



Proposing a
Valparaiso
University
Environmental
Institute



What is VU's role in CLIMATE CHANGE, POLLUTION, & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

In 2015, we began with a VU/USGS collaboration on climate change

VU Faculty / Department

Kristi Bugajski	Biology
Laurie Eberhardt	Biology
Robert Swanson	Biology
Beth Scaglione-Sewell	Biology
Julie Peller	Chemistry
Chris Iceman	Chemistry
Jon Schoer	Chemistry
Bharath Ganesh Babu	Geography
Craig Clark	Meteorology
Zuhdi Aljobeh	Engineering
Peter Weiss	Engineering
Luke Venstrom	Engineering
Nicole Negowetti	Law School

USGS Researchers, Lake Michigan Ecological Research Station

Meredith Nevers	Aquatic Ecology and Limnology
Muruleedhara Byappanahalli	Microbiology
Ralph Grundel	Zoology
Noel Pavlovic	Plant Ecology
Richard Whitman	Aquatic Ecology and Limnology

Our Mission was to educate the community, be beacons of service, and lead the way...

From 2015 – 2022: Climate Crisis in Better Perspective

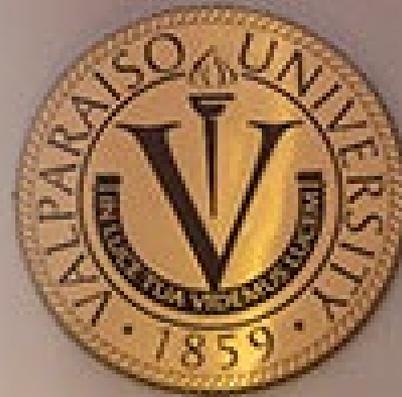
Secretary-General for the United Nations declaring Climate Change “Code Red” for Humanity (2021)



*Reservoirs Oroville (CA-above left) and Mead-Hoover (NV-above right);
Kentucky floods (left), August, 2022.*

As a leader
of truth
seeking and
service...

...we can no longer stand
by without sharing our
LIGHT to guide towards a
viable tomorrow!!!



VALPARAISO
UNIVERSITY

There are so many already doing work on environmental topics/climate change!!!

- SCIENCE and ENGINEERING FACULTY with strong collaborations

(USGS were assigned VU Associates; National Labs also have formal associations with universities)

- BUSINESS SCHOOL
- SOCIAL SCIENCES, RELIGIOUS STUDIES, OTHERS
- Office of Sustainability (Julie Whitaker)
- Earthtones and others

- PROGRAMS AND COURSES

- RESEARCH

- PUBLICATIONS

- SYMPOSIA

- LOCAL PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

- INVITED SPEAKERS

- CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- FACULTY AND STUDENT GROUPS

- OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

BUT, WE ARE NOT CONNECTED...

STUDIES AND CONCERNS OF THE ENVIRONMENT MUST BE INTERDISCIPLINARY (faculty, staff, students)

How do we connect all these components?

-
- Create a centralized initiative or institute for environment/sustainability with faculty director and staff assistance (website, etc.)
 - Effective communications: a website with frequent updates to connect people/organizations and highlight work, events, etc.
 - Connect with the media to inform community (leadership)
 - Schedule Workshops/ Seminars/ Discussions to inform and to advance the initiative

There are MANY benefits to centralizing our efforts:



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- Students: education, awareness, action; increased student opportunities in RESEARCH AND OUTREACH; recruitment and retention; student health and wellness through positive actions
- Community benefits: RESOURCES – EXPERTISE, INFORMATION, ETC.
- Faculty: grant opportunities; interdisciplinary strengths; NWI* studies on the environment; collaborations with other scientists, municipalities, organizations, etc.
- Outreach and education; water health*
- Money savings long-term; stewardship and leadership

*unique and important area for environmental work

VU's Sustainability Institute could...

- Serve campus as a climate change resource center;
- Coordinate areas of study - identify current courses across the disciplines that support sustainability, including natural and physical sciences, engineering, public health, business, social and behavioral sciences, and arts and humanities;
- Streamline potential sources of financial support and incentivization (grant-research applications);
- Create campus/City of Valpo partnership to support clean energy projects; and
- Promote collaboration with academic departments and campus operations to advance sustainability efforts on campus.

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022

August 16, 2022: President Biden signs into law.

Major provisions include:

1. Allocates approx. \$370 billion for climate-friendly technology and programs;
2. Tax incentives for renewable energy installations, purchase of electric vehicles, substitution of gas-powered appliances to electric.
3. \$8.45 billion is the USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which offers financial and technical assistance to farmers and nonindustrial forest managers.
4. \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund that will support competitive grants to national and local "green banks," which will use the money to invest in projects and innovations intended to reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions and other forms of air pollution.

non-profit organizations are eligible for green bank funds for carbon-reducing projects.

Thank you

Thoughts?

