Sustainability and the Mission Final Project

Jill Finch

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I’m very appreciative to be a part of the first cohort of the Sustainability and the Mission Program. Being part of this program also was a great way to meet colleagues from across campus and learn about different perspectives on sustainability. Going into the program I had no idea how much I would learn about living a sustainable lifestyle and how much Xavier integrates sustainability initiatives across campus.

One aspect of this class that really impressed me were all of the “field trips” we took around campus to learn about sustainability initiatives. After working at Xavier for over 5 years, I really never knew about any of these and it was absolutely fascinating to learn about everything that is going on behind the scenes. The trip to the small chapel in the academic mall was truly eye opening. I had no idea that there was geothermal under the chapel and all that it takes to maintain the chapel. Another trip we took over to the Physical Plant Power Plant to learn more about how the campus is heated and cooled was another eye-opening experience. It was amazing to actually go into the different boiler rooms and under Dana Ave. to see how everything works – it definitely gives you a better understanding of why the buildings around campus have fluctuating temperatures.

Another trip we took to the green space above the cafeteria was great to learn about the sprinkler system and why certain plants and trees are planted where they are. Karen was so interesting discussing the different green spaces on campus and their purpose and how complex the sprinkler system is. Walking around campus I never would’ve thought about why there is a specific plant or tree where they are for a reason, now when I’m out walking around it makes me reflect more on why that plant or tree is where it is. When Justin from Chart Wells came into talk to our class that was also eye opening to learn about all of the sustainability initiatives that the cafeteria is taking. It gives you a fresh perspective when you are eating a meal in the cafeteria and you have the information that Justin shared in the back of your mind or when you see the garden of fresh herbs that they are growing in the cafeteria.

The Sustainability and Mission class has really taught me to look at the University from more of a sustainability lens now that I know about the different initiatives that are happening around campus. Seeing all of the sustainability initiatives does give me hope that we are moving in the right direction. Thank you, Tim and Joe, for putting together a wonderful and meaningful class!