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JOHN CABOT UNIVERSITY
OCTOBER 2019

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In collaboration with

GRASSROOTS

Blowing the lid off of plastic consumption

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Letter from the editor

Dear JCU Community,

It is with great joy that we present to you the October Issue of *The Matthew*. As you can tell by the cover, this issue concerns one of the most pressing topics of our generation: sustainability. We have partnered up with John Cabot's Grassroots Club with the intent to bring forth a discussion concerning our planet.

In this issue you will find articles on green initiatives in JCU, advice on how to live a more sustainable life, as well as articles commenting on political and social issues worldwide.

As always, we are so thankful for the insightful articles written by our community. It is our pleasure to be a platform for a progressive dialogue and change. If you are interested in being apart of the conversation on *The Matthew*, submit an article via email at newspaper@johncabot.edu or directly on our website, thematthew.org.

Sincerely,
Adriana DeNoble
Editor in Chief



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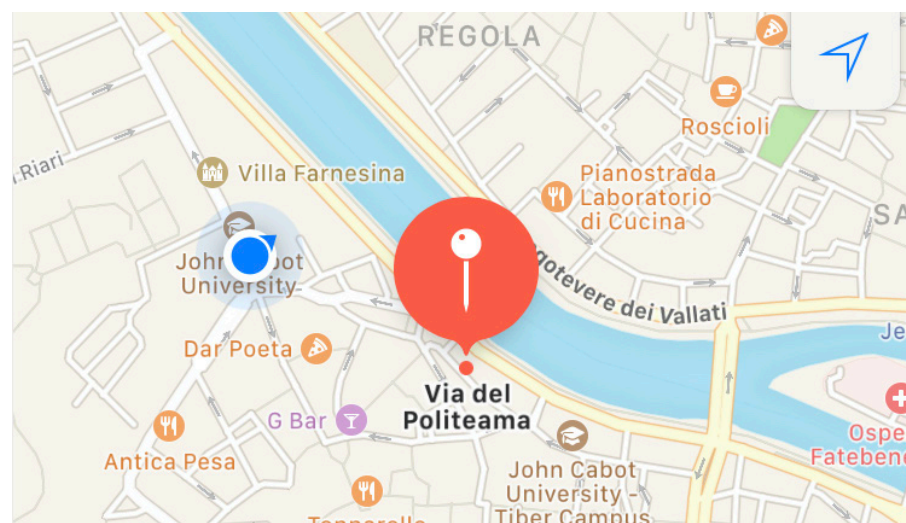
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Photo by Adriana DeNoble



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A More Sustainable JCU

By: Marija Rakovic

There is no denying that climate change and pollution are the biggest crises humanity has ever faced, and our generation will have to deal with it for years to come. The sad truth is that all of us contribute to it in some way or another. Yet, small steps can make a huge difference. That is why since its conception in 2009, Grassroots has engaged in several projects and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainability in John Cabot, hoping to transform our university into a sustainable environment.

Currently, we are focusing our efforts on making JCU a plastic-free university. As we are aware, plastic is one of the main polluters of our planet. A mind-blowing 8% of global oil is used to produce it, according to the World Economic Forum, which creates considerable amounts of greenhouse gases. Even worse is the fact that only one fifth of all plastics are recyclable, and it is estimated that nearly 18 billion pounds of plastics flow into the ocean every year from coastal regions.

The only way to stop the deterioration of our planet is to stop consuming it. This is why we have been working hard in these past months, finally reaching a series of milestones with the help of students, partnering clubs, and the JCU Administration.

New JCU Aluminum Bottles

Our university has recently purchased 8,000 aluminum bottles and started distributing them to all students, faculty, and staff since Oct. 3 in Tiber Campus, eliminating plastic cups from all drinking fountains. If you have been unable to get your bottle, you can still go to the Tiber Campus Front Office with your JCU ID to get one.

The bottles will also be distributed to newcomers every semester so that everyone who steps into JCU will embark on a journey that starts on an environmentally-friendly note.

In addition, a new drinking fountain has been installed in the new Critelli Campus annex so that all campuses are now equipped with water stations to refill bottles.

No More Plastic in Vending Machines

In conjunction with these efforts, JCU aims to remove plastic cups from every coffee machine, substituting it with paper cups and wooden coffee stirrers, as well as substituting plastic bottles in vending machines with aluminum water cans.

Grassroots Sponsorship Program

Grassroots has started a sponsorship program this semester to help student clubs make their events plastic-free and sustainable. The Sponsorship Program is specific to plastic-free initiatives: we plan to sponsor these events by offering budgetary contributions to those who are interested in purchasing plastic-free tableware. Grassroots already started sponsoring some events including the World Culture Club's first Afrobeat dance lessons. For more information, read the guide on how to make your JCU event eco-friendly on the university's Admissions website.

Tiber Cafè

We continue to have big plans for the cafeteria as well. The aim is to eliminate all plastic from this campus space. Since last semester, Tiber Cafè is already offering alternatives such as biodegradable plates, paper cups for beverages and fruit, as well as compostable takeaway containers. All you need to do is ask the Tiber Cafè staff for the eco-friendly alternative.

In terms of food waste, the problem is still hard to beat: we as students need to become more conscious of our dietary behaviors and the effect of their food consumption. To address this issue, we are trying to create educational spaces and initiatives where students can learn how to become sustainable citizens by working in close contact with the Tiber Cafè and the Administration.

