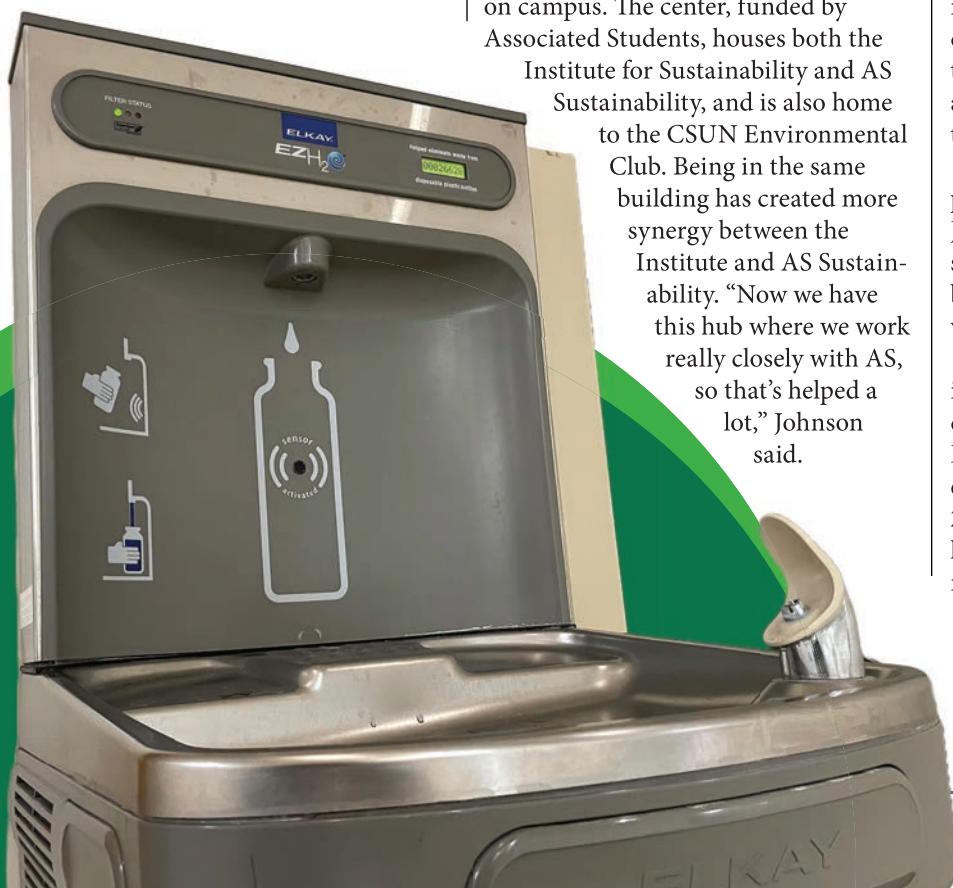
Having a dedicated center has been a game changer for sustainability efforts on campus. The center, funded by Associated Students, houses both the Institute for Sustainability and AS Sustainability, and is also home to the CSUN Environmental Club. Being in the same building has created more synergy between the Institute and AS Sustainability. "Now we have this hub where we work really closely with AS, so that's helped a lot," Johnson said.

The Institute for Sustainability, now under the auspices of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, works on multiple projects and different fronts to create a more sustainable campus as well as to ensure that all students learn about sustainability and climate change.

Recently, Johnson worked as part of the CSUN Sustainability Team to develop a new comprehensive 10-year plan to address all aspects of sustainability on campus. CSUN's Roadmap to Sustainability is incredibly wide-ranging, covering 10 planks of sustainability – from environmental concerns of sustainability like energy, water and emissions to social sustainability in the form of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. Equally important, the progress in each of these pillars and their subsets is measurable and transparent. Progress can be tracked on Sustaira, indicating that CSUN's leaders in sustainability are serious about results and sharing them with the community.

With the end of the previous 10-year plan and the launch of this new one in June, Johnson acknowledges that "we still have a long way to go, obviously, but we are much further along than we were 10 years ago."

The progress to transform CSUN into a more sustainable space, though, can already be seen all over campus. Eriksson points to the tripling of the electric vehicle charging stations from 24 to 90. The campus has also completely switched over to LED lighting. By replacing over 43,000 bulbs, the campus



Water refill station in Cypress Hall at CSUN in Los Angeles, Calif. Photo by Brenda Larin.



PHOTO BY WILLIAM ESPINOSA

Even Leal, Jacob Kuzmick, Sunny Hanley, and Milana Hale, Event Producers, enter the Sustainability Center at California State University, Northridge, Northridge, Calif. on Nov. 9, 2023.

is now saving over 1.7 million kWh of electricity per year, while also reducing greenhouse emissions by 2,200 metric tons of carbon dioxide annually. On the landscaping side of things, Johnson says that over a million square feet of lawns have been removed with even more slated to be removed over the next five years.

In its mission to address multiple areas of sustainability, the Institute for Sustainability also oversees the half-acre CSUN Food Garden.

Jesse Woltal and Kai Keale, the caretakers of the garden, are two of the eight California Climate Action Corps fellows currently being hosted by the Institute. Founded by California Volunteers of the Office of the Governor, CCAC fellows are “the country’s first state-level, climate service corps

[who work] to empower all Californians to take meaningful action to safeguard the climate,” per the California Volunteers’ site.

In many ways, the garden is one of the more tangible embodiments of sustainability ideals and efforts on the campus. Growing food together sustainably not only builds community, it also addresses issues of social and economic sustainability, namely food insecurity.

to amend the soil and help grow other plants. This spirit of growth from previous effort is central to the garden.

