

CRC's GREEN SCENE

A bimonthly newsletter of the Sustainability Committee at Cosumnes River College

Photo by Jim West

Sept/Oct 2017
Volume 10, Issue 1

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Guiding Students to Greener Transportation Options



Drew Carlson reports...

I learn a lot from my students. A few semesters ago, I had a student who frequently arrived late for my 6:00 pm class. The next semester was much better, and I asked what was different; he was now taking light rail to campus, a more consistent and faster ride than battling Highway 99 traffic during rush hour.

Since many students don't know much about their non-driving options for getting to campus, I have started pasting transit information into my syllabi and talking in class on the first day of my courses about alternative transportation

options. I also point out that all students taking 3 or more units pay, as part of their Student Access Card, a \$2.10 per unit transit fee (up to a maximum of \$31.50), which gets them transit on RT and e-Tran any time during the semester. That's a pretty steep discount off the normal RT student rate of \$55/month.

You can find more information—some of which is what I cut and paste into my syllabi—by visiting the CRC website at www.losrios.edu/lrc/lrc_sainfo.php ♦



Light Rail Makes School Possible

Editors' note: Mary Rodgers is a non-driving CRC student completing the Plant-Based Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture certificate program who appreciates being able to take her bicycle on light rail.

Mary Roger reports...

Without light rail, I wouldn't be taking classes at CRC. Bussing would entail three transfers and a couple of hours, but I can walk across the street, jump on a train, and it's a straight half-hour shot from Downtown to campus—no traffic jams, parking hassles, or burning of additional fossil fuels. Because the trains run so frequently, it's easy to get to class on time. CRC Student Access cards conveniently serve as RT passes,

eliminating the need to update a Connect card or buy a ticket (and risk a broken machine or missed train).

Light rail is convenient and relatively safe, but I wish I could minimize time spent at transit stops—cigarette smoke is ubiquitous at these so-called smoke-free stations. Enforcement has been lax, but the video surveillance camera and speaker systems that call out transgressors may be intimidating some into compliance. Between that new security system and the increased force of "train cops," the number of unruly and sometimes frightening fellow passengers seems to be diminishing. There are still enough of them to keep an eye out for; most are harmless, but for a woman, adopting a confident (*macha*) demeanor—stand

erect, walk confidently, be actively alert, don't show fear—is always a good strategy, as is riding in the front car as near to the driver as possible.

These issues are not unique to RT, but they are a graphic reminder that public transit is open to everyone—including ex-cons, the homeless, the mentally unstable, and the just plain rude. It's beyond RT's purview to solve larger societal problems, but continual improvements are certainly making public transit more usable for me—during daylight hours, anyway. Traveling solo after dark is another story—one that someone else will have to tell. ♦

New Plant-Based Programs at CRC

Timaree Hagenburger reports...



At the beginning of the fall semester, the first two classes for the brand-new Plant-Based Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture certificate program went live: NUTRI 303 (Plant-Based Nutrition)

and NUTRI 331 (Plant-Based Food Principles and Preparation). Not only are the classes full, but everyone is having a blast and learning a ton! This program is all about learning by doing. I can barely contain my excitement now that these classes and our program are finally happening. I get goosebumps walking across campus on Friday mornings before our cooking lab (NUTRI 331) begins.

I see my role in the Plant-Based Nutrition class as facilitating the guided investigation and application of the information available about the incredible power

of plant-based nutrition. One of my students, Sharline Jackson-Ringgold, had this to say about the class: "This class opens your mind to a whole different world, with jewels throughout every class session that we can take back home and apply immediately. I am so happy to be in this class so that I can see through all of the marketing and advertising and make truly informed choices for myself and my family. It feels incredibly empowering to be able to take control of my health destiny!" Students are also looking forward to getting into the dirt, as our Sustainable Agriculture class (HORT 313) will be offered in the spring. ♦



Last week in NUTRI 331 lab, students made Creamy Thai Curried Butternut Soup (top left) and Delectable Green Beans with Pecans.

Market Match—Using CalFresh Benefits at Your Local Farmers Market

Timaree Hagenburger reports...

Market Match—“making fresh affordable”—is a program that provides money to individuals and families to help their CalFresh/EBT benefits go further at local farmers markets. Spend \$10 at the Laguna Gateway Farmers Market (Saturday mornings in the Sprouts/Sports Authority parking lot at Big Horn and Laguna Blvd) and receive an additional \$10 to

spend on more fruits and vegetables! The program is provided by Alchemist CDC in partnership with The Ecology Center and Certified Farmers Markets of Sacramento County, with support from the California Department of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. ♦

For more information go to www.marketmatch.org or call (916) 204-8260



CalFresh/EBT benefits (food stamps) can now be used to buy nutritious carrots and beets, as well as other fresh whole plant foods, at farmers markets in California.

“I didn’t realize that I could use my CalFresh/EBT (food stamps) to shop at a farmers market until Professor Hagenburger emailed her NUTRI 300 students to tell us about the Market Match program. The following Saturday, my family and I went and it was an amazing and easy experience! The people there were friendly and all of the food looked, and ended up tasting, amazing. We were so excited to be able to use our CalFresh benefits since it has been difficult for our family to buy quality foods when trying to stretch food money.”

— M.F., NUTRI 300 student

New Sustainability Mini-Certificate Offered by CRC’s Geography Program

Debra Sharkey reports...