Your eco-friendly role on campus

What can you do now as we continue develop numerous sustainable initiatives? If you have leftover food ask for the new biodegradable takeaway containers or bring some Tupperware. If you want some fruit ask for the paper cup alternative. Avoid purchasing plastic water bottles from vending machines at all costs, and use your own JCU aluminum water bottle, or simply drink from the fountain. If you want to take away your coffee, ask for a paper cup and avoid the plastic cap; alternatively, bring a reusable coffee mug. Try not to overindulge with the food on your plate, and opt for a refill instead: our eyes tend to be bigger than our stomachs, and it is a shame to waste perfectly good food.

Overall, try not to consume plastic whenever possible, seek the eco-friendly options that our campus is currently offering, and engage in sustainable behaviors.

While we bring awareness and environmental engagement to all JCU students, and keep pushing towards making John Cabot a sustainable university, we ask you to change with us.

Be the change.



Photo by: Federica Giandolfo

The Battle of Maunakea vs. TMT: Indigenous Rights vs. Technology

By Emily Cegielski

What would you do if your place of worship was to be defiled?

The Hawaiian Islands are facing yet another threat to their indigenous rights as the Thirty Meter Telescope International Observatory (TIO) is pushing the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) to be built on the region of Maunakea. Maunakea is a mountain located on the Big Island of Hawaii which is considered sacred by Hawaiians. Hawaiians do not oppose technological advancement, but they do oppose their culture being demolished.

Imagine this. In a parallel universe, a time travel machine has been created, and it is powered by a special dust that can only be found on the ground that the Vatican stands on. The creators of the time machine declare that the Vatican is the best location for their device and that half of the Vatican must be removed in the name of science. The Western world cries in an uproar because the Vatican is a symbol of the Western Catholic Church.

There's an allegory for us to get our cogs turning and thinking. Maunakea and TMT have been saturating the news for the past couple of months as it has created an international uproar: the battle of indigenous rights vs technology.

For a long time, Hawaii has suffered from over development and westernization. The suggestion of TMT being built on Maunakea follows the pattern of oppression in Hawaii. Maunakea is more than a mountain and TMT is more than a telescope. This argument is not about science; this argument is about keeping the Hawaiian culture alive. TMT has become a symbol of oppression of the Hawaiian culture.

The Conflict

The battle of Maunakea vs. TMT has been going on since 2009 when TMT International Observatory first decided that Maunakea was possibly the most significant location for astronomy advancements in the whole world, as reported by a writer for The Washington Post, Morgan Krakow. TMT's technology helps astronomers see vivid details that were not possible to see before.

In other words, TMT was to be built on Maunakea, but after protests that began in 2014 and 2015, the plans for building TMT were put on hold. Once 2019 came around, the

Hawaiian Supreme Court decided that building TMT would not defile Maunakea, granting a building permit to TMT International Observatory. Construction of the telescope was to start in July, but hundreds of protesters blockaded the road to Maunakea in opposition to the telescope. Handfuls of protestors were temporarily arrested but everything was handled peacefully. Hawaiians and protestors alike have been standing guard of the road since July 15—and still are blockading the road—to ensure that no telescope is going to be built. Any thought of construction by TMT International Observatory and local government has ceased.

Both parties, Maunakea and TMT International Observatory, have been respectful of each other. TMT acknowledges the spiritual aspect that Maunakea holds by being an active member of the Hawaiian community and engaging in meaningful conversations with locals. TMT supposedly will bring job opportunities and a STEM program for students. Despite these claims, there is still a large amount of resistance to TMT being built. An update from local newspaper The Star Advertiser states that protestors do not plan on moving anytime soon. TMT International Observatory commented that there has been a ten-year delay in its construction of TMT and it is currently looking into its secondary location in the Canary Islands, having recently applied for a building permit if things continue to go south with Maunakea.

The Two Sides

A BBC report by Alice Cuddy on Maunakea presents the different parties and perspectives that are for or against TMT being built on Maunakea. The main argument for TMT, as Cuddy clarifies, is the vast amount of advanced technology and information it would provide. This is the furthest and deepest we would be able to see into space, which means that astronomical discoveries could be anticipated. Another interesting argument in favor of TMT is that navigation and astronomy are culturally tied to Hawaiian culture. Hawaiians have long been navigating by the stars and connected to the sky. The development of the telescope would hence be connecting modern Hawaiians to their culture.

In the arguments against TMT is the

defilement of sacred land. Maunakea is a holy place for the Hawaiians, as it is a part of Hawaiians creation story. Maunakea is where the Gods lived, and only the highest chiefs could go to the summit because it was holy. However, the key argument here against TMT is best described by social media activist, Theresa Keohunani Taber, who was interviewed in Cuddy's article:

“Hawaiian culture and Hawaiian language and Hawaiian resources and Hawaiian people are what Hawaii is. If you start eliminating that narrative, then there is no Hawaii.”

By building TMT, it is one more resource, one more mountain, that has been taken from the Hawaiians.

The Opinion

It is no doubt that TMT would provide space advancement, but TMT has become a symbol of globalization and the prioritization of development rather than preservation. Walter Rite, a Hawaiian activist said:

“We do not want this TMT on this mountain. This mountain represents more than just their building they want to build. This mountain represents the last thing they want to take that we will not give them.”

The fact is that TMT itself is not a moral dilemma; it is the history of abuse in the Hawaiian Islands and TMT is the last straw. Since Hawaii was first colonized by Europeans, the Hawaiians were expended for their resources and forced to assimilate to Western culture. History.com gives more details about the history of Hawaii. The missionaries and merchants colonized Hawaii in the early 19th century. The University of Hawaii mentions that by 1861, the missionaries had banned the natives from speaking Hawaiian, which led to the loss of the language, which is only recently being recovered. Once the 20th century hit, the Americans had stripped any power from the Hawaiian Kingdom and controlled all revenue ventures. By the 1960s, Hawaii became a state by annexation. So the main point here is that Hawaii has a long history of being exploited.