The garden is not just a place for growing food; the climate corps fellows and volunteers are also making a concerted effort to plant natives and help threatened species, such as the monarch butterfly. “We have our fruit trees, we have our vegetable beds, but all throughout, we have 60 different species of California native plants growing here,” Woltal said. Thus, the garden is a sort of oasis for native plants in the concrete jungle that is the San Fernando Valley.

Keale often uses the synergy and the biodiversity seen in the garden as a teaching metaphor on the importance of multiculturalism in society. There are many parallels between the dynamics of a thriving garden and a multicultural society.

“When I try to describe synergy and biodiversity in the garden, I also try to bring up that these plants function very similar to us. We don’t just like one culture or one group of people because it won’t grow very well, and there will not be necessary change when there needs to be. But, you know, together we have all of these different skills and cultures

With a student body of around 35,000 and more than 4,000 employees, CSUN uses more energy annually than the average MLB stadium does per season.

“One of the things that we do here at the garden is that we give all of our produce over to the food pantry here on campus. Everyone deserves to have access to good clean produce,” Keale said.

Unused produce, though, does not go to waste, as it is used for compost

Solar powered phone charging station and rest area located in Jacaranda quad at CSUN campus in Los Angeles, Calif.
Photo by Brenda Larin.





Professor Mario Giraldo stands by planters growing grapes at CSUN's Food Garden. The G.A.R.D.E.N (Growing Accessible Resources for Diversity, Education, and Nourishment) is a self-sustaining garden run by students and faculty on the north side of campus, by the athletic fields. Food is grown here utilizing compost and an automatic irrigation system. The garden can yield over 100 lbs of food depending on the year, which is delivered to food banks and pantries across CSUN. Photo by Griffin O'Rourke.

and ideas that we bring to the table," Keale said.

Toward that end, Woltal and Keale incorporate enduring sustainable agriculture practices of Indigenous peoples. In the garden, they are striving to realize a broader and more inclusive vision of what sustainability can be.

Lecturer, CSUN sociology graduate alum and fellow California Climate Action Corps member Valeria Ramirez also sees a kind of Western bourgeois concept of sustainability. Ramirez points to how communities of color in south Los Angeles and similar neighborhoods have already been practicing sustainability in the form of reusing, recycling and gardening in response to generations of environmental racism and food insecurity, despite maybe not knowing the modern branding of sustainability. "That's what I'm working

on specifically – trying to bridge what cultures are already doing," Ramirez said. Drawing on her background in collective action and research, Ramirez also helped to develop the Roadmap to Sustainability, focusing on addressing intersectional issues of social and environmental justice.

As a CCAC fellow working on Zero Waste, Ramirez also echoed what both Eriksson and Johnson said is perhaps the biggest sustainability challenge facing the campus: waste. Zero Waste is the idea that waste should ideally be prevented or at the very least reduced to, first, what can be composted and, second, to what can be recycled in order to divert waste from landfills.

Despite the hundreds of bins around campus, there is still the issue of sorting waste properly. "The challenge is that what's getting put into them isn't always

what's really supposed to be in them," Johnson said. CSUN's Zero Waste website confirms this: as much as 30% of the campus's waste that heads to a landfill can actually be recycled, which could make a huge difference. One of the biggest ways, then, that students can have a direct impact on sustainability on campus is by "taking the time to properly sort the material at the Zero Waste bins," Eriksson said.

Not everyone has to get their hands dirty gardening, though, to contribute to a more sustainable campus. From filling a reusable water bottle at one of the many refilling stations, making a conscious effort to use less plastic, or deciding to walk or bike to campus, there is an endless amount of everyday decisions that can be made to help CSUN be more sustainable now and in future generations.

Electric Cars Are California's Future

WRITTEN BY CLAIRE BOECK
PHOTOGRAPHED BY RODRIGO HERNANDEZ

An executive order to eliminate the sales of all gas-powered vehicles in California by 2035 was enacted by Governor Gavin Newsom on Sept. 23, 2020. It was intended to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and clear up the pollution in California with the ultimate goal of fighting climate change, but it will not be as easy as flipping a switch.

Californians are not prevented from owning gasoline-powered cars past 2035, or selling them on the used market. The new plan only affects car manufacturers and models that are allowed to be sold.

California struggles with air pollution, Los Angeles especially. The LA and Long Beach area ranked highest in the country for ozone pollution, according to the American Lung Association. The California Air Resources Board, or CARB, also reported that transportation represents half of the state's greenhouse gas emissions.

That is the main reason Newsom announced such an aggressive plan, as he confirmed in a press release.

"This is the most impactful step our state can take to fight climate change," he said. "For too many decades, we have allowed cars to pollute the air that our children and families breathe. Californians shouldn't have to worry if our cars are giving our kids asthma. Our cars shouldn't make wildfires worse — and create more days filled with smoky air. Cars shouldn't melt glaciers or raise sea levels threatening our cherished beaches and coastlines."

The move will reduce pollution from "light-duty vehicles," or standard passenger cars, by 25% by 2037, according

to CARB.

"Cars are one of the major contributors to air pollution around the world," said Tom Hogen-Esch, a political science professor at CSUN. "And so the quicker we start phasing out fossil fuels, the better off we're going to be. Not only in terms of public health, but also the larger challenge, which is climate change."



The year 2035 was not chosen randomly. CARB told Reuters it was a "sweet spot" that took into account the abilities of the automakers and supply chains.

The automakers are largely on board with the idea. Back in 2021, six leading automakers — including Ford, GM, Mercedes Benz, and Toyota — met at a United Nations conference and signed a pledge to "work toward reaching 100% zero-emission new car and van sales in leading markets by 2035 or earlier."

However, the pledge is not legally binding.

California hopes that the cost of owning electric vehicles will reach parity with their gasoline counterparts, so much so that owning one becomes a no-brainer. A dramatic increase in production and energy generation is required for that to happen. California is pumping billions of dollars into the project, but it may not be enough.

