



## **Fall 2008 Update on the University's Environmental Stewardship**

Columbia has undertaken a wide range of initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint and improve our stewardship of the environment. This important, long-term commitment begins with many individual steps, but our success depends on our ability to move forward as a community. With Sustainable Columbia e-news, we provide an update on the broad participation by students, faculty and staff across the University in our shared goal of becoming even more sustainable and energy efficient in our operations and our daily lives. Please be sure to share your ideas and efforts with us through the contacts provided at the bottom.

Robert Kasdin  
Senior Executive Vice President

### **Columbia Earns Top Score for Sustainability**

The new academic year began with some terrific news about our growing commitment to environmental sustainability. As the Spectator recently reported, Columbia is one of only 15 out of 300 participating colleges nationwide to have earned the highest grade for overall sustainability efforts this year. We have continued to improve our grade year-by-year and are the only university in New York State to earn an A- on the 2009 College Sustainability Report Card, an initiative of the Sustainable Endowments Institute.

This accomplishment is a reflection of many creative ways the University's students, faculty, staff and administration are working together to build a more sustainable environment. For more information about the 2009 Report Card, visit [www.greenreportcard.org](http://www.greenreportcard.org) or read the Columbia News article at [www.columbia.edu/cu/news/oncampus/sustainability.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/oncampus/sustainability.html).

### **First Greenhouse Gas Inventory Completed**

Last year President Bollinger accepted Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC challenge, joining nine other local universities in pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 30 percent by 2017. Columbia has completed its baseline emissions inventory and is now working on a detailed action plan to meet its 30 percent reduction goal. Development of the University's emission

reduction plan includes vital input from Facilities, the Information Technology department and the Office of Environmental Stewardship. We will reach our goal over time through investments in more energy-efficient infrastructure and through changes of behavior by all of us. Results are expected to be posted online and will be officially announced at a press conference with Mayor Bloomberg on Oct. 23.

### **Green Roof Initiative Moves Forward**

The University has established New York City's first green roof research stations at two Morningside locations: 423 W. 118th St. and 635 W. 115th St., where the Office of Environmental Stewardship is located. At both locations, researchers and students from a range of Columbia schools and centers have been involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring, including The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science, Columbia Secondary School for Math, Science and Engineering, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, Urban Design Lab, the Center for Climate Systems Research and others. They are collecting research data to measure the green roof's impact in terms of storm water retention, urban heat island effect, atmospheric carbon dioxide and surface and air temperatures. The University will present initial results at a talk sponsored by the U.S. Green Building Council New York later this year.

### **World Leaders Forum on NYC Sustainability Challenge**

This Thursday, Oct. 23, President Bollinger will host a special World Leaders Forum featuring a discussion on Columbia's sustainable initiatives, the University's role in New York City's PlaNYC initiative, and how individuals can reduce their own carbon footprints. The program will include a question-and-answer session with the audience. The event will be moderated by Steve Cohen, director of the Master of Public Administration Program in Environmental Science and Policy, and will feature Columbia experts, as well as Columbia alumnus Rohit Aggarwala, director of the Mayor's Office of Long-term Planning and Sustainability. For more information, visit the World Leaders Forum at [www.worldleaders.columbia.edu](http://www.worldleaders.columbia.edu).

### **New Lamont-Doherty Geochemistry Building Seeks LEED Certification**

University Facilities is continuing to compile documentation to complete its application for LEED Silver certification for the new Gary C. Comer Geochemistry Building on the Lamont campus in Palisades, New York. This building will be the first new Columbia building to receive LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. In moving to the new building, the Observatory rented over 1,000 reusable plastic crates, rather than adding at least that many cardboard boxes to the waste stream. In addition, the Lamont campus also completed the distribution of more than 7,000 compact fluorescent light bulbs to employees and students to replace less efficient traditional incandescent bulbs. The Observatory is also awaiting delivery of a hybrid vehicle to replace the inter-campus mail and delivery van. The new vehicle will save

roughly 250 gallons of gasoline each year, which translates to roughly 2.25 metric tons of CO2 equivalent.