Contrastingly, Hawaiians are very connected to their land. They believe in “Malama Ka’Aina,” which means to take care of the land. It is therefore their responsibility to care of their land, but how can they be responsible for their islands if they have no land? They have been stripped of their responsibility

in the face of development and globalization. Their land has been used for tourism, for science, for everything except preservation. Only a small percentage of land is still owned by Hawaiians, but the Western world does not recognize the significance of what this land means to Hawaiians.

Maunakea already has 13 other telescopes. TMT is just one more Western idea (or telescope) that does not value Hawaiian culture. To the rest of the world, advanced technology is more important than a place of worship. Hawaiian's rights as an indigenous culture are extremely limited even in our contemporary society.

So let us now go back to the allegory of the time machine and the Vatican. If scientists were to try to demolish the Vatican, most likely there would be a massive disturbance because it is seen as a holy and historical place. It would not even be a question to tear down the Vatican. However, when it comes to a marginalized ethnic group's holy place, technology would win.

Referencing Taber again, she also addresses the burning of Notre Dame saying:

“We wouldn't wish that on any people; to lose their place of worship or the place that connects them to the higher power that they believe in. Mauna Kea and all mountains, all sacred places, are just as reverent, just as important as a church or a mosque.”

Globalization tends to put preference towards Western ideals of “proper” religion, advancement, and revenue. Hawaiians have been forced into a dark place where they have lost all control of their home; their land, their water, and their sky. By saying no to TMT, they are taking a step to reclaim their rights as a people and a nation.

We live in an interconnected world. The fact is we are only going to become more globalized and technically “advanced.” There will always be more telescopes, but there will not always be a beautiful people with a sacred mountain full of rich history and tradition. There will not be any Malama Ka’Ani left if we keep on disregarding the importance of cultural diversity.

If you think that Maunakea should be preserved from further development, you can sign the petition to stop the building of TMT at www.change.org.

Who do you side with in this battle?

Protests About Femicide in South Africa

By Caitlyn Davis

Last month, a 19-year-old student at the University of Cape Town, Uyinene “Nene” Mrwetyana, was raped and murdered by post office employee Luyanda Botha. The following week, Leghandre “Baby Lee” Jegels, 25, was shot by her boyfriend who was also a police officer, and another woman known as Mallo was raped and found dead in her grandmother’s yard. These murders put the last nail on the coffin for many South African women who are now demanding more government action against the issue of femicide.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), femicide is the “intentional murder of women because they are women, but broader definitions include any killings of women or girls.” The definition varies because it is difficult for countries to collect motives for these murders, thus the number of women who are killed because they are women is unknown. The definition is therefore simplified to “any killings of women or girls.” For the majority of these cases, not only is the victim a woman, but the perpetrator is usually a man and/or the partner. Domestic abuse at home is also commonly seen in these cases since the home is an environment where the woman has less power, making her more vulnerable to her abuser.

The abuse against women in South Africa is staggering. A report released from the WHO in 2016 showed that South Africa was number four out of 183 countries for highest female interpersonal violence death. The top three were Honduras, Jamaica, and Lesotho. From 2017 to 2018, 12.5 women out of 100,000 in South Africa were murdered, which is equivalent to 58 murders a day. Not only is South Africa’s murder rate five times the global average, but the murder rate for adult women increased by 7.7 percent in the span of two years, from 2015 to 2017.

“Society has failed women at every level. We have failed them in a legal sense, on a society sense, in our community and in our churches. Every institution in South Africa has failed to protect women. It’s become so endemic in our society that people somehow think this is the norm.”

These are the words of Alex Fitzgerald, a protester who is 8-months pregnant. Which mother wants to raise her child in an environment where violence has become normalized? Last month, shortly after Mrwetyana’s death, several gender-rights activist organisations came together to organize a protest in Johannesburg. The protestors were local men and women, University of Cape Town students and activists. Together, they marched straight to the headquarters of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) in the city’s financial capital, and demanded South Africa’s corporate sector to provide detailed

planning and funding with fighting gender-based violence. The protestors carried signs with phrases: “I don’t want to die with my legs open” and “Actions not words.” They even wore shirts with the hashtag #AmINext, which became popular on social media in support of the protest. The CEO of JSE, Nicky Newton-King, made this statement: “The pain the women in this country are feeling is palpable. I completely understand the need to be heard. The important point of this though is how we mobilize the correct business response to what is a complete tragedy for this country. We have committed to take this to big businesses and devise how to respond appropriately,” as reported by Al Jazeera.

The South African president, Cyril Ramaphosa, has been highly criticized for his perceived lack of interest or concern for this issue. In response, after the protests went on for two days, he promised tougher action against violent crimes against

In fact, a study from Rhodes University does suggest that only 10 percent of all rapes in South Africa are actually reported to the police. However, a study published in 2017 showed that, from 2003 to 2017, only 6 percent of reported rapes in South Africa ended with a conviction. A few years ago, a 14-year-old girl named Valencia Farmer was gang raped and murdered, but only one of her killers was found guilty. He was sentenced to 17 years in prison.

The women of South Africa did not do anything to instigate violence and murder. Researchers and academics actually believe that the major contributing factors to this issue is high levels of unemployment in South Africa (29 percent), inequality, and poverty.

