

Boston College Launches New Model for University-Wide Engagement

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Could alumni be a missing link in sustainable trends on campuses?

With over 20 times the current student population, Boston College's alumni network is teaming up with faculty and students to keep current with the latest environmental research, help students get green jobs, and enhance Boston College's contribution to creating a sustainable economy.

In addition to diplomas, graduates of Boston College received a new document to commemorate this year's commencement: an invitation to join the newly launched Boston College Energy & Environment Alumni Network (BCEEAN). The network connects faculty members, students and alumni who are active or interested in the field of energy and environmental studies.

In less than two years, BCEEAN has grown to 500 members, published three newsletters, hosted multiple environmentally-focused events for alumni in Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C., and sponsored a university-wide conference on sustainability that brought a diverse group of campus stakeholders. This group of more than 180 Boston College trustees, administrators, staff, alumni, faculty, and students gathered to discuss, plan and dream on the subject of "Excelling at Sustainability: Leadership for Others."

Faculty, students, and alumni meet at the BCEEAN Sustainability Conference

"Our goal is to energize, inspire, and unite our entire university community, on-campus and beyond" explained network co-chair and environmental attorney Fran Dubrowski, a 1970 graduate. "We also hope to create a model for universities to engage a broader audience in environmental discussions. To build a sustainable economy, we need to involve all sectors of society – to start talking to each other across disciplines and across political, geographic, age, and demographic lines."

Alumni and student exchange ideas at the BCEEAN Sustainability conference.

Boston College's Jesuit heritage and mission of uniting academic achievement with a tradition of service to others figured prominently in the network's formation. "Boston College trained us to identify our passions and talents, match those against the world's needs, and be 'men and women for others'," said network co-chair and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency attorney-advisor Patricia Randolph Williams, a 1977 alumna of the college. "This challenge has special resonance in the energy and environment field, where United States consumption patterns and energy choices impact millions around the globe."

The network's ongoing goals include:

- enabling alumni to jump-start student careers in energy and environment,
- helping alumni stay abreast of energy and environmental developments by connecting them to cutting-edge faculty research and to the insights and experiences of other alumni, and
- enhancing Boston College's contribution to creating a sustainable economy.

"Alumni associations are the perfect place to begin a transformational conversation across career paths and backgrounds," explained Dubrowski, "because they already cross those lines. With 20 times more alumni than current students, our alumni network hopes to be a seed that grows and eventually helps transform how both our college as well as other universities tackle the challenge of sustainability."

For more information on Boston College Energy & Environment Alumni Network (BCEEAN), please visit www.alumniconnections.com

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