Buried in CRC’s 2017-2018 college catalog is a new 12-unit mini-certificate in sustainability. Offered for the first time this semester, the certificate requires students to take GEOG 302, Environmental Studies and Sustainability (3 units); and their choice of either BIOL 350, Environmental Biology, or BIOL 352, Conservation Biology (each 3 units); plus an additional 6 units of electives selected from a list of sustainability-related courses offered in the fields of

architecture, economics, geography, horticulture, and plant science. The list of elective courses will be expanded to include more sustainability-related courses as programs offer them. Four new elective options to be added this semester include HORT 313, Sustainable Agriculture; GEOG 305, Global Climate Change; NUTRI 303, Plant-Based Nutrition; and NUTRI 331, Plant-Based Food Principles and Preparation. The CRC geography program also offers a more comprehensive two-year A.S. degree titled Environmental Studies and Sustainability. ♦



Empathy and the Environment

Editors' note: Anthony Soto is an English major at CRC, with an interest in pursuing political or environmental journalism as a career. He wrote the following essay after his ENGWR300 class read last year's OneBook offering, Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder by Richard Louv.

Anthony Soto reports...

People around the world may describe America in a variety of ways, but empathic is probably not one of them. We have leadership that chooses to put "me first" politics at the forefront of their agendas, such as dropping out of the Paris Climate Accord. Intense heat waves as well as hurricanes leaving death and destruction in their wake bear witness to the negative effects of short-sighted and uncaring viewpoints. An empathetic approach to climate change includes acting before a tragedy occurs as well as after.

The responses to Hurricane Harvey nicely contradict egotistical mindsets, even if for a brief moment. Unfortunately, that's the problem. This empathy will likely be short lived. Most superficial movements are. Tragedies like the floods precipitate good will for the victims, but preemptively caring

about environmental and human rights issues could possibly make such disasters less disastrous by efficiently preparing for them and, even better, working to reduce causes of global warming that fuel heat waves and hurricanes. The partisan politics that run Texas are a key example—slashing disaster relief funds for political and religious reasons, and politicians falling in line with what their voters demand. If the people of Texas, as well as their leaders, had empathy towards their fellow Texans, even those with differing opinions, then disaster relief policies and environmental efforts would be better funded.

Empathy is the starting point for positive change around the world. I discovered this truth while working for the Montana Conservation Corps in 2010 and again in 2016. It was demonstrated by my crew leader, Jon Luthanen, a person who had given up all ego about himself, in order to serve the environment and others. He taught the crew members to help each other and to preserve the natural wonders of Yellowstone National Park. He passed the idea of stewardship to me, compelling me to spread the message that if everyone looked after each other, we as a global community could

be less selfish and closed minded.

We can learn from previous movements in U.S. history. As the anti-smoking ads in the 1960's started to become more accepted and encouraged, one of the most important figures of the movement, Michael Pertschuk, reflected, "It was only when the science of passive smoking's threat to lives of involuntary smokers...the combination of potent scientific authorities and the passionate outcry of organized community neighbors...challenging the accepted norms that gave smokers ownership of the air they polluted, that a movement that would radically change social norms took place." It's a beautiful notion that empathy for innocent lives led to monumental changes that seemed impossible at the time.

That's the power of empathy, the power to see that all life is equally precious and connected. Applying the power of empathy, motivating ourselves to care a little bit more about our environment and thus each other, may not only provide relief for victims of disasters but also bring hope for a future with fewer disasters. ♦

CRC Offers New Online Global Climate Change Class

Debra Sharkey reports...

This semester, the CRC geography program began offering GEOG 305 Global Climate Change. It will next be offered during the Spring 2018 semester at the Elk Grove Center.

The course introduces students to climate change science using real-world environmental data to investigate Earth's climate system, via curriculum developed by the American Meteorological Society.

The course meets the Natural Sciences general education requirement for CRC's associate degrees as well as CSU- and UC-science transfer requirements. ♦

CRC Geography Professor Attends Dartmouth College's "School of Ice"

In June this year, CRC geography professor Debra Sharkey attended "The School of Ice: Ice Cores and Climate Change," an advanced professional development program for geoscience faculty at minority-serving institutions, at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. The workshop was developed by the U.S. Ice Drilling Program Office, a National Science Foundation-funded organization providing oversight of U.S. scientific drilling efforts in both the Arctic and Antarctic.

The course was designed to expand professors' knowledge of the role of proxy records in our current understanding of Earth's climate, with a special focus on the very important role of ice core data. Researchers with expertise in ice science from Dartmouth College and the nearby Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL) contributed to a packed agenda highlighting the importance of ice cores in telling the story of the Earth's past and future climate. The workshop placed professors in the role of research scientists and ice core drillers as they processed ice cores at the cold laboratory

located at Dartmouth College, toured CRREL to understand the important relationship between scientists and engineers, and participated in a geological field trip exploring the remnants of the last glacial maximum.



Prof. Sharkey licks a shard from a 300-year-old ice core so that the gas bubbles can be seen more easily.

"Having held, cut, eaten, and observed the careful melting and chemical analysis of a 300-year-old ice core extracted from the summit of Greenland's ice sheet (by former CRC student Gifford Wong!), I now more fully understand how this frozen material reveals information about Earth's past climate," Prof. Sharkey commented. "I can't wait to share this knowledge with students in my physical geography, environmental studies, and global climate change classes." ♦



News In Brief

Curious About Vegan Food? Local Chefs Offer Vegan Fare in October



The 7th annual Sacramento Vegan Chef Challenge started on Sunday, October 1st, and runs through the end of the month. During this time, restaurants throughout the Sacramento area offer special vegan dishes created especially for the occasion. This year at least 34 local restaurants are participating. ♦

For more information go to www.theveganchefchallenge.com

Cosumnes River College Sustainability Committee

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