“It’s all leading to a general desperation in society,” comments Lisa Vetten of the University of Witwatersrand Institute for Social and Economic Research for Al Jazeera. “The disenfranchised

cannot exert much power and what that often translates to is people using violence to express their frustration.”

Inequality is argued to be the biggest factor in femicide. Women are not seen as strong as men and capable of fighting back as men in South Africa. Fortunately, there are men who want to change this mentality. Patrick Godana is a manager at Sonke Gender Justice, an NGO that focuses on gender equity in South Africa. He said:

“Gender norms are fueling violence against women, social norms are fueling violence against women, alcohol abuse and poverty, because some men feel like they are less of a man, their esteem as

men is low and therefore they can only present their own authority by shaking and beating up women. My responsibility is to look up and say, ‘What can I do as a man to engage other men in making that change?’”

Godana turns his words into actions by hosting workshops all over the country, explaining to men that women are, in fact, equal. Many of the men who attend these workshops resist and disagree in the beginning, but after listening to Godana giving examples of women being enlisted in the military, women using their voice to take charge, some of them begin to change their mindsets.

Activist Tefo Tlale is one of the men who attended last month’s protests:

“As a black African man, women are not seen as equal decision-makers or having a critical role to play in society. We have to undo that learning and ensure the next generation doesn’t grow up in a society where they think they are better just because they are men.”



Photo courtesy of Discott from Wikimedia Commons

women, according to Africanews.com, stating, “men that kill and rape must stay in jail for life. I agree completely that the killing of women must be brought to an end here in South Africa. We will use every means at the disposal of the state.” He even promised the publication of a sex offender registry and adding eleven more sexual offences courts. The protestors had trouble believing in Ramaphosa’s claims. A protester held a sign that read “Cyril isn’t serious!” and a tweet made by the South African Government did not help make the president’s promises more believable. The tweet read:

“Violence and abuse against women have no place in our society. Govt is calling on women to speak out, and not allow themselves to become victims by keeping quiet. Women who speak out are able to act, effect change and help others.” (@GovernmentZA, Sept. 2)

Many South African citizens were offended by the poor choice of words according to numerous sources including Times, saying that the South African government tried to put the blame on the victims for “allowing themselves” to stay victims.

There's No Consensus — A History of Climate Change Denialism

by Camilla Palermo

Sometimes they lurk in the dark behind organizations, corporations, and the media. Sometimes they are the president of the United States. They are everywhere and often closer than you expect. They often speak the language of profit and exploitation and discredit facts and science. Their rhetoric revolves around belief and alternative facts rather than observable science, and they endanger life on our planet by putting their interests in front of those of everyone else.

They are the climate change deniers, the hoaxers, the skeptics. These are men and women who built their entire careers arm in arm with the highest bidder. But what is climate change denialism, and where does it come from?

Climate change denial, global warming denial, or climate change skepticism, is the discharge or rejection of scientific facts that go against the tide of the scientific consensus on climate change. Many of those who refuse to believe in climate change, or that global warming is anthropogenic, call themselves “climate change skeptics.” However, this is an inaccurate self-description. Skepticism is, in fact, an inherent part of the scientific process, since the latter requires continuous revisions and questioning of findings. Yet, by the year 1995, the word skepticism began to be used to describe the small minority of scientists whose views were contrary to scientific consensus. Interestingly enough, these skeptics presented their views in media appearances, public statements, and seldom to the scientific community.

Climate change deniers view themselves as victims of a conspiracy and are being persecuted for “dissident” views. They claim without evidence that the climate “hoax” is coming from scientists who make up data and conclusions to keep their funding, and that environmental movements perpetuate the hoax to scare us into funding scientists. The story of climate change denialism, however, dates back to the late 1960s and early 1970s. As environmental movements started to pop up around the world, a strong distrust towards businesses followed suit since corporations working in the energy sector started to be seen by the public as the main culprits behind environmental degradation. Governments responded with regulations, and in the United States President Richard Nixon proposed the creation of the EPA (Environmental Protection

Agency).

The fossil fuel industry fired back with a series of actions similar to those adopted by environmentalists, which in hindsight can be seen as real waves of corporate activism: they organized grassroots movements and built coalitions, testified at hearings, used telephone and written campaigns, and used the media and research reports. During the first wave, fossil fuel firms spent millions of dollars to convince the public that the interests of the market and those of the people were the same. Professor Sharon Beder writes about this in her 1997 book, “Global Spin: The Corporate Assault on Environmentalism.” Money and lobbying against environmental action came from massive corporations such as Exxon Mobil, General Motors, and Peabody Energy. Also, trade associations like the American Petroleum Institute and the Western Fuels Association or the U.S Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers substantially mingled with these practices. This information can be read in detail in the article “Organized Climate Change Denial” by Riley E. Dunlap and Aaron M. McCright, published by The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society in 2012.

Moreover and according to David Alberswerth, Senior Policy Advisor of The Wilderness Society Regarding Oil and Gas Exemptions, the fossil fuel corporations financed Ronald Reagan’s Office, who implemented numerous deregulatory acts; established public relations departments and moved close to Washington. In addition, business lobbyists increased and employment in the private sector industry grew rapidly. The main tactic was to convince the public that stricter environmental policies were jeopardizing the people’s freedom of choice, while the only thing at stake though was their brimming pockets. Although Reagan’s Office helped shed light and solve the issue of the ozone hole, he also stated that “trees create more pollution than cars,” and conceded and leased millions of acres of national land to the oil, gas, and coal industries to develop their plants and mines, according to The Wilderness Society, a land conservation organization that is dedicated to protecting natural areas and federal public lands in the United States.