All electric cars need batteries, and the high demand is being met with short supply. The International Energy Agency estimated that raw battery materials supplied from mines, like lithium and cobalt, will only meet half of the world's immense demand by the end of the decade.

You also need electricity to charge the batteries. Officials predict 12.5 million electric cars to be driving on the road by 2035, but the state's current infrastructure is not ready to support that yet.

The state has confidence it can pull off the upgrade, but the path will be tricky, especially without fossil fuels in the picture. They need to increase their energy capacity by three times to reach 100% clean energy by 2045, another one of the state's lofty goals.

"Is the state on track to achieve its clean energy goals? Right now, there's no one who can give you a definitive answer. More transparency on a plan that goes from here to there every year, where we can track progress, will really help answer that question," Alex Breckel of the environmental advocacy group Clean Air Task Force told CalMatters.

Pollution Rankings

How does Los Angeles compare to other cities in pollution?

WRITTEN BY JAY KUKLIN

INFOGRAPHIC BY JAY KUKLIN

Los Angeles is famous for its beaches and celebrities. Still, a common concern among Angelenos is its notoriety for poor air quality, which goes hand in hand with the city's subtropical climate.

In two air quality reports provided by the American Lung Association, 40% of Americans live in areas that have unhealthy pollution levels, while LA and other counties in Southern California were given an 'F' grade based on particle and ozone pollution.

It also does not help that LA has experienced more climate change in recent years, such as higher temperatures, rising sea levels, alterations in rainfall patterns, and more wildfires.

LA ranks fifth in the top 10 cities with the highest carbon emissions rates, falling short of Seoul, South Korea; Guangzhou, China; New York, and Hong Kong, who rank first, second, third and fourth in the list, according to USNews.com.

However, in March and April 2020, carbon emissions rates decreased by 17% and 34%, respectively, thanks to the city's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Washington, D.C., and Baltimore's carbon emissions rates respectively dropped by 25% and 33% because of a drop in natural gas consumption, a warm spring, and changes in gasoline fuel sales.

The city saw a 20% overall improvement in air quality between March 16, 2020, and April 6, 2020, according to a report from Yifang Zhu, a professor of environmental health sciences at the Fielding School of Public Health at UCLA. The stretch of good air quality was the longest for LA since 1995.

The primary source of LA's pollution is burning things, such as coal in power plants, gasoline in cars, chemicals in industrial processes, or woody materials and other flammable items during wildfires. Because LA is in a basin area bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west and several moun-

tain ranges to the east and the south, the city is vulnerable to high ozone levels, often making the air unsafe for residents to breathe. When a city is in a semi-basin, the ozone, or smog, is "trapped" in the air. And when it gets overly sunny during the summer season, and all pollutants from vehicles, factories and other industrial sources become mixed with oceans, windy weather and the terrain from the mountains, the ground-level smog levels get worse.

With that in mind, LA gets an average of 15 inches of rain per year, according to a report by the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, contributing to the city's poor air pollution reports over the past 24 years.

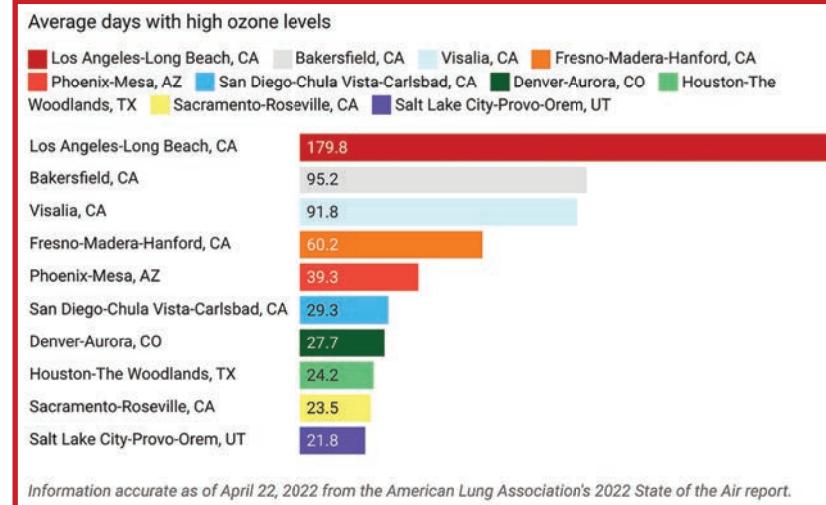
LA's efforts to reduce pollution are slow. Still, they are paying off, as air quality in the area has improved over the past two decades due to local and state regulations reducing toxic air contaminants.

such as the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act. The Biden administration approved a new rule reducing air pollution that large ships emit when they are docked among coastline cities, such as LA, San Diego, Long Beach, and Richmond, on Oct. 20.

Citizens can help reduce air pollution by walking or riding a bike instead of driving and turning off all lights in rooms before they leave them. Scheduling all errands into a single trip can help limit personal emissions.

And if Angelenos are looking to buy a new car, they can buy one that is effective with low pollution or opt for a zero-emission vehicle. These are better alternatives than buying a car that relies on gasoline fuel to get around, which burns a lot of fossil fuels and is terrible for the environment.

By taking the necessary steps, citizens can make LA breathable again.



The Price of Palm Oil

WRITTEN BY EDWARD SEGAL

Deforestation, global warming and labor exploitation are three issues that have plagued the economy, and they all intersect with the production of palm oil.

Palm oil comes from trees of the same name, and can be made by either squeezing their fruit or the kernel inside the fruit.

Native to Africa, oil palm trees were brought to southeast Asia about a century ago. Now, Indonesia and Malaysia are the main suppliers of the world's palm oil.