Columbia's Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences recently donated seven new ornamental pear trees to the Lamont campus to commemorate the retirement of seven admired faculty members. Research scientist Kevin Griffin personally donated 20 young red oak trees that were cultivated for a growth experiment in the metropolitan area. These trees will be planted within the forested acreage on the beautiful Observatory grounds.

### **Green Goes Digital with Information Technology Initiative**

Did you know that with the right settings, your computer can cut its electricity use by as much as half? Columbia University Information Technology (CUIT) launched a program to make computer use more energy efficient across the University. During first-year orientation week and through the first two weeks of classes, CUIT staffed a table in Carman Lounge and another table on the Lerner ramp to help people learn how to save energy by creating optimum power management settings on their computers.

As an added incentive, CUIT, working with Housing Services and the Office of Environmental Stewardship, held two raffles for \$50 gift certificates to Community Food and Juice. Everyone at the University, including faculty and staff, can receive help to achieve the most energy efficient performance on computers by visiting the CUIT Service Center in 102 Philosophy Hall. Read the online Guide to Green Computing for additional tips and to calculate your computer's energy use at [www.environment.columbia.edu/docs-wycd/green\\_guide/index.html](http://www.environment.columbia.edu/docs-wycd/green_guide/index.html).

### **EcoReps at Columbia University Medical Center**

The EcoReps working with CUMC Facilities have implemented paper, bottle and can recycling in all on-campus residential buildings. Since Earth Day last spring, they have offered a free light bulb exchange, where students can trade incandescent bulbs for compact fluorescents (CFLs). New students attending this year's Welcome Expo signed an EcoPledge to make green changes in their daily routine and, in exchange, received a reusable Go Green Columbia canvas bag, an aluminum water bottle and a free CFL bulb. A medical student also initiated Eco-to-Go <<http://ecoagents.org>> with local vendors to cut down on the excess waste and packaging served with food at restaurants, cafes and food trucks around the Medical Center. CUMC EcoReps and Facilities have also partnered on smaller sustainability initiatives, such as making sure draft doors are closed to prevent cool air from escaping during the summer, and cleaning up the bike racks to encourage students, faculty and staff to ride to campus.

### **Sustainable Construction for Manhattanville**

The Manhattanville design and construction team, University Facilities, the Office of Environmental Stewardship, and Environmental Health and Safety staff, with input from

Mailman School of Public Health faculty, have been working with the public interest group Environmental Defense Fund to develop a state-of-the-art plan to minimize the impact on air quality during construction in the Manhattanville area. For example, construction equipment will use new, cleaner diesel engines, ultra-low sulfur diesel and a high-efficiency verified particulate filter in the exhaust. The University is working with equipment manufacturers and contractors on specifications and will mandate that all equipment be verified to meet the requirements before being allowed on-site. A key component of the effort is air monitoring stations that will continuously take measurements of air quality in the vicinity. This information will be made publicly available to the local community, and will be posted on Columbia's Manhattanville Planning Web site at [www.neighbors.columbia.edu/pages/manplanning](http://www.neighbors.columbia.edu/pages/manplanning).

### **Student Grants for Sustainable Campus and Community**

Students can now apply for grants of up to \$1,000 to fund innovative projects that promote a culture of sustainability for the University and its neighbors. Projects may relate to biodiversity, energy conservation, recycling, transportation, new media, water conservation, air quality, community gardens, and green building, among others. Projects must have either relevance to the local community or seek to develop public policy in the local area. Individual students or groups are eligible to apply for grants, with priority given to projects that also have funding from other sources. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis throughout the academic year. The grant program is sponsored by the Offices of Environmental Stewardship, Government and Community Affairs, and the Provost. For more information, visit [www.environment.columbia.edu](http://www.environment.columbia.edu).

### **Don't Forget to Share Your News and Ideas**

Help us promote your own efforts to help Columbia become more sustainable. Please e-mail Nilda Mesa, assistant vice president of environmental stewardship, with your ideas at [environment@columbia.edu](mailto:environment@columbia.edu).

Please share information about what you and your office are doing to support a sustainable Columbia by sending your news and updates to Clare Oh in the Office of Communications and Public Affairs at [clare.oh@columbia.edu](mailto:clare.oh@columbia.edu).