

Greening the Imagination

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As a professional organization, AWSS has been very active in ably representing the interests of women scholars and students in Slavic Studies. Our founding mothers and daughters have waged and are waging a long and serious battle to include women more equitably in our profession and put women's topics and gender at the front and center of our research agenda. I know that I am a beneficiary of every progressive change that has taken place in our field, and I thank everyone from the bottom of my heart. Today I am asking you to join another fight, the fight for global sustainability. We live in a world of acidic oceans, bleached and collapsing coral reefs, dammed and depleted rivers, catastrophic deforestation, forest fires, loss of bio-diversity, topped off by melting glaciers and polar ice caps. AWSS can't solve all our problems, but I know that organized and motivated women can change the world for the better. Climate change is a difficult, controversial, and complex subject and I don't pretend to understand all of it. But I have drawn up a list of practical measures that I would like to see implemented on my campus and have sent a letter to that effect to the President of my university, California State University, Los Angeles. American universities have always been at forefront of all progressive politics and our diverse student body can make the fight against climate change a global one. My dearest wish is that every AWSS member creates a list of the changes that they would like to see on their campus and send it to senior campus administrators.

1. Ban single-use plastic bottles on campus and design a sexy steel bottle and lunch box with a newly formed university sustainability logo that students can buy. (Although I have deep reservations, I am not completely opposed to market-based solutions.)
2. Refurbish and add more drinking water fountains on campus.
3. Urge hospitality services to use reusable and, only if absolutely necessary, biodegradable napkins, utensils, and crockery. (We can wash our own plates and glasses.)
4. Urge the food court to have healthy vegetarian options. Invite farmer's markets and CSAs to campus.
5. Create a system of food waste composting on campus and sell the composted soil as many grocery chains do.
6. Build a chicken coop and goat pen to help with the above. I can explain why chickens and goats are crucial for the future of our planet. (The Russian peasant was a lot smarter than us in many ways.)
7. Hire a certified organic gardener to work with facilities to eliminate toxic chemicals from the landscaping.
8. Use the same person to create a low-water-use, bee, bird, insect-friendly and edible landscape on campus.
9. Work with facilities to use green cleaning products as it will help the health of our maintenance workers.
10. Promote car-pooling and bicycle use as the present system of single car usage sucks!!!
11. Reward students and faculty who use public transport and publicize them as heroes on campus!

12. Install solar panels on all buildings.
13. Re-visit waste management systems to install hi-tech systems that capture, reduce, and reuse waste.
14. Re-think and recycle water usage on campus and install gray water capture systems.
15. Hire an intelligent sustainability czar with a serious science/technology background to drive these changes on campus.
16. We should have a mandated goal of moving towards a zero-waste and then a zero-emissions campus by 2020 if not sooner.
17. Brainstorm about how to make ASEEES and AWSS conferences go green.
18. Smuggle environmental history into all our courses to grow public awareness. After all, we only fight for what we love and we only protect what we designate as important.