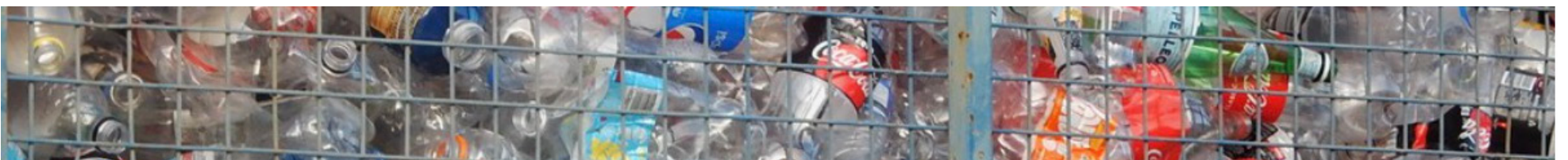
By 1978, power was again a synonym for

corporate. Businesses managed to change beneficial environmental legislation and kept on with business as usual. However, that same year, an internal report by Exxon researcher James Black claimed that, “a doubling of carbon dioxide is estimated to be capable of increasing the average global temperature from 1 degree to 3° degrees C, with a 10 degree C rise predicted at the poles.” In 1980, a meeting at the American Petroleum Institute with researchers from companies including Exxon, Texaco, and Shell concluded that it would be likely that by 2005 we would see 1 degree Celsius of warming, as well as a 2.5 degrees of warming in 2038, and that by 2067, a 5 degrees Celsius rise would result in “globally catastrophic effects.” Forty years later, the U.N. World Meteorological Organization confirms these predictions today, estimating global temperatures will rise from 3 to 5 degrees C in this century, surpassing a global target to limit the increase to 2 C or less, as reported by Reuters.

The 1980s brought along a new host of environmental bad news, such as new information about global warming, the discovery of the ozone hole in 1985 and Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989—the largest oil spill in the history of the United States. People started to think of the environment as a delicate system to protect, demanding stricter laws once again. This set in motion a second wave of corporate activism, the “denial machine,” which this time targeted environmental groups directly and used all its power against them, characterizing them as fringe movements composed of crazy, radical individuals. Not only did they create a strategic lawsuit against public participation (known as SLAPP), they used the power of the Advertising Council and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). Industry interests thus have been able to turn the dissatisfaction of rural communities, workers, small business owners, and farmers into an anti-environmental sentiment, while legitimizing an extreme free-market capitalism model. It can be said that ecological awareness was the last obstacle for total social hegemonic power.

Continued on following page...

Courtesy of Micahel Coghlan



There's No Consensus — A History of Climate Change Denialism

by Camilla Palermo



Photo by Sustainable Initiative Fund Trust

Continued...

Throughout the 1990s, the fossil fuel industry started using the weapon of doubt, similar to that used by the tobacco industry—which remains in vogue today. This time, legislation implementation was obstructed by making applications too expensive; the public was convinced that less regulation was better than more; public trust in climate science was undermined, and doubt was manufactured by distributing educational materials to schools and funding universities. The fossil fuel industry green-washed consumers, creating faulty images of themselves. Again, they actively lobbied and spent millions to prevent regulations to pass, achieving more and more political power – which they still retain, while creating a superstructure of government bureaucrats, journalists, and academics, initiating an ideological war, which largely remains the case nowadays.

But who are “they,” who are these people? Some are your neighbor, professor, or a random Facebook user. Yet, many of them are well-paid employees of organizations, politicians, or fossil fuel executives - such as the Koch Brothers, who systematically aimed at blocking any significant

regulatory procedures for fossil fuel emissions, or efforts towards investments in the renewable energies sector. Others are scientists, often handsomely paid by the coal and oil industry such as Wei-Hock Soon, William Happer, or David Legates. Curiously a staggering 90% of papers skeptical of climate change originates from conservative, right-wing think-tanks, who oppose the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, climate change denial is closely linked to political ideology, which is one of the biggest predictors of environmental attitudes. Despite the fact that the fossil fuel corporations created large bodies of research which are broadly in line with the scientific consensus on climate change and global warming, they kept up with the disinformation campaign through specific rhetorical tactics.

There are some common myths and misconceptions used by climate change deniers and skeptics that are repeated over and over again. The most famous one is perhaps the idea that “there’s no consensus,” while in reality, as shown by multiple papers from the *Environmental Research Letters* scientific journal, 97% of scientists agree on anthropogenic climate change. Another one is that “climate has changed in the past,” which is factually

true: climate changes under the pressure of whatever dominant force is in place, yet now that force is human activity. Some skeptics claim that “it is the sun”, while scientific models demonstrate that since the 1980s the heat generated by our star has been decreasing, while the temperature on earth keeps increasing. Others state that climate “models are unreliable”, although they have been successfully predicting climate change since the early 1900s, with the first models taking shape mid 19th century. Others again state that climate change “is natural and cyclical,” while a paper issued by the acclaimed science journal *Nature* analyzed 700 climate records that demonstrated that the past 150 years are the only time in the last 2,000 years in which the earth’s temperature changed on 98% of the planet’s surface and in the same direction: upwards.

As a generation plagued by the constant attacks of fake news, we must hold these ideas in mind. Powerful actors have been contributing to systematically misinform the public for personal, ideological, and economic interests, and will likely keep doing the same in the future. It is already difficult to accept that we are living in the midst of massive global change. We need reliable sources of information to accompany us, and push us towards an ecological transition. It is time for economic and ideological interests to surrender in the face of climate breakdown.

