

GREEN IMPACT

newsletter

Dear AMES students and staff,

I hope you are all well and have managed to keep healthy and safe during these unprecedented times. This is a quick update from the AMES Green Impact Team student rep to introduce us to new faculty members and present our plans and ideas for the year.

The team was funded a couple of years ago as part of the Green Impact Challenge, a university-wide project aiming to encourage cooperation between students and staff in the efforts to reduce the environmental impact of faculties, colleges, labs etc. From tackling waste management and carrying out energy audits to campaigning for sustainable travel alternatives and circulating educational resources, the Green Impact Team has proven to be a wonderful opportunity to engage the student and staff community and raise awareness about environmental problems, and we are very proud to say that we have repeatedly won a Bronze Award as part of the aforementioned Green Impact Challenge.

This year we were originally aiming to step up our game and work towards fulfilling the requirements of the Silver award: however, the outbreak of the pandemic and the resulting disruption in the normal working mechanisms of the faculty has forced us to reevaluate our priorities. We have come to the conclusion that, since the faculty building is currently accessed by a small percentage of students and staff and with all the uncertainty surrounding this second national lockdown, many of the actions suggested by the Green Impact Challenge do not currently seem feasible. We are also well aware that this year has been undoubtedly challenging for many of us, and we frankly didn't feel like adding in extra pressure or commitments would be in anyone's best interest. But while we might be putting the "official" Green Impact Challenge on pause for the year 2020/2021, this doesn't mean that the faculty will stop working towards improving its environmental sustainability! Some truly inspiring initiatives have been going on behind the scenes, like the creation of a dedicated teleconferencing room and the adoption of a carbon offsetting scheme for travels undertaken by faculty staff. The impact of these actions goes well beyond the yearly scope of the Green Impact Challenge, and it's a good reminder that there are still a variety of actions that we can take to tackle environmental problems at a more systemic level. We wanted to share this with the hope of keeping the conversation around Green Impact going and building a dedicated community, so that once things go back to normal we'll be ready to resume our efforts.

That being said, if you're interested about Green Impact and you'd like to learn more, we'd love to hear from you! Similarly, if you have any sustainability-related news, comment or suggestion, feel free to share it with us by emailing the team's current student rep Sara Pocher at sp876@cam.ac.uk! We're planning to issue a termly newsletter compiling a variety of resources and examples of inspiring sustainable actions, and any contribution would be more than welcome!



On that note, here are some resources we thought you might find interesting:

-Thanks to the efforts of student activism, the University of Cambridge has finally committed to fully divest from fossil fuels! You can read more about the big news here: <https://www.varsity.co.uk/news/19931>. If you want to learn more about divestment or want to get involved with the movement, the Cambridge Zero Carbon Society is a great place to start: <https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeZeroCarbonSociety/>

-If you're interested in learning more about climate change and climate justice, 350.org has a wonderful collection of educational resources as well as crash courses on a lot of related topics: <https://trainings.350.org/online-skill-ups/>

-Spotlight on China and its relationship with the environment and climate change! For some interesting books on the subject, check out China's Environmental Challenges and Mao's War Against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China by Judith Shapiro. You might also want to look back on this panel organized by the Cambridge University China Forum on the topic of "China and Climate Change: Hero or Villain?": <https://www.facebook.com/camchina/videos/353740862362903/>

Thank you very much for reading all the way, we hope this provided you with some food for thought! Wishing everyone a good rest of term and we'll get in touch again soon.

Sara Pocher and the AMES Green Impact Team