Ray Flannery

Sustainability and the Mission

Throughout my time in this course, I have enjoyed learning about integral ecology and how sustainability is not a monolith, nor is it an independent concept. Instead, sustainability and care for our common home are embedded into many facets of everyday life, some more visible than others. From fast fashion to technology use and many other topics, (un)sustainable decisions big and small are in play. As we progressed through this course, we often reflected on what Xavier students do to heed the call to live sustainably, and how we as faculty and staff engage students in learning about Xavier’s institutional sustainability efforts. I created a non-exhaustive list of some of the sustainable initiatives my office has adopted with the hopes that my team members and I can have a frame of reference and common language for what sustainability encompasses and how we can highlight this in our many interactions with students. By taking stock of our sustainable practices, even the unintentional ones, we can make a more consolidated effort to adhere to them and envision more meaningful change. Moreover, we can stress the direct and indirect impact of these commitments to our student body based on our learning.

The Office of Student Involvement, Gallagher Student Center and Commuter Services’ commitment to sustainability includes:

* Recycling bins in offices
* Partnering with Metro to provide Xavier public transit options in greater Cincinnati
* Shuttling students on buses and vans to Xplore Cincy outings, CVG Airport, and Kroger Oakley Station
* Promoting City Flea secondhand shopping opportunities to students
* Operating annual trips to Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden to support and learn about conservation and biodiversity
* Paperless ticketing and sign-in to events with EngageXU and card readers
* Increased digital promotion of events and programs
* Reusing program supplies when possible (e.g. stuff-a-plush stuffing, paint tablecloths, etc.)
* Supporting environmental Student Organizations including:
  + Alternative Breaks
  + Birdwatching Club
  + Club Sports
  + Outdoor Club
  + Xavier Student Sustainability
* Staff pack lunches in reusable containers
* Donating leftover or unused program/Club supplies (e.g. Crayons to Computers, thrift stores)
* Distributing reusable grocery tote bags to all families who register and check-in for Family Weekend
* Turning off lights in Gallagher Student Center when spaces are vacant
* Certifying three staff as Ignatian Educators of Distinction for Sustainability