Forty-two countries produce palm oil. It is found in everything from pizza to shampoo to biofuel. India, China and the European Union, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature, are the biggest consumers of the product.

Palm oil is an efficient crop, and can grow quickly on any type of soil at almost any time of year. It supplies 40% of the world's vegetable oil on under 6% of all land used to make vegetable oils. It can keep spreads semi-solid, it gives products a longer shelf life, and it adds crispness to fried foods. It also has almost no trans fats.

The world produces more than 75 million metric tons of palm oil a year, according to Vox. In comparison, only 3 million metric tons of olive oil are produced every year.



However, palm oil production comes with its downsides.

In order to create space for oil palm trees, rainforests are burned. On peatlands (wet forests), burning rainforests releases 100 times the greenhouse gases as in conventional forest fires, according to the Smithsonian Magazine.

25% of Indonesia's rainforests have been taken down to make room for oil palm trees. These trees soak up much of the soil's water and destroy the soil in the process, according to Ecosia, a search engine that uses its advertisement profits to plant trees.

Ecosia also says the production of trees threatens 193 of the world's endangered or vulnerable animal species, such as the orangutan.

Most alarming of all, the production of palm oil is linked to the exploitation of workers and child labor. Millions of people work on the plantations in Malaysia and Indonesia, many of them poor. The AP News writes that workers have reported child labor, slavery and rape.

Some workers were forced to sign contracts saying they would not get paid for their first two years on the plantation, and would only be loaned about \$16 per month for food and healthcare. The contract also stated that workers could not leave the plantation, according to an investigative reporting center called the Schuster Institute.

As a result of the concerns people had about the exploitation of labor, Malaysia and Indonesia established an agency in 2012 that gave Indonesian immigrants who worked at the plantations much-needed legal protection.

Child labor laws have also recently been updated in Indonesia. Until 2020, Indonesia operated under old child labor laws, which made labor legal from the age of 12. In 2020, a new law set the minimum age at 15. To do hazardous work, Indonesians have to be 18.

Common alternatives to palm oil include

canola, coconut and olive oils. Each has its health risks and benefits, but the Smithsonian Magazine says that no other oil-producing crop can yield even a third of the oil that the palm tree can.

Switching to another type of oil would require four to 10 times more land, and would shift the deforestation to another part of the world rather than fixing it.

Palm oil is one of the biggest exports in Indonesia and Malaysia, and tens of millions of people earn their income from it, which makes switching a tough task.

In both Malaysia and Indonesia, the amount of deforestation caused by oil palm trees has declined over the last decade, according to Vox. In 2021, Indonesia reached its lowest point in deforestation in 22 years.

In 2013, advocacy groups convinced major companies to use already-degraded lands to grow oil palm trees. This meant they would clear fewer forests.

Palm oil has a horrendous legacy, but the downward trend in deforestation and the increasing protection of the workers who produce it bode well for the future of the product.



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CSUN AGRI-TECTURE

Illustrated by Kevin Silva

*Plants are not drawn to scale



Lilac Hall
Jacaranda Hall
Sagebrush Hall

Did you know that
CSUN's buildings
are named after
plants?

Citrus Hall
Chaparral Hall
Monterey Hall



How CSUN is working to improve transportation emissions

WRITTEN BY PAMELA GARCIA

PHOTOS BY RODRIGO HERNANDEZ

Being one of the most commuter-accessible universities, with a percentage of 51% commuter students in 2019, a large portion of the California State University, Northridge,

student population relies on public transportation to commute to campus.

CSUN has a variety of options for commuter students, such as paid ride-share programs, Metro transit agencies, and their own transit shuttles.

Due to recent changes in Metro lines, many commuter students' public transportation routes have been affected. Students have had to adjust to alternative routes, which add more time to commutes, especially

for students commuting from outside the San Fernando Valley.

On average, CSUN students who live in and around Los Angeles who commute using public transportation take about two hours to arrive in Northridge.

"I used to drive back and forth from Orange County to CSUN. It was a two-hour drive there and two to three hours back. It was very exhausting and at one point I was losing hair because of the stress," wrote Angelina Tran, a third-year student, in a survey conducted by The Daily Sundial.

LA Metro is currently working to improve their commuter experience and create a more sustainable method of transportation. Their hope is that these changes will bring new riders to





Metro to achieve pre-pandemic levels of weekly ridership.

Most notably, Metro has begun a shift into using electric buses on their G line that goes through the San Fernando Valley. Metro also extended their D and E lines to cover areas of Los Angeles such as Westwood and Santa Monica for easier transit access.

"These service updates will also help our revamped NextGen bus system live up to its potential by offering more frequent and convenient bus services for many riders," Metro said in a statement released in Dec. 2022. "That means riders will spend less time on their commutes and give them back precious time for everything else in their lives."

Additionally, Metrolink, Southern California's commuter rail system agency, implemented a "Student Adventure Pass" that now allows students to ride on Metrolink trains all around Southern California for free. This not only cuts costs, but for many students like Tran, the pass can cut the commute time significantly from cities outside of Los Angeles County, making the travel less taxing than with a car.

To provide another resource for commuter students, CSUN's partnership with the U-Pass program takes the burden of Metro's daily pricing off college students with a discounted transit pass, covering the majority of Southern California. It is \$95 per semester, allowing unlimited daily rides on buses, trains, Metro micro, and shuttles.

However, some students still feel the price of the U-Pass is excessive compared to the free GoPass that community college students receive.

"The community college I went to had free bus passes. That was one of my favorite things there, and I wish CSUN did that too, especially considering how many buses I take a week and how many students that do take public transportation, or would if it were free," said Elliot Moorvitch, a third-year anthropology major.

