

Saint John's University EcoHouse Constitution

Last Updated November 2020

Preamble

We the SJU EcoHouse Members seek to create a society that emphasizes intentional community living both within the EcoHouse and CSB|SJU as a whole, promoting and educating sustainability, and living out the Benedictine Values. The purpose of this document is to establish a general, broad standard for which each member is to live by; educate members of the EcoHouse community on what is required of them; aid current residents in the annual selection process; establish the relationship and interworking of the EcoHouse Community and the Administration of CSB|SJU.

General Community Standards

The following establishes general, broad community standards for which all members of the EcoHouse community future and present should demonstrate a commitment. The following standards should be reviewed to suffice the four aforementioned purposes.

Co-existence with Other Members

Community participation, and ultimately the success of the EcoHouse community from year to year, is dependent upon members' ability to coexist with other members. Each member that makes up the community has a unique perspective, sleep schedule, and way of operating in society – the community members must acknowledge these differences and respect them for the community to thrive.

Commitments to co-existence are as follows:

1. Respect for others' perspectives, including a different or lack of knowledge/understanding on a given topic
2. Respect for others' personal space
3. Respect for and upkeep of general living spaces including living rooms, kitchens, house trinkets, etc.
4. Respect for each individual's basic needs including sleep and peace

Should any member of the community show consistent negligence in following these standards, a conversation with the rest of the community should occur to realign them with the vision and mission of the community. A member's inability to abide by these standards opens the option of a recommendation to Residential Life to relocate the member and revoke their eligibility to live in the SJU EcoHouse community. Such a recommendation must be voted and approved by a majority of current EcoHouse members.

Community Participation

The EcoHouse community is a unique, vulnerable one – relying heavily on community member contribution to and consumption of the community. In order for the community to continue existing for generations to come, an active contribution and dedication to the shaping of the image/reputation of the community must occur. Community members all have unique ways of participation, and with this in mind, it is important to note that community members must not be required to participate in the same way. Commitments to community participation are as follows:

1. Engage members in deep debate on topics that expand one's knowledge
2. Ensure that opportunities to contribute to the community are provided in a variety of ways and times to allow for contribution for all members
3. Aide, in some capacity, the community events or operations of the EcoHouse Community, such as the Edelbrock Greenhouse.
4. Participate in sustainable living practices, see section "Promotion of Sustainability"

Cleanliness

A component of co-existence, the need for general cleanliness is a must. Unlike other living arrangements on campus, the EcoHouse community is allowed certain privileges like keeping house trinkets, furniture, and other décor that make the houses the unique places they are. These privileges will only continue if the members of the community continue to maintain the cleanliness of the houses. These standards will be determined at the discretion of the current EcoHouse members.

Commitments to cleanliness are as follows:

1. Cleaning up one's mess in a timely manner
2. Encouragement of and participation in community cleaning days
3. Respectful reminders to others about the importance of general cleanliness

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Meetings

The community should work to set a regular meeting time that fits most members' schedules to facilitate cohesion and active planning of events and initiatives. These meetings are encouraged to be more informal – meaning brunch, morning coffee, or late-night gatherings – and serve as an opportunity to brainstorm, plan, and provide updates on the progress of events. Our community is a unique brainstorming community and participation in these events is extremely important in order to get the entire community on the same page and put initiatives into action. Commitments to meetings are as follows:

1. The entire community should make an effort to attend these meetings
2. If necessary, a recorder should take meeting notes and upload them to a document-sharing website that everyone has access to

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Promotion of Sustainability

The intent of the EcoHouse Community is not only to provide a space for members' exploration in and personal implementation of sustainability, but also to take charge in educating the broader community on the topic of sustainability – environmentally, culturally, and economically. While practicing sustainability is good for members, it does no good if it is done behind closed doors with no intention of sharing ideas with the general community. Commitments to promoting sustainability are as follows:

1. The EcoHouse Community members will participate in sustainable living. Sustainable practices such as recycling, power conservation, alternative transportation, and using reusable products are greatly encouraged and promoted.
2. The EcoHouse community must plan at least one event each semester that promotes sustainability and encourages continued engagement in the topic of sustainability for the broader community
 - a. A semi-formal write up of these events or initiatives should be submitted to the Director of Residential Life, Faculty Resident, and respective RA(s) at the end of each semester
3. Collaboration with the CSB EcoHouses and other on-campus clubs is strongly encouraged
4. Seeking funding from the Residential Life Curriculum Fund is encouraged

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Greenhouse

The operation of *Edelbrock Greens*, the Saint John's Winter Greenhouse, is a privileged learning opportunity given to the community by the Donald McNeely Center for Entrepreneurship. Commitments to the Greenhouse include:

1. Providing a helping hand in the operations of the Greenhouse
 - a. Organizing, counting, installing/removing gutters
 - b. Making soil mixtures for planting purposes
 - c. Contributing to the Greenhouse Plan which sets out what plants will be grown, where they'll be grown, and when they will be planted/harvested
2. Attendance at and active participation in scheduled plantings and harvests, including the delivery of food to the Refectory, Sexton, Minnesota Street Market, and other customers
3. A willingness to water vegetation periodically
4. An interest in understanding how the Greenhouse operates as a sustainable, local source of sustenance for the community

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Selection of EcoHouse Members

The members of the EcoHouse community do not participate in the normal university housing selection process. Every year, the current EcoHouse members will select new members for the upcoming year. The process entails the steps below. The EcoHouse Community does not adhere to discrimination of any form during the application evaluation process or general discussion. Any violation of this guideline can be presented to the organization advisor via anonymous complaint.

