



The Sustainable Seneca Fair brought together students, employees and external partners at Newnham Campus on Thursday, Nov. 7. From left: Andrew French from Seneca's grounds department; Sandrine Bendavid, Social Service Worker student; Paula Echeveste Petrone, Sustainability Supervisor; Peggy Pitawanakwat, Co-ordinator, First Peoples@Seneca; and Sana Shabbeer Moosavi, Fashion Business student.

Sustainability takes centre stage at Seneca

Fair, harvest, eco warriors and more

Nov. 7, 2019

Seneca has 17 reasons to celebrate Planet Earth this week.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>) set by the United Nations were at the heart of the Sustainable Seneca Fair at Newnham Campus today. The goals aim to ensure that the world meets “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

One such initiative showcased at the fair was the clothing swap.

“Fashion is the second-most polluting industry in the world and used clothes should not end up in a garbage dump,” said Paula Echeveste Petrone, Sustainability Supervisor, Facilities Management Custodial Services. “It is a reality that sustainable clothing can be pricey. So, if you are bored with something in your wardrobe, don’t throw it away, just swap it. The message here is to reuse, repurpose and not buy more.”

Other sustainability initiatives on display at the fair included the Green Citizen program, Seneca’s Urban Farm, the Seneca Sting Honey and First Peoples@Seneca (</student-services-and-support/first-peoples.html>). External participants included Diabetics Canada, World Wildlife Fund and Partners in Project Green.

“I really like the fair a lot because it is giving students and faculty an opportunity to see what all can be done for sustainability,” said Stanley Tam, a first-year Business Administration – Marketing (</programs/fulltime/BAM.html>) student. “I’m especially impressed with the way our campus is recycling organic waste onsite to produce compost for the grounds.”



A dozen Seneca students from different campuses joined President David Agnew and Angela Zigras, Chair, School of Hospitality & Tourism, for a fish harvest at Markham Campus on Tuesday, Nov. 5.

From Farm to Forks

Seneca's sustainability efforts also provided rich fare at a luncheon table at Markham Campus this week. About 30 tilapia harvested from the aquaponics system of the Urban Farm at Newnham were served to 12 students invited from different campuses along with President David Agnew and Angela Zigras, Chair, School of Hospitality & Tourism (</school/seneca-business/hospitality-and-tourism.html>).

The delectable autumn feast was prepared by Prof. Ramesh Poredi of the Hospitality – Hotel & Restaurant Services Management diploma program (</programs/fulltime/HTM.html>) and his team of students. In addition to baked tilapia filets, also on the menu were spring greens from the Urban Farm and a chocolate dessert drizzled with honey produced from Seneca's beehives.

Fifteen fish from the Urban Farm were also donated to the Seneca Student Federation Food Bank this year.



From left: Seneca's groundskeeping team Andrew French, Devon Simbrow and David Sumners with Don Forster, Senior Manager, Facilities Management Custodial Services.

Seneca's Eco Warriors

The battle to save the environment is being fought on several fronts at Seneca and its eco warriors come in many shapes and forms, including a robotic floor machine that helps conserve water and a macerator that chomps at leftover food in the cafeteria and in turn feeds a “Rocket” that converts all that mushy stuff into compost.

In a first step towards zero-emission sustainable grounds maintenance at Seneca, gas-powered leaf blowers and trimmers are being shown the door. These machines, which weigh about 20 pounds each and cause a ruckus as they suck up leaves from the sprawling campus grounds, are getting replaced by their battery-powered sleeker siblings that weigh no more than two pounds. The new equipment — Newnham has already acquired two blowers and a trimmer — brings down noise pollution, so much so that the operators don’t have to wear earplugs. It also goes a long way in preventing air pollution with zero carbon emission.

“There is no fuel and therefore no emission,” said Don Forster, Senior Manager, Facilities Management Custodial Services.

Forster and his team have another eco warrior parked in their garage — a brining machine. Starting this winter, rock salt will be sparsely used on Newnham’s walkways. Instead, public areas will be brined before a snowstorm.

“Our goal is to reduce the amount of salt needed by 40 to 50 per cent and still have safe walking areas throughout winter while reducing our environmental impact on fresh water lakes, rivers and streams,” Forster said. “With less rock salt strewn all over, the one thing missing this winter will be the crunch underfoot.”

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