Even though CSUN's commuter status has progressively dropped since the pandemic, the school encourages students to use alternate forms of transportation available to them to travel more sustainably.

CSUN's sustainability department collaborates with the university to create sustainability goals every year. In 2023, CSUN planned to increase the share of alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles for commuting from 26% to 40%, as well as reduce vehicle use on campus to eventually eliminate usage altogether.

While CSUN plans to convert the university to a more environmentally friendly institution and push public transportation, students feel the university does not understand the limitations of public transportation.

"I can't do clubs, can't really stay after class to chat with professors or classmates. I can't really meet anyone. [I am] pretty constrained to my schedule.

I have a class that ends at 9:30 p.m. and won't get back home till 12 a.m.," said Saul Quintero, a fourth-year media theory and criticism major.

While CSUN provides a variety of ride-share options, providing options for discounts and offering more consistent hours on the Chatsworth station shuttle could take a lot of the burden off students who rely on ride-shares for easier access around Northridge.

In order to create more environmentally friendly habits in universities in and around Los Angeles County, institutions could collaborate with the Metro agency to cater to the needs of college students in the same way the agency has done with Los Angeles Unified School District for K-12 schools.

Solutions for the many trials and tribulations of CSUN commuters would take a lot of time to implement. Despite the limited number of options for students to express their opinions on campus, there is a platform for commuter students to make their voices heard through the Metro's service council meetings. Individuals are allowed to express concerns at the monthly meetings held in the San Fernando Valley and four other Southern California regions. The commuter experience is ever-changing, and speaking up to ensure our public transportation systems can reflect that would help pave the way for a more sustainable and reliable future of transportation.

IF THE MESS FITS

MAKING GARMENTS FROM *Garbage* AT MANZANITA HALL

WRITTEN BY KALIA OSHIRO

California State University, Northridge's interdepartmental sustainability initiative, "From Waste to Wearable," will be hosting a fashion exhibition in December on the second floor of Manzanita Hall. Refreshments will be pro-

vided, including cocktails, mocktails and catering. The show will feature guest of honor Dan Hoskins speaking, who is the dean of Mike Curb College of Arts, Media and Communications. Last year's inaugural fashion exhibition took place at the Art and Design Center. A few of the five classes collaborating for the exhibition meet in this building, such as professor Vida Liu's introductory art class and professor Meiqin Wang's exhibition design class. In the family and consumer science department, professor Jongeun Kim's students will work throughout November on more advanced outfits for the exhibition, including dresses and gender-neutral attire. The twist is that all the outfits will be made from everyday waste, including empty containers, old fabrics, and wrappers, which showcases the reusability of materials..

According to Earthday.org, the apparel industry is responsible for 35% of microplastics in the ocean, 4% of greenhouse gas emissions, and 40 million tons of landfill waste. All the outfits featured in the show will incorporate recycled



This in-progress umbrella, also by a student of Liu's, raises awareness for global warming. The umbrella itself is recycled — frayed, but usable — and will be painted and lined with Cheetos bags. The piece is a reminder that without environmental regulations, the snacks will not be all that is "flamin' hot."
Photo by Kalia Oshiro.



Christine Awad, an apparel production and design senior, working on a corset in Sequoia Hall (Left). Paw Dah Si examines a Gucci bag to determine whether she is going to use it as a top or bottom (Middle). Paw Dah Si sketches dress ideas for the "From Waste to Wearable" fashion show on December 8 (Right). Photos by Rodrigo Hernandez.

materials and objects such as bubble wrap, duct tape and bottle caps.

"With new scientific research coming out, we know that our Earth is on the brink of ecological collapse," said Wang. "It's not going to be able to support

the kind of lifestyle people in developed countries have been living, without concern that things might run out."

For these students and faculty, the key to a sustainable future is awareness. Although these pieces are

not meant to be worn in daily life, they will keep a small amount of trash out of the landfill. Their other function is to challenge what we assume is useless and explore ways that we can get more use out of trash before discarding it.

"We all can do something," said Wang. "We all can change our everyday lifestyle to be a little more sustainable... Small actions count. Collectively, if we all do something small, we can make a big difference."

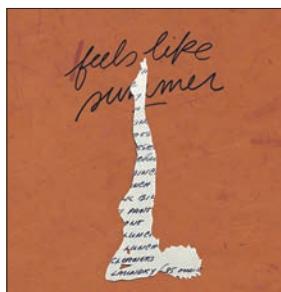


Ruth Murillo, an art major with an emphasis in painting, is the curator and hostess for the "From Waste to Wearable" fashion show. Growing up, Murillo saw her mother implementing eco-friendly practices daily, from gardening to raising chickens. Since taking the lead curator role, Murillo is in charge of the event's logistics, from sponsors to models to the precise placement of chairs in Manzanita Hall. She will also provide Spanish translation for any guests who need it, in hopes of making the message of sustainability accessible.

"We're not there for the brand, it's about the movement behind it," said Murillo.
"We just need people who care about making a change and are willing to come."
Photo by Kalia Oshiro.

Cantando

WRITTEN BY ISAAC GAVINO



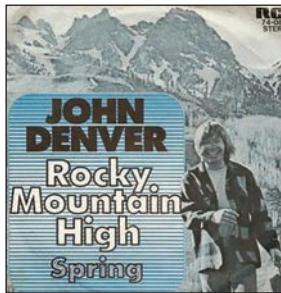
Feels Like Summer
Childish Gambino

Childish Gambino's 2018 song "Feels Like Summer" subverts audience expectations and raises awareness of global warming. On first impression, the track's serene nature follows the formula of an R&B ballad. The smooth, calming beat is contrasted by verses emphasizing rising temperatures, rapid population growth, water scarcity and the death of organisms' ecosystems. In this context, the phrase "Feels Like Summer" becomes an urgent call for help.



