

Amusement saves the world

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For Amusement

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December 2006-Anna Turner watches *An Inconvenient Truth* and is stunned to discover that Melissa Etheridge still has a career in music.

January 2007-House Bill 251 was passed, requiring all Ohio Universities to reduce building energy consumption (both on and off campus) by 20% by the year 2014. 2004 was used as the starting point, meaning that Miami has a decade to meet House Bill 251's requirements.

September 2008-A report entitled "Sustaining Miami University for a Third Century" is presented to the university by the Presidential Task Force on Environmental Sustainability. The report deals with increasing energy efficiency and other sustainability issues.

May 2009-Anna Turner re-watches *An Inconvenient Truth*, but gets bored half-way through and switches to *Heavy Weights*.

September 2009-Miami University hosts Towards A More Sustainable Miami: A Town Hall Meeting to create open dialogue amongst community members on the topic of sustainability.

David Prytherch, newly-appointed campus Sustainability Coordinator, is one of the speakers for the event, which takes place Thursday, September 3.

"There is a lot of enthusiasm at Miami about sustainability," Prytherch says, "All of these groups across campus are working independently to improve sustainability and efficiency. It's about bringing those groups together and making it a community-wide effort."

Luckily for Prytherch, he does not have to go through the song-and-dance of collaboration—wasting all those hours "bringing those groups together" and "making it a community-wide effort." This reporter has all the answers he needs to make Miami 20% more efficient by 2014:
On Air Pollution...

Problem: Americans have the largest carbon footprint per person in the world—but that's only because China wears such small shoes. Dr. Prytherch believes that Miami students and staff are not atypical to this statistic, saying our transportation habits emit excess carbon into the atmosphere. "I was part of a campus transportation study, and we found that Miami students and staff do a lot of gratuitous driving. We drive a lot and we drive short distances."

Solution: Drive longer distances. If you have to get to Millett from North Quad, drive around campus six or seven times before reaching your destination. If you don't have time to make a few victory laps around Oxford, leave your car idling while in class. This has the same effect as driving long distance without actually having to go anywhere. Major environmental crisis averted. NEXT.

On Recycling...

Problem: Not everyone has seen the Bill Nye: The Science Guy episode about Recycling, so not everyone knows what trash to throw away, and what trash to reduce, reuse, or recycle. Prytherch comes across trash cans overflowing with recyclable items or items that are produced in recyclable forms, and all he sees is a missed opportunity. "It's more convenient to people to throw it in the trashcan in the classroom than put it in the recycling bin out in the hallway."

Bigger trashcans provide more space for trash, meaning everything can fit, recyclables included. There is a reason they are called trash*cans* and not trash*can't*s. Major environmental crisis averted. NEXT.

On Energy Efficiency...

Problem: Miami relies entirely on non-renewable resources when it comes to energy.

According to “Sustaining Miami University for a Third Century,” the energy mix at Miami is 27% electricity, 55% coal, 17% natural gas, and 1% oil. Prytherch believes there are several ways to improve energy efficiency at Miami. “Some buildings stay lit all the time, some buildings are far too cold in the summer or way too hot in the winter,” says Prytherch. “There’s a lot we can do as a university to a) waste less and, b) come up with more sustainable ways to do the things we already do.”

Solution: Be sure to leave any electronic devices plugged in and turned on AT ALL TIMES.

Keep heaters and air conditioners running ALL YEAR. The faster Miami uses up the finite supply of fossil fuels, the sooner the university will have to switch to alternative energy sources. Major environmental crisis averted. NEXT.

On Saving Paper...

Problem: A large institution like Miami requires a lot of paper. While the university is making an effort to reduce the amount of paper used, Prytherch is adamant that Miami can do more.

“Whole forests are sacrificed to support the operations of the university,” Prytherch asserts.

“Trees are being felled right now.”

Solution: Canada. Go to Canada. They’ve already got the lumberjacks and it is pretty obvious that they’ve got trees. Their flag is a picture of a maple leaf—it can’t be any more obvious where the trees are. Major environmental crisis averted. NEXT.

So there you have it, Miami: Sustainability issue solved.



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