Until then, always remember to mind your news.

The Truth on Our Plates

Saving the world one bite at a time with Meatless Mondays; a proposal for JCU.

by Camilla Palermo

An inconvenient truth lies in our plates, in our fridges, in our pantries. Some of us know, yet fail to take action; others have no idea; others are doing their best. It is difficult to accept this idea, but we are eating our planet away one bite at a time. Our personal dietary choices have an enormous impact on the environment, whether we like it or not. Many of us consider this to be a “delicate argument”, yet the only delicate thing is the health of our ecosystems, which we are systematically endangering also because of the food we choose to eat. In front of ecological collapse and a massive climate breakdown, we must do everything that is in our power to stop this. As individuals, the most powerful weapon we have in our environmentalist arsenal is the food we decide to consume.

Estimates from the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Research Institute, clearly demonstrate that industrialized farming, which dominates the world food production system, is one of the main culprits behind global warming, causing 14.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions - more than the 14% of global transportation systems - and ranking as the second greatest source of emissions on our planet.

The industry often goes hand in hand with deforestation - which causes around 18% of global greenhouse gas emissions alone. Millions of acres of forests are razed to the ground every year to make more space for cattle, or to grow the food that will then feed them.

This is a global issue. The top 20 meat and dairy corporations emit more greenhouse gasses than Germany, which is the world's seventh-largest greenhouse gas emitter, as reported by various sources like the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), the Heinrich Böll Foundation, and GRAIN. Behind the Brazilian Amazon forest fires this year, for example, lies the livestock and agriculture industry. In July only, the fires rose to a staggering 84% more than the same month in 2018, since cattle ranchers and loggers who wanted to clear land for agri-business purposes are now supported by the country's new legislation - or lack thereof. Important to note, in fact, is that Brazil is the largest exporter of beef in the world, and the second biggest importer of their meat is Italy, according to the United States Department of Agriculture. Additionally, much of the Amazon's deforestation is soy mono-crops. Of that produce, more than 80% is used for animal feed and shipped worldwide; 6% is fed to humans; and the re-

maining portion is used to manufacture additives, oils, and sauces, as reported by the Global Forest Atlas Organization.

The world's grasslands, wetlands, and forests are cleared at alarming rates to make space for animals and their food. This is extremely dangerous, and not only because by being razed they disperse massive amounts of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, but they do so because these areas are the earth's defense mechanism: they act as emission sinkholes, trapping them underground.

According to Our World In Data, 71% of the world's land is considered habitable. Fifty percent of it is used for agriculture, and 77% of agricultural land is employed for livestock grazing and animal feed production. Yet, even though these agri-businesses take up such a big chunk of agricultural land, they only provide 17% of global caloric supply and 33% of global protein supply. In other words, as Our World In Data puts it:

the 11 million square kilometers used for crops supply more calories and protein for the global population than the almost four-times larger area used for livestock.

There is no debating that we are eating our planet away.

Although deforestation is an urgent issue to tackle resulting in resource depletion for many human communities, ecosystem loss, and the extinction of numerous species, it is not the only damaging effect of industrialized animal agriculture. Direct emissions of greenhouse gases are central to the issue. Carbon dioxide causes 27% percent of the emissions linked to industrial animal farming, yet methane and nitrous oxide, 28 and 265 times respectively more powerful than CO₂, are part of this problematic landscape. The greatest source of these gases is ruminants— including cows, sheep, and goats, who produce methane during their digestive processes — to put it politely.

Agricultural machinery, fertilizers, and intensive monocultures drain and overtax the soil; antibiotics, toxins, and hormones excreted by animals end up in our oceans, rivers, and streams, poisoning the water and the life in it. What aggravates the situation further is the fact that industrial animal agriculture is extremely water-intensive. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports that in order to produce the equivalent of one hamburger, we require 660 gallons of water, which are the equivalent of two to three months of showers. The livestock in-

dustries use 29% of the freshwater in the world, returning it to the environment as contaminated farm runoff.

The oceans too are plagued by our eating habits: overfishing is one of the biggest culprits behind ocean depletion and the loss of various species daily. According to FAO, about 32% of the world's fish are being exploited beyond sustainability, and in the Mediterranean and Black seas, about 60% of fisheries are fished at unsustainable levels. Between 1970 and this year, ocean life dropped by 50% due to overfishing, according to the WWF, and the disappearance of many species represent a danger for other marine animals that depend on them for food. Whales, dolphins, sharks, and other larger fish sometimes get caught in fishing gear.

Meatless Mondays at JCU- A Proposal

With data at hand, we cannot remain silent, nor turn our heads in the other direction. Saving life on earth is much more important than our taste buds, and adopting a plant-based diet is not only becoming a moral imperative for our generation, but it has become a tool to create massive global change.

In order to offer more sustainable and healthy food to students and curb our emissions as a university, Grassroots has proposed the implementation of Meatless Mondays to JCU's Administration, starting Spring 2020. Meatless Mondays is an international initiative that encourages people not to consume meat on Mondays for both environmental and health reasons – since heavy animal products consumption is linked with certain types of cancer, obesity, and heart disease. Numerous institutions and universities around the world have already adopted it.

Your Support

To implement Meatless Mondays in our university we need your support: starting last week, you will be able to answer a comprehensive list of questions in a SurveyMonkey to show your support to our cause. Also, Grassroots and the Student Government will soon be organizing a Student Forum that you are kindly invited to participate in, to explain to you the plan, give you more information, and hear your doubts and ideas.

