



February 2025 Newsletter

New Year, New Opportunities

We hope you have been staying warm during this chilly winter and are adjusting to the new semester! Exciting things are in the cards for sustainability efforts at CMU in the coming months. Stay tuned to find out what projects and events Central Sustainability (CS) is working on!



What to Expect from CS this Semester

CS has been busy planning projects, policies, and programming to continue furthering sustainability at CMU. The following are a few of the exciting things to come:



Earth Week

CS will host a variety of programming to celebrate Earth Week. This year, CS is planning a series of sustainable volunteer events and opportunities to encourage student engagement with sustainability.

Campus Race to Zero Waste

CS will facilitate CMU's participation in Campus Race to Zero Waste (CR2ZW), a national competition among colleges and universities to reduce the most amount of waste and improve campus sustainability efforts.

Outreach

CS coordinators will be presenting to K-12 classes in the Mount Pleasant area to teach them about sustainability and connect with the local community.

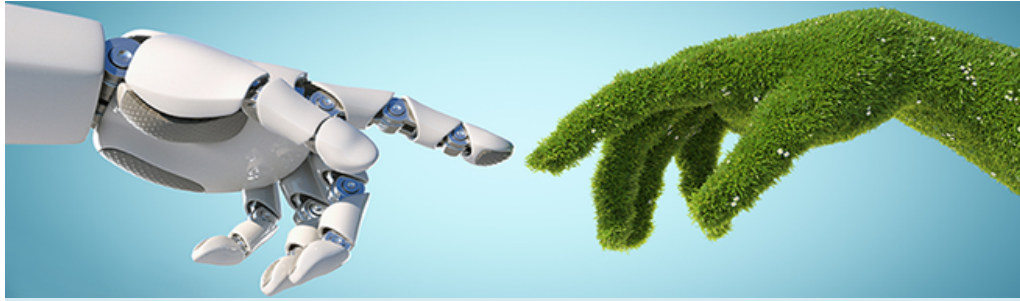


Resolve to be Sustainable this Year!

For many, a new year is an opportunity to improve. Sustainable change often starts with a single person. For those looking to make some changes, here are a few ideas for sustainable new year's resolutions:

- Eat meat once a day/week
- Shop local or second-hand
- Carpool
- Use reusable grocery bags
- Plant a garden
- Walk or bike
- Avoid single-use plastics
- Read about sustainability
- Bring reusable containers out to eat
- Compost
- Learn to recycle in your community
- Use a reusable water bottle

Topic of the Month: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Environment



What is AI?

AI is a generalized term for a group of technologies that processes information in a way that aims to mimic human thinking. Recently, AI has become a widespread tool used to generate internet search results, writing, and more, prompting a debate over its ethical use, regulation, and impact.

What is AI's environmental impact?

AI has environmental costs and benefits. AI requires a lot of energy, mostly from fossil fuels. ChatGPT, a popular AI, uses 10 times the energy of regular Google searches. By 2026, the International Energy Agency predicts AI will make up 4% of global energy usage, roughly the amount used by Japan. Data centers hosting AI are built using many limited resources, often mined in environmentally destructive ways. If not recycled properly, these materials become hazardous electronic waste. Building and operating these centers also consumes increasing amounts of water, estimated to exceed over six times the amount of water used by Denmark.

Using AI for certain purposes, however, such as data collection and analysis, can increase efficiency and reduce energy usage. AI has been used to effectively visualize data and assist in environmental monitoring, such as emissions tracking.

What can be done to reduce AI's impacts?

Largescale efforts to regulate AI, disclose its impact, recycle water from data centers, and increase its efficiency all aim to reduce AI's negative environmental impacts. As an individual, it is important to be aware of everyday technologies' environmental impacts and support efforts to improve them.

Sources:

- Website 1: <https://environment.yale.edu/news/article/can-we-mitigate-ais-environmental-impacts>
- Website 2: <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/ai-has-environmental-problem-heres-what-world-can-do-about>
- Image: <https://depositphotos.com/photo/nature-technology-abstract-concept-robot-hand-natural-hand-covered-grass-198802426.html>

Want to make sustainability a part of your daily life?

Check out our Sustainable Living Guide and make the CMU Sustainability Pledge today!

Sustainability Pledge



CMU Sustainable Living Guide



Sustainability Student Organization Spotlight: Campus Grows

Campus Grows (CG) is CMU's student-led gardening organization! They host events centered around gardening and enhancing the campus garden, which is located just west of Lot 70 near the baseball stadium on West Campus Drive. Organization dues are \$10 for any students, staff, faculty, and community members looking to garden on their own plots this summer. Additionally, the group helps manage the community garden, where volunteers can donate their time to grow food for the CMU Student Food Pantry. CG's main mission is to promote gardening education and highlight the benefits of growing your own food. Students interested in joining CG can sign up via Engage Central!



Any Questions? Contact Us!

Stop by our office in Dow Science Room 275 or email us at sustainability@cmich.edu.

Also check out our socials for more updates!

Instagram & Facebook @cmucentralsustainability