Big Yellow Taxi
Joni Mitchell

An anthem of the counterculture era in the United States, "Big Yellow Taxi" serves as both an observation and a warning against rampant consumption and overdevelopment. Joni Mitchell explores an ironic result of the degradation of the environment in the face of perceived American progress. Mitchell sings, "Don't it always seem to go/ That you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone/ They paved paradise, put up a parking lot."



Rocky Mountain High
John Denver

"Take Me Home, Country Roads" may be John Denver's most famous single, but "Rocky Mountain High" is just as powerful in its beautiful portrayal of the Colorado Rockies. Denver's simple tale of a man enthralled by nature and opposed to its destruction contributed to a growing interest in and appreciation for the environment. The track would later become one of Colorado's official state songs.



Fallen Fruit
Lorde

Ominous and uneasy, "Fallen Fruit" offers a bleak but necessary retrospective on human activity and its contributions to global warming. Lorde condemns past generations' reliance on industrial success and ignorance to the pressing environmental crisis. She explains that no matter the socioeconomic class, we are now all "dancing on fallen fruit." We are faced with the same consequences of climate change, and more importantly, problems to solve.

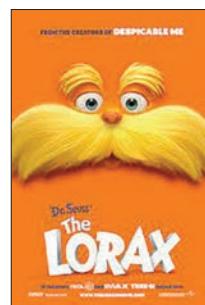
Matador Marquee

WRITTEN BY SASHA ALIKHANOV



"Wall-E"

is a 2008 animated Disney science fiction film that follows the titular waste-collecting robot roaming Earth, who meets Eve, a newer robot sent to Earth to find signs of habitability. Following Eve out of his love for her, Wall-E finds himself on a spaceship surrounded by sedentary humans, bound by their reliance on robots. Wall-E and Eve lead a plan to rejuvenate the humans and bring them back to Earth.



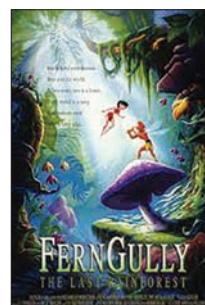
"The Lorax"

is a 2012 Disney musical that explores the effects of destroying the environment amidst industrialization. In this fictional comedy, an inventor creates a multi-use material out of the tufts of Truffula trees, and its production leads to the deforestation and extinction of said trees, which makes the environment uninhabitable. Years later, a boy in a town of artificial vegetation sets out to replenish the trees and revive the land.



"Princess Mononoke"

is a 1997 Studio Ghibli animated film that follows a young prince, Ashitaka, on his quest to cure himself of a curse and mediate a conflict between nature and human industry. Princess Mononoke, also known as San, is a girl raised by wolves who continually attempts to assassinate the leader of IronTown, Lady Eboshi. Ashitaka learns of both sides' motivations, and tries as he may to help, destruction befalls the forest and IronTown.



"FernGully: The Last Rainforest" is a 1992 independent musical that follows a rainforest fairy named Crysta and a logger she accidentally shrank named Zak as they work together to defeat Hexxus, an evil spirit that destroys the environment. Hexxus feeds off unnatura.

Book Club

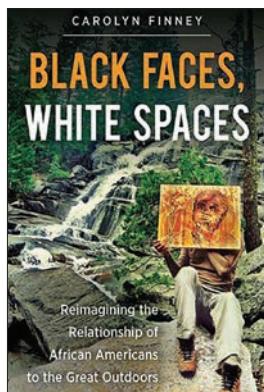
WRITTEN BY CESIA LOPEZ

Amanda Baugh, a professor of religious studies and the director of the master's in sustainability at California State University, Northridge, wrote a new book titled "Falling in Love with Nature: Latinx Catholics and Climate Resilience." It was inspired by conversations with students about the concept of environmentalism and will be released in spring 2024 by New York University Press.

Professor Baugh created the "Religion and Ecology" course, which explores the relationship between nature, humans and the influence of religion. Her book recommendations empower students to engage critically with the intersections of environmentalism and themselves.

"The ultimate goal is to help students see they are leaders," said Baugh. "They're very well-equipped to be environmental leaders. It's not somebody else's problem. It's theirs. And they have the power to do something about it."

All the following books are available to students at the CSUN University Library.



"Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors"

by Carolyn Finney

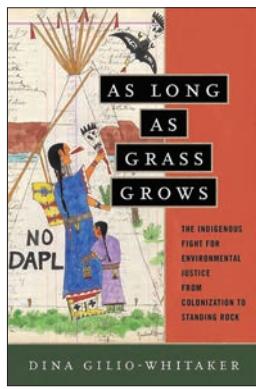
"Black Faces, White Spaces" criticizes the environmental movement for its focus on whiteness and its historical exclusion of Black voices and bodies in outdoor activities. The book presents an equitable and sustainable vision of environmentalism, as told by Black Americans.

Baugh says the majority of her students are people of color.

"They inherited the story that their communities are not environmental activists when they are. It's completely embedded in their values and their traditions and their histories, but hasn't been labeled in that way because environmentalism is presented as white," she explained.

Baugh said this book shaped the way she teaches her classes.

"One of my biggest goals is to help my students see that they have environmental values in their own communities, and to take ownership of it."



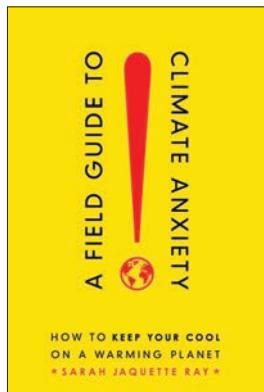
"As Long As Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, From Colonization to Standing Rock"

by Dina Gilio-Whitaker

In "As Long As Grass Grows," the author examines Indigenous communities' long-standing fight for environmental justice in the U.S. The book covers land theft, natural resource exploitation and ecological racism. It highlights conflicts between Indigenous communities and environmentalists, such as the racist roots and ideologies of the conservation movement. "Basically, if you think you're doing environmental justice, and you're not thinking about dispossession... you're actually kind of missing the entire picture," explained Baugh.