Go Vegan

By Mittmac

HOW TO EMBRACE SUSTAINABLE FASHION: THINK OUTSIDE THE (CARDBOARD) BOX

By Sofia Carlettini

Sustainable fashion has become an extremely debated topic nowadays. Many brands are currently choosing to “go green”; in other words, their new aim is to produce sustainable pieces of clothing that will reduce environmental impact. Younger generations, in particular, are increasingly aware of the environmental problems that our world suffers from, which is why many people are starting to demand products that will not cause further damage to Mother Earth.



By Kimco Realty (flickr),

There are many strategies with which one can embrace fashion sustainability, here are a few of them:

1. Purchasing Vintage Clothing.

Buying secondhand and vintage clothing can be an easy eco-way to shop. Vintage is an increasingly popular trend among celebrities as well. A prime example is the Duchess of Sussex, Megan, who was photographed wearing a 1960s Dior coat. Iconic celebrities such as Kim Kardashian, Rihanna, and Bella Hadid were found wearing vintage clothes both on and off the red carpet. After all, old fashion trends always make a comeback.



by markusspiske (pixabay)

2. Purchasing from eco-friendly brands.

Many sustainability driven high-end fashion brands, such as Gucci, Stella McCartney, and Mara Hoffman, are changing their business model and manufacturing materials to prevent environmental impact. In the same way, many affordable brands are embracing fashion sustainability as well. For example, Reformation is one of the most loved women’s brands in America right now, which uses recycled and sustainable materials for its collections. Moreover, Thought Clothing is an English brand based in London which produces women’s and men’s clothing using eco-friendly, natural, and recycled fabrics.



by Jason Hargrove (flickr)

3. Renting Clothes.

Yes, you read it right. Renting pieces of clothing and accessories is actually the most efficient way to embrace fashion sustainability. Every time you rent, you’re saving all electricity, water, and emissions used to manufacture a new piece of clothing. Plus, did you know that the average American throws away 81 pounds of clothing per year? Renting clothes could drastically change this statistic. If you are considering to rent instead of purchasing clothes, here are a few tips for you: Rent the Runway is a famous online renting service that provides unlimited designer clothing and accessories. Similarly, Drexcode is a well-established and affordable Italian e-commerce which rents high-end fashion clothes and ships them throughout Europe.

Are you ready to join the sustainable fashion revolution?
What are you waiting for?

Work in Progress: Towards a Plastic-Free and Carbon-Neutral University

by Giacomo Di Capua

We are the first generation to be able to end poverty and the last generation that can take steps to avoid the worst impacts of Climate Change. Future generations will judge us harshly if we fail to uphold our moral and historical responsibilities.

With these words, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon accurately portrayed the unparalleled threat that the 21st century world is to confront: we live as witnesses of one of the most crucial periods in the history of humanity.

The burden of unregulated consumerism, and the lack of serious commitments towards environmental protection and conservation efforts, have brought our planet on the verge of collapse. In the last year, however, the birth and spreading of a generational movement demanding more action and efforts into the fight for climate change from national governments struck a chord in communities and peoples around the globe: the Fridays For Future movement.

As of this month, here at John Cabot University, we feel this new momentum. We feel that students are coming to the long-ignored realization that ecology and environmentalism should not be a sole concern of environmentalists and scientists. The state of our environment affects us all, and our generation is now asking for more room for change and improvement in our ways of conducting business, life, and education.

For this very reason, the project of becoming a plastic-free university has been intensively discussed now as it has never been before. Since this semester, a wide array of initiatives have been launched to perform a transition towards using non-plastic materials during Student Life events—and even among the entire JCU community through the recent distribution of JCU water bottles.

One of the main initiatives is a new JCU plastic-free sponsorship program promoted by our very own Grassroots Club and implemented by the university last month. The program, entirely funded and enacted by JCU's environmental club, mobilizes Grassroots' financial and media resources to assist other student organizations in reducing their net plastic consumption and waste. Thanks to this Sponsorship Program, all student clubs have the opportunity to apply to the Grassroots Board for budgetary assistance, in order to purchase non-plastic articles for their events, with the final goal of reducing disposable plastics in Student Life activities to zero — before 2021. Upon acceptance of requests, the applying clubs will receive financial resources for their non-plas-

tic materials, consultancy for zero-plastic event formats, and additional social media coverage for their event by the Grassroots team. For more information on applying for plastic-free events, visit our Facebook page (@JCUBeTheChange) and see which events have been sponsored so far.

Even though those efforts already constitute a solid starting point for greener and more sustainable standards for our university, we can and must dare more. Along this ambitious path we ought to follow, the Grassroots Club considers there are key next steps to put into effect.

Carbon Neutrality

As a renowned and esteemed academic institution, the mandate of our community and administration should further include the university's carbon neutrality as a substantial priority for the years to come.

Compensating for universities' own carbon emissions and negative environmental externalities has rapidly become a benchmark for outstanding academic institutions worldwide. Through a co-operative network called the International Alliance of Research Universities, academic institutions such as the University of Oxford, Harvard, Yale, University of Cape Town, and University of Berkeley, California, among others have been committing to sustainability in their campuses since 2006.

Initiatives such as the Meatless Mondays and the inclusion of more vegetarian meals in Tiber Cafè have been already proposed by the student body and if properly implemented at John Cabot University, could significantly impact our net environmental impact.

Ecosia

In addition to that, another paramount step to take for the sake of JCU's carbon neutrality is to initiate the installation of the search engine Ecosia in every computer on campus and to propose the same to students for their own personal devices. Ecosia finances reforestation projects worldwide, and its usage by the JCU community, together with external financing strategies towards reforestation projects, could critically help our university balance its carbon footprint.

