**Sustainability and the Mission Program: Capstone Reflection/Project**

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Prior to working at Xavier, I spent the first 20+ years of my professional career working in conservation and environmental education, so I was eager to continue playing a role in sustainability alongside my new position in Education Abroad when I began at Xavier in 2023. During that first year at Xavier, I joined the Laudato Si Sustainable Lifestyles Committee, and took over as the Chair for the 2024-2025 school year. Thus, when I began the Sustainability and the Mission Program (SMP) in fall 2024, I had only been employed at Xavier for about a year and still had much to learn about Xavier’s sustainability efforts.

The SMP has been quite valuable in terms of increasing my awareness and knowledge of sustainability efforts on campus. I greatly appreciated hearing from guest speakers and visiting areas on campus where tangible efforts have been made such as the Nexus garden, central utility plant, and green roof. It also brought to light where additional opportunities to move sustainability further forward exist.

I also really enjoyed meeting and networking with a diversity of colleagues from across campus as participants in the program. Reading and discussing chapters from Laudato Si and Laudato Deum each week was a great way to structure conversation and reflection on the Pope’s call to humanity to care for our common home.

The state of our living planet is precarious and whether humanity can alter our current path of destructive behavior is uncertain. And yet, we cannot give up hope. We need sweeping systems and cultural change that can only begin with individuals speaking out and taking action.

Through the Sustainable Lifestyles Committee, I strive to educate and inspire the Xavier community to live more sustainably. Each week, for example, we share a Sustainable Lifestyles post on the announcements and in Today at Xavier. We are also working on projects to promote proper recycling on campus, such as developing residential curriculum in the form of a bulletin board and an active program that RAs can implement in the residence halls. These are just a couple of examples of ways we are trying to make a positive difference for people and our planet here on campus.

There is always more to do, and more capacity needed in order to do it. My sincere hope is that Xavier invests greater resources in and bolsters its commitment to sustainability to enable us to more profoundly walk the sustainability path into the future.