"It makes a very strong, powerful argument that the first environmental injustice for indigenous communities is land dispossession," said Baugh.

"So, it goes back to the very beginning of colonial contact and that it is the first environmental injustice." The book showcases Indigenous peoples' resistance and resilience while exploring how the struggle for environmental justice is deeply intertwined with the fight for Indigenous sovereignty.



"A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety: How to Keep Your Cool on a Warming Planet"

by Sarah Jaquette Ray

In the book "A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety," Ray explores the overwhelming anxiety and uncertainty many millennial and Generation Z students experience while thinking about their environmental future. The book is an action guide with practical steps for students on how to deal with ecological grief, prevent burnout, and find joy in advocating for climate justice. The book offers concrete tips for a healthy mindset with climate advocacy work without minimizing the seriousness of the crisis, according to Baugh.

"The problems are real and important, and we need to do something about it, but also, the book is trying to give us a different narrative as opposed to just, like, curling up into a ball," Baugh said. "Recognize it's not all up to you, so you build a supportive community and work with other people."

Time is Ticking on Local Biodiversity

WRITTEN BY JAZ MENDEZ

PHOTOGRAPHED BY GRIFFIN O'ROURKE

Whether it was growing coffee beans in Colombia or teaching at California State University, Northridge, professor Mario Giraldo has always raised environmental awareness.

Giraldo has more than 20 years of work experience relating to environmental science and sustainability, particularly using geographic information systems and remote sensing to analyze suburban landscapes.

At CSUN, Giraldo has been developing educational opportunities for students to understand and connect with their surroundings. He shared his thoughts about the environment, adding that education is the first step to sounding the alarm of a running ecological clock, ticking to the sound of doom.

Q *What got you interested in the environment?*

A Early on, I was exposed to the mountains in Colombia. I spent my days walking and hiking trails across agricultural fields, but I was also surrounded by natural areas like forests.

In college, I studied agricultural engineering, specializing in bringing technology to farmers. I took a course on agricultural ecology, a discipline developed at the University of California, Davis. The university was offering the course, and I became interested in producing food for humans while simultaneously making sustainable management of the natural environment.

I think it was a fantastic link for me, really expanding my perspective on sustainability. After all, sustainability is about social justice, equal opportunities for people, prosperity and developing rational use of natural resources.

This holistic approach really got me started. I'm also coming from coffee. I am the fourth generation in my family of local coffee growers. So, I started a coffee experiment on campus with a colleague.

Q *Can you explain what that coffee project was about?*

A A former colleague and I were looking at a project in Whittier College. The project was trying to see if they could integrate all the productive changes of coffee here in Southern California.

The only missing link was how to grow the coffee, and those involved with the project were able to actually grow the plants. My colleague knew I was a coffee grower, so we wanted to test that idea.

It was still in the experimental phase and needed funding. My colleague passed away, and now the project is on the back burner. But that's basically how we started to try to integrate all the food, all the economic changes in the business chain, from producing the coffee beans all the way to selling the drink.

Q *In terms of growing your own produce, do you think that's something that more people will eventually have to do?*

A Yes. The tradition of kitchen gardens goes back all the way to colonial times. And it's very embedded in our Latino heritage. Also, this is the very first generation that grows fully urbanized.

This has never happened before. Even I had some exposure to farming and nature. So, from that perspective, there is a long tradition of growing. You see parents and grandparents inclined to grow plants; it gives them a connection to their roots, culture, family, feelings, emotions, and their childhood memories.

In the United States, liberty gardens were promoted by the government during the time of hardship. These gardens taught people to be self-reliant — there was no guarantee of supply in the supermarkets. This is still a possibility today.

Q *How much does the urban environment play into how plants are being grown right now?*

A So, California has an abundance of fertile soil, sunlight and the right temperature.

Once you fix the problem of water, the possibility to provide a lot more food in cities will be greater. For instance, having more native vegetation is important to reduce our high levels of carbon dioxide.

I have been working to integrate native vegetation at CSUN. Now, this is not new or original. Los Angeles has been doing this for a while. So, there are societies all around us that are very interested in it.

Now, to decrease the heat island effect in the San Fernando Valley, we need to have more trees. So, we need to have a big call to action, because most of the natural environment that we have was set aside more than 100 years ago.

This generation needs to set aside land and start building then the next generation of Sepulveda basins, because the city is now in high demand. We are in the Valley, which has some parks, but they are very small compared with the residential area around us.

We need to enlarge our natural environment for our benefit.

Q Do you think the stagnancy within the policy process has prevented us from slowing its effects?

A Well, the environment has always been politicized. California, however, has been proactive for the most part. We have been successful in passing legislation, which has made our living conditions good.

The big challenge is at the national level; there are many states in which there is no political muscle and, therefore, the conversation fails to address all of the issues.

Now, business and economics are making a big difference in this political conversation. The state of Georgia had this big opposition against sustainability. However, when they started cranking the numbers, they realized that going green with their buses made a lot of sense from the perspective of maintenance.

So they started switching and they gathered grants, because it became a good business opportunity.

Q Why do you think it's important to start making holistic changes?

A When I was in college, the conversation was all about saving the planet. Now it's all about saving our lifestyle.

Life for vulnerable populations is going to be extremely challenging. It already is — now, imagine going to school here in the Valley and not being able to leave the classroom because the temperatures outside are over 100 degrees, extending from May to November.