Renewable energy & electric efficiency

Other efficient and innovative methods to reduce energy waste and electric consumption, on

which Grassroots will be working in the following months, are enhancing energy efficiency by investing in high-efficiency and renewable energy-based technologies. The installation of low-consuming LED bulbs could greatly benefit the university by increasing its electric energy efficiency and driving down electricity-related expenditures, while at the same time our annual energy waste would decrease. In addition, purchasing portable wind turbines and small-sized photovoltaic panels to be placed on roofs and connect them to separate grids, could further cut our energetic needs, as well as power zero-emission charger stations for personal devices such as smartphones and laptops around campuses.



Academic programs

Furthermore, following the lead of fellow universities such as the American University of Paris, the Richmond University of London, the Tor Vergata and LaSapienza universities of Rome, the Grassroots Club remarks the urgency with which consistent academic programs, encompassing Environmental Studies, Sustainability, and Ecology, are to be introduced in our course options.

Continued on following page...

Work in Progress: Towards a Plastic-Free and Carbon-Neutral University

by Giacomo Di Capua, President, Grassroots Club

Declaration of Environmental Emergency

Finally, it is important to understand that environmental concerns are a worldwide increasingly pivotal topic, and JCU should take a stance on those matters. As programs of environmental activism, education and awareness increasingly stage in the long-term projections of higher education institutions worldwide, the need for JCU to act along this trend is clearer than ever. While committing to greener standards by investing in sustainable technologies and practices is profoundly commendable, declaring the long-term commitment of our university towards a plastic-free, carbon-neutral, and environmentally aware paradigm is today fundamental.

For this reason, the Grassroots Club will submit a proposal to the university to adopt the Declaration of Environmental Emergency, a document drafted by The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education (EAUC), the US-based higher education climate action organization, Second Nature, and UN Environment's Youth and Education Alliance.

The document, endorsed by the United Nations and internationally known as the Sustainable Development Goals Accord, calls for academic institutions worldwide to commit to three main goals:

Goal 1- "Mobilizing more resources for action-oriented climate change research and skills creation;"

Goal 2- "Committing to going carbon neutral by 2030 or 2050 at the very latest;"

Goal 3- "Increasing the delivery of environmental and sustainability education across curriculum, campus and community outreach programmes."

As of Oct. 14 of the current year, the signatories include 195 Higher and Further Education institutions, 3 Students' Unions, and 50 networks – representing a grand total of more than 3 million 894,702 students and 8,899 institutions.

The over 9,000 signatories of this declaration range from higher education institutions in Northern America to schools and universities in Africa, Asia, and Europe. If the ratification of such Declaration was to be a reality, John Cabot University would be the second signatory of the

declaration in Italy (after the Tor Vergata University of Rome) and the first abroad-American university to sign the document worldwide. In the United States, the document has already been widely accepted and the signatories already include several higher education networks and more than 30 autonomous colleges and universities.

Upon previous consultation with other JCU student clubs and organizations, Grassroots strongly believes the above mentioned goals to be within our scope as an academic institution, reachable within the proposed timelines (2021 for single-plastic elimination and 2050 for JCU's carbon neutrality), and critically beneficial to the national and international public image of our university.

We live as witnesses of one of the most crucial periods in the history of humanity, and now we have the priceless opportunity of becoming game-changers by taking the lead of dynamically changing institutions and representing the vanguard of environmentally sustainable universities worldwide.

The Department of Environment of the United Nations will publish the official list of adhering institutions on Nov. 1.

We believe our university can reach the three main goals for academic institutions worldwide that the UN Accord requires. Grassroots believes it is of utmost interest and benefit to the university for it to be included in such a list.

In the next few months, we will continue working on the planning, proposal, implementation, and control of those fundamental projects for our community while collecting data and gathering information to assess their long-term effectiveness and financial sustainability—and we need everyone's help.

Grassroots is and will continue to collaborate with JCU student clubs and the Administration, together with students and faculty, in order to pursue a more sustainable paradigm of university for us and for the environment. However, change is already happening worldwide and the time at our disposal is rapidly shrinking. We only have two options: to either join that change, or watch it happen.



By *filmbetrachterin* (pixabay.com)

creative voices



Photo by Jan Bjørnaas

WHITE

by Marilù Ciabattoni

Count to three.
Count to ten.
Count them all,
Then start again.

Here I stay,
Hoping to
Find answers in my breath,
While I stare at
That shiny
Triangle of light.
Tortured by these thoughts
In my mind.
In this mind
In this head.
My head
In this body.
My body.
Recenter,
Breath.
Breathing is the answer.

I've seen you go,
Late at night.
I've lost my way
And found it twice.
I looked for truth
And it was white.

Chivalry isn't dead, yet

by Oliver Thiel

Chivalric love is not dead, my Dearest.
For when I listen to these songs of mine,
You are there. You are with me in my heart.
I know you are there, my truest Love. You
escape all form, all confinement of thought.
I hear these sorrows with an open heart,
but a closed, lost mind. I grasp for the Who
to no avail. I call for the how's and
when's of love, with an echoing silence.
Just a reflection of the void within.
Chivalric love is not dead, my Dearest.
For I know you are out there, in here, Love.
I will press on through this struggle, for You.
Chivalric love is not dead, my Dearest.



Drawing by Chryssi Soteriades



La Città Eterna

Via del Politeama, Trastevere
Photos by Adriana DeNoble