1. An application will be sent to all students several weeks before the general university housing process is to begin.
2. Once a sufficient amount of applications is received and the application deadline is reached, each EcoHouse member will individually evaluate all applicants.
3. After such time, current EcoHouse members are allowed to hold a general discussion and voice any specific concerns or ideas regarding that year's applicants.
4. Each current EcoHouse member will then rank the applicants according to the application score based on the application evaluation rubric – the highest score being the best.
 - a. See the CSB|SJU website for a rubric sample.
5. The scores of all applicants will then be tallied, and the results determined.
6. Once the selection of new members is completed, rooming assignments will be selected. The EcoHouse members with the highest seniority have the right to choose first. After, the next subsequent members choose.
7. Once rooming assignments are determined, a list of the current residents and their assigned rooms will be sent to Residential Life for final approval and registration.
8. Residential Life will check all new, selected applicants' housing eligibility status and approve each applicant as appropriate.
9. Approved applicants will be notified of their acceptance and additional information will be distributed as necessary.
 - a. After approval from Residential Life, new members will be contacted for rooming preferences; however, this does not guarantee that the request can or will be fulfilled.

SJU EcoHouse Living-Learning Community Guidelines

Residents of Marmion, Tholl live together as the EcoHouse living-learning community. They share the goal of promoting an awareness of and commitment to sustainable living. As a community, the residents have a responsibility to educate the greater CSB/SJU community about issues of sustainability as it relates to energy, water, transportation, food waste, and recycling, as well as cultural and economic issues. Residents of Marmion and Tholl are expected to:

1. Establish a working relationship with the Sustainability Fellow or Sustainability Office through regular meetings
2. Work with their Faculty Resident to host two educational programs each year for the SJU community. Programs should be documented on a program report form approved by the FR and then given to Residential Life for records.
3. Effectively manage, organize, grow, harvest, and sell all produce grown in *Edelbrock Greens*, a passive solar greenhouse funded by the Donald McNeely Center for Entrepreneurship
4. Educate themselves about sustainable living practices and explore how to reduce both their environmental impact and that of the EcoHouse
5. Adhere to all SJU Student Handbook policies as noted in the J-Book. These policies include, but are not limited to, alcohol policies, behavior, discrimination, drugs, good neighbor policy, hazing, sexual misconduct, stealing, and weaponry. All policies can be found in detail at <https://www.csbsju.edu/sju-student-development/j-book-student-policies/policies/student-life-policies>

Each resident of the community is expected to be involved in the planning of at least one of the programs each semester and to be present for the majority of the monthly advisory meetings and the intermittent Greenhouse workdays.

If a resident of the house is not showing active participation in the sustainability initiatives of the community, Residential Life has the option of moving that resident to another location with a majority

vote of the EcoHouse Community. Should a space in Marmion or Tholl become vacant, the EcoHouse community agrees to find a student to fill that space. A space that is not filled within two business weeks of the resident's official moveout may be filled at the discretion of Residential Life Staff unless otherwise agreed between the EcoHouse community and the Residential Life Administration.

At all times the Residential Housing agreement supersedes this agreement, and Residential Life reserves the right to cancel or reassign this Housing agreement.

Current EcoHouse Residents

By signing below, we are acknowledging the contents of this constitution and agree to abide by it to the best of our ability. We accept the responsibility for our actions and agree to the procedures and consequences stated in this document.

1. _____
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11. _____

SJU Residential Life and Housing

Saint John's University Residential Life sponsors the SJU EcoHouse Community as an official organization.

Official Advisor

The SJU EcoHouse Organization will be advised by The Director of Residential Life and Housing, as the official advisor.

The official duties of the official advisor include regular duties performed by advisors but also include decision making based on community complaints as described above.

Funding

No definite funding outside of the allotted housing budget is required of Residential Life to provide the SJU EcoHouse Organization. Any additional funding requests will be determined and discussed as needed.

Organizational Review

Organizational Review with the Director of Residential Life and Housing will occur every year during the spring semester unless otherwise agreed by the EcoHouse Members and the Official Advisor. Changes to the constitution may be made by joint agreement of the EcoHouse Members and the Official Advisor.

Director of Residential Life and Housing:

(Print) _____

(Signature) _____