

Good afternoon,

Pope Francis, in his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, implores us as a moral imperative to use the Earth's resources more judiciously as we, as he states, "care for our common home."

Niagara University's Energy Task Force was created in this spirit to be a formal working group challenged with finding ways to more efficiently utilize energy resources. One of its objectives has been to establish temperature settings for campus buildings that are in alignment with best practices at other institutions of higher education.



With that in mind, the Energy Task Force has been working diligently for months to establish a foundation for a campus-wide energy policy. The policy was approved last week by the President's Cabinet.

Beginning June 1, general heating and cooling in all campus facilities will be monitored and regulated closely, resulting in energy saving measures that will make a substantial impact on our usage as well as our greenhouse gas emissions.

As noted, this policy is congruent with the values of Catholic social teaching, as well as recommended best practices for environmental stewardship. We will integrate this initiative on our campus through our common and daily practices. I would like to take the opportunity

to update you on some of the initiatives we are undertaking to be congruent with the call of Pope Francis as well as Niagara's longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship:

- The general heating value in classrooms and offices will be 70 degrees with a 2-degree differential (68-72) during standard operating hours, and 60 during off-hours. Residence halls will be maintained at 70 degrees with a 2-degree differential (68-72) while students are present and the institution is open.
- For times of the year when cooling is required, 74 degrees will be maintained during operating hours in offices, classrooms and living spaces that are air-conditioned. Unoccupied space will be set at 80.

The temperature policy holds many benefits for our university community:

- It is an important step as we strive to meet our goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 as part of our participation in the American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment.
- The reduction lightens the load for producers of electricity, thus reducing the need for energy generation, which often relies on the burning of fossil fuels.

Members of the Energy Task Force will host two information sessions to explain the initial steps related to this policy and answer questions. They will be available to speak on how this will affect areas such as residence halls, events, classroom scheduling, and campus safety.

The entire campus community is invited to the following sessions:

- Thursday, April 21, 11:10 a.m., Academic Complex, Room 351
- Monday, April 25, 2:30 p.m., St. Vincent's Hall, Room 405/406

The Energy Task Force includes members from our faculty, Sustainability Committee, Facility Services, Campus Safety, Human Resources, Residence Life, Enrollment Management, Athletics, Conferences/Events, and Records (classroom scheduling). This representation ensures that there will be communication with the areas affected and allows us to address questions regarding the recommended changes. I thank the committee members, especially co-chairs Dan Guariglia and Joe Winter, for their diligence.

To be successful, effective energy utilization takes everyone working together, an understanding of institutional goals, being sensitive to people, programs and operations of departments, and the strength to adapt to minor inconveniences.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation as we work to ensure the values of environmental stewardship and sustainability at Niagara University.

With every good wish,
James J. Maher, C.M.
President