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YOU ARE AT: Home » News » Campus Life » Winter break checklist encourages campus energy conservation



Winter break checklist encourages campus energy conservation



BY S MOLLY DOMINICK ON DECEMBER 7, 2014

CAMPUS LIFE, ENVIRONMENT, NEWS

After finishing final exams, students rush to pack their stuff and clean up their dorm rooms. Although an understandable mistake, something as simple as forgetting to turn the lights off over winter break wastes energy and money that could easily be conserved. Multiplied by each person who forgets to turn off a light or unplug a charger, this forgetfulness contributes to larger environmental and fiscal ramifications.

The Winter Break Conservation Initiative drives this message home at the University of Miami. Lasting from Dec. 20 to Jan. 4, the initiative asks students and staff to help reduce UM's carbon footprint by following a checklist of energy-saving tips before leaving campus for winter break.

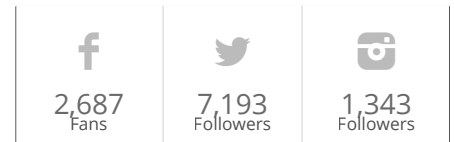
The checklist includes tips applicable to campus residents, like remembering to turn off personal electronics and fridges, which will inevitably go unused during the owner's extended absence from campus. Tips for staff are also included, such as checking rooms for temperature adjustments and shutting fume hood sashes in labs. The initiative asks everyone to report any issues with energy-using devices to Facilities Customer Service before Dec. 19.

The idea for an annual energy-saving effort during winter break was formulated by Facilities Management. To make it possible, the department joined forces with the administrative sustainability group GreenU and Student Government's Energy Conservation Organization Agency (ECO).

TO BE A PART OF THE WINTER BREAK CONSERVATION INITIATIVE, FOLLOW THIS GREEN U CHECKLIST.

- Turn of all the lights in your room and unplug any electronics, including equipment chargers.
- Clean out contents of your refrigerator and unplug it prior to the break.
- Ensure all the doors and windows are closed properly.
- If any repairs are needed on items that can impact energy usage, contact Facilities Customer Service by Dec. 19.

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Gun control (11%, 51 Votes)

Environmental concerns (10%, 48 Votes)

Education (7%, 31 Votes)

Total Voters: **469**

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Nika Hosseini, an executive board director of ECO, said the effort supports university-wide sustainability endeavors.

"There is now a huge push on the side of GreenU and ECO, along with many other departments, to substantially reduce the university's carbon footprint, and this is one way to assist the overall goal," Hosseini said.

ECO Chair Benjamin Slavin illuminated the impact these efforts could have on the greater Miami area.

"Given that the city of Miami is the second-most vulnerable city in the world for sea level rise, it's imperative that we take advantage of every opportunity to be sustainable as a university community that we possibly can," Slavin said.

To further these environmental goals, the initiative continues the larger UConserve Campaign that brought the Green Office Certification Program and a sustainability survey to campus earlier this year.

Teddy L'houtellier, coordinator for GreenU and sustainability manager for UM, was a leader in outreach for these UConserve initiatives.

"Basically, this is about communication and getting the message about sustainability out there," L'houtellier said.

Regarding the necessity of the Winter Break Conservation Initiative, L'houtellier appealed to one simple reason.

"It just doesn't make sense to run everything when everyone is gone," he said.

For the full Winter Break Conservation Initiative checklist, visit bit.ly/1AMfbho.

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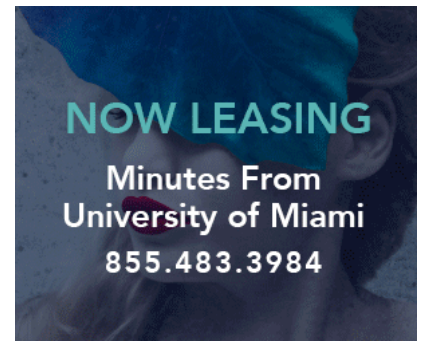


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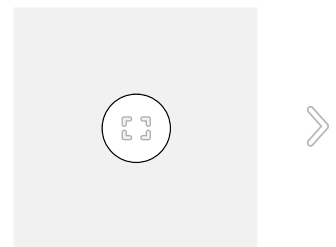
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The Council of International Student Organization performs their organized cheer dance Wednesday night at the Lakeside Patio. Victoria McKaba // Photo Editor

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