The environmental world right now is very concerned about keeping our lifestyle, keeping our society functioning the way that we are used to it.

Q In recent years, there has been this alarm that time is running out — what are your thoughts on that?

A Tools of modern science allow us to do what in the old days were designated to witchcraft or sorcery. Data science can give us knowledge on how the physical environment will behave. Using well-collected and accurate data, we can only predict how the future could be.

Do you see birds in your garden? Do you see lizards or butterflies? You better take pictures of them because your children may not see them.

There is no doubt that your generation will be having a very hard time enjoying biodiversity, because a lot of the animals and insects will be extinct by the time you start making enough money and enjoying the good things in life.

Many of the forests I grew up in are completely gone. We have transformed the planet, and not necessarily for the best of it.

So, the forecast is happening and it's alarming.



CSUN's Climate Communities

WRITTEN BY NANCY CRUZ

PHOTOS BY WILLIAM ESPINOSA (RIGHT) AND TRISHA ANAS (LEFT)

With climate change and global warming on the rise, California State University, Northridge, students can turn to the Sustainability Center to find a community of like-minded individuals working together to improve the environment.

CSUN Sustainability Center

Located between the housing shuttle point next to the Premier America Credit Union Arena, formerly known as the Matadome, and the University Student Union, the Sustainability Center is home to the Productions Department as well as the Associated Students Sustainability Department, which oversees the Institute of Sustainability and the G.A.R.D.E.N.

Founded in 2008, the Institute for Sustainability aims to provide all students with opportunities in sustainability-related programs in community organizations. The G.A.R.D.E.N., which stands for growing, accessible resources, diversity, education, and nourishment, is a half-acre community space where students and volunteers can gather and practice everything they have learned about caring for the environment. The Associated Students Sustainability Team hosts events throughout the year to encourage students to learn about environmentally friendly practices.

Held on Clean Air Day, the Refill and Repair Clinics motivate students to bring in damaged clothing to get repaired and learn how to do it at home. Students are also welcome to bring empty containers filled with shampoo, conditioner, or soap.



In honor of America Recycles Day, the Sustainability Center provides a thorough guide on properly disposing of waste and where to donate and recycle. Another informative event is the Sustainable Fashion Expo, which promotes sustainable fashion over fast fashion to combat global warming.

"Each of these events has a specific focus regarding sustainability, but all of them spread awareness about sustainability-related issues, as well as provide resources for students to adopt sustainable practices into their daily lives," said Kaley Tooth, the sustainability coordinator at the Sustainability Center.

Local organizations can also be found tabling at the events, providing helpful information to students, and showcasing their work in hopes of building a stronger relationship.

"The Sustainability Center's mission is to provide a space on campus dedicated to sustainability and a space where students can learn more about sustainability and get involved," said Tooth.

CSUN Environmental Club

Another way for students to explore the concept of sustainability is through the CSUN Environmental Club. Born to bridge the gap between the student body and the Sustainability Department, the Environmental Club is the first student-led sustainability organization at CSUN.

Officially established last fall, the club aimed to inform students about the number of events held by the Sustainability Center but later began to hold its separate events, thus forming its very own community.

The club meets every other Thursday at the Sustainability Center. Members participate in workshops led by guest speakers, professors from the sustainability department, and external organizations. Their most recent speaker was a member of the Ballona Wetlands Reserve, who educated them on the importance of restoring the wetlands around Marina del Rey.

Nelofer Siddiqui, a fourth-year communications student and communications chair for the CSUN Environmental Club, recounts her experience with utter joy as she professes to have found a community of people who, like her, are passionate about the environment, shortly after having transferred to CSUN.

"Everyone in the club seemed very passionate about the environment and the outdoors, and I loved that," said Siddiqui. "I always wanted to do something regarding social change and making the world a better place, but I really didn't know where to get started, and the environmental club gave me an opportunity to make my own small difference."

Apart from their general meetings, the club hosts several events, including hikes, beach cleanups, and other activities in collaboration with the Compost Garden and Orange Grove.

"We're a space for any students who want to learn more about the environment and get more involved in making the environment around us a better place," said Siddiqui.

The Sustainability Center and CSUN Environmental Club can be found on Instagram at @csunas_sustainability and @csun.enviro, respectively.

"I don't care much
for the enclosure
of buildings"

said Mary Oliver.

I didn't realize that I, too, have been soothed
by wide open spaces,
mountains in the distance,
open to all, eternal ground
beneath our feet.

Beautiful architecture is only available to a rare few, as has always been true:
the baths, hunting house, and monastery.

Pockets of peace and serenity protected from peripheral chaos
destined to become the ruined legacy
donors scramble to preserve.

We bury our trash, our fears, our loves,
but the past resists decay.
Regrets sealed in boxes below ground— betting
it will never reemerge— hoping
our grandchildren will never have to see.

Angela Castellano



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- ▶ USU Board of Directors
- ▶ USU Programs
- ▶ Veterans Resource Center

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SCAN THE QR CODE TO
VISIT THE FULL USU
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Events subject to change



FEATURED EVENTS



Crunch Time

Now – Thursday, Dec. 14
📍 University Student Union



Pride Center: Let's Talk

Tuesday, Dec. 12: 3 – 4 p.m.
📍 Pride Center



VRC: Study Jam

Tuesday, Dec. 12: 5 – 7 p.m.
📍 Veterans Resource Center



Pride Center: Deaf Queer Coffee Night

Tuesday, Dec. 12: 5 – 7 p.m.
📍 Pride Center



VRC: The Blend

Wednesday, Dec. 13: 10 a.m. – Noon
📍 Veterans Resource Center



SRC: Game. Set. Winter Break!

Now – Jan. 11: 5 – 7 p.m.
📍 Student Recreation Center