Welcome to the first edition of a new Sustainability Newsletter for University of Pittsburgh alumni and friends! We hope this effort piques your interest and connects you to the University of Pittsburgh's ongoing vision for and efforts towards sustainability.

As an individual working in the diverse field of sustainability or who was engaged in sustainability-focused research, learning, and/or community life while at Pitt, we hope to more actively engage you to in enhancing the University of Pittsburgh’s leadership balancing equity, environment, and economics so that current and future generations can thrive.

Please join us in conversation, action, and strategy,

Gena Kovalcik, Co-Director, Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation

Aurora Sharrard, Director of Sustainability, Office of Sustainability
In January 2018, the University of Pittsburgh released its first Pitt Sustainability Plan, outlining the University's strategic framework and goals to create a campus and community that is environmentally responsible, socially equitable, and economically robust. The Plan is guiding sustainability initiatives and partnerships on- and off-campus, including establishing a new Office of Sustainability.

Pitt's multi-level, interdisciplinary sustainability efforts on- and off-campus include the University Sustainability Committee and the Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation's Faculty Sustainability Task Force. Campus-wide sustainability efforts are also supported by summer undergraduate research and the Student Office of Sustainability's 28+ affiliated student groups.

Global Sustainability Efforts
Pitt & Pittsburgh SDGs on Global Display

- In September 2019, alongside the United Nations' 74th General Assembly, Pitt Provost Ann Cudd joined the City of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University, Chatham University, and the Pittsburgh Foundation in highlighting regional accomplishments to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for a more peaceful, prosperous planet with just and inclusive societies. Read event highlights and Pitt-specific SDG progress.
- This Fall, Pitt also had its first cohort of Millennium Fellows, participating in a global program that convenes, challenges, and celebrates student leadership on the SDGs.

Campus Initiatives

Hydropower Marks Pitt's First Big Renewables Commitment

In line with the University's goal to purchase 50% renewables by 2030, Pitt will be the region's first institution to partner on harnessing the flow of Pittsburgh's rivers as a source for clean, reliable electricity.
Pitt will receive all electricity generated by a low-impact hydropower station on the Allegheny River. [Read more.]

**Center for Sustainable Business Launched**

In October 2019, Pitt launched its Center for Sustainable Business, which is engaging global and national companies in integrating environmental and societal concerns into their business models. The Center joins the Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation as a campus hub dedicated to advancing sustainability across research, teaching, and outreach.

[Alumni Spotlight]
In 2017, **Samir Lakhani** (A&S ’15) was named a CNN Hero of the Year for his nonprofit [Eco-Soap Bank](#), a global soap-recycling organization which operates in 11 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Samir is a social entrepreneur dedicated to restoring health and dignity to developing countries through environmental initiatives. Since 2014, Eco-Soap Bank has helped supplied over 650,000 people with hygiene supplies and education. In 2019, Samir received the Emerging Leader Award from GSPIA’s Johnson Institute for Responsible Leadership -- and launched kickstarter [Project Eco-Soap](#) to give more soap to those in need. [Read more about Samir Lakhani](#).

**Dr. Candice DeLeo Novack** (Eng ‘10) has been working in Research & Development at [Avon Products, Inc.](#) since completing her PhD; she leads downstream product development in the eye and face color categories and the consumer-centric product design team for all color categories. She feels her Pitt experience as a MCSI NSF: IGERT Fellow was invaluable to her professional journey because it has made her more savvy in product life cycle analysis and has given her an edge over colleagues. Candice’s experiences outside of the U.S., particularly conducting MCSI-funded research at UNICAMP in Brazil, helped her put a more global lens on product development, design, and technology.

---

**Faculty Highlight**
MCSI Leads Multidisciplinary Circular Economy Team to Reduce Global Waste

A 5-university team led by MCSI’s Deputy Director, Dr. Melissa Bilec, will address the complex challenge of global waste through circular economy design. Their proposal received a 2-year, $1.3 million award from the National Science Foundation’s new Growing Convergence Research program, with the potential for an extension to 5 years and $3.6 million. 

Read more.

Student Leadership

Kareem Rabbat (ENG ’20) is interested in the intersection of environment, equity, and economics, in that order. During his undergraduate career, Kareem has started his own business (Ecotone Renewables LLC) and served on Pitt Green Fund’s board. He also conducted undergraduate summer research with MCSI, determining which bacteria and fungi could help solve persistent pollution problems. Read more about Kareem.

The Pitt Pantry is dedicated to ensuring that all students have regular access to a balanced and nutritious diet. The Pantry hosts
THE PITT Pantry

regular shopping hours, is completely volunteer-run, and operates on charitable donations received from individuals and organizations within the community. Read more about The Pitt Pantry.

We Want to Hear from You!

This is the first alumni and friends newsletter about sustainability activities, people, and strategies across the University of Pittsburgh. Please reach out and let us know what kind of content you would like to see in future newsletters.