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**SustainVU**  
*Growing Responsibly*

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VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY

## EPA Environmental Education Grant Proposals– February 2

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) seeks grant proposals from eligible applicants to support environmental education projects that promote environmental awareness and stewardship and help provide people with the skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment. This grant program provides financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques. Proposals are now being accepted through February 2, 2015. More information [here](#).

As we head into February, showing appreciation for loved ones is on everyone's mind, so don't forget to love the earth, too! Try to reduce waste and consider the environment when planning your Valentine's Day festivities. There are many activities to show your appreciation for the environment this month including a tree planting event, a campus lecture on environmental issues, and an energy conservation competition! We also want to congratulate the [Dr. Randy Blakely's Lab](#), who was named the "Greenest Group on Campus" in the 2015 Basketball Sustainability Competition! Additional information about the stories and events included in this newsletter are available on the [SustainVU website](#) and [Facebook](#) page. Happy Valentine's Day from SustainVU and stay warm out there!

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**Inaugural Commons Unplugged Week  
for first year students**

## Presentation of Greenest Group on Campus Award – February 7

Commodore fans can cheer on this year's VU Basketball "Greenest Group on Campus," Dr. Randy Blakely's Lab, on February 7, when they will enjoy a free catered in-game VIP event, free tickets and an award presentation on the court during the South Carolina game. The award is presented by [Waste Management](#), [Vanderbilt University Athletics](#), and [SEMO](#). Join us in congratulating the winner, and don't forget to recycle at all of the VU home basketball games! Green totes are located in the concourse area of each level of Memorial Gym, making recycling easy. Anchor Down and Tackle Recycling! Go 'Dores!

## Commons Unplugged Kick-off: Climate Change Seminar – February 15

Michael Vandenberg, David Daniels Allen Distinguished Chair of Law and director of Vanderbilt's Climate Change Research Network, will be giving a version of his TEDxNashville seminar on Sunday, February 15 from 3pm-5pm in the Commons Center to kick off "Commons Unplugged", a weeklong sustainability and natural resource conservation event. Professor Vandenberg's academic research explores the relationship between formal legal regulation and informal social regulation of individual and corporate environmental behavior, the influence of social norms on corporate behavior, and the ways in which private contracting can

The first-ever Commons Unplugged environmental awareness week, from Sunday, February 15 to Saturday February 21, 2015 will celebrate sustainability, natural resource conservation and energy conservation through various events focusing on Vanderbilt's first-year student population. This event is co-hosted by the Dean of the Commons office and Vanderbilt's Sustainability and Environmental Management Office.

Throughout the week, first-year students will compete in a building energy conservation contest to earn points in the year-long campus competition called the Commons Cup.

Additionally, the week will kick-off on Sunday afternoon, February 15 with a TEDx-type interactive seminar on climate change by Professor Michael Vandenberg, a well-known climate change educator from Vanderbilt's Law School. Professor Vandenberg is the David Daniels Allen Distinguished Chair of Law, Co-Director, [Energy, Environment and Land Use Program](#), and Director, [Climate Change Research Network](#), at Vanderbilt University Law School. His work with Vanderbilt's Climate Change Research Network involves interdisciplinary teams that focus on energy use and carbon emissions from the household sector. His corporate work explores the social influences on firm behavior and the emergence of private environmental governance. The kick-off event is open to the Nashville community and will be held in the Martha Rivers Ingram Commons Center Room from 3-5pm on Sunday, February 15th.

## EPA recognizes NHL's Nashville Predators as an outstanding Food Recovery Challenge participant

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ([EPA](#))

recognizes the

accomplishments of the Nashville Predators of the

National Hockey League ([NHL](#)) as well as other organizations

and businesses that participated in EPA's [Food Recovery Challenge](#). Participants in the program were successful in

reducing their climate footprint, improving efficiency, helping communities and achieving cost savings through waste

reduction. The program saves money, protects the environment and feeds the hungry.



enhance or undermine public governance.

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## Commons Unplugged Green Fair – February 18

Promote your sustainability-related organization to first-year students at the first “Commons Unplugged” Green Fair. The Green Fair will provide an opportunity to promote the sustainable activities, business practices, and achievements of various student groups, departments or organizations to the Vanderbilt community. Tabling display space will be provided in the Vanderbilt Commons Center to participants at no charge. If you or your group is interested in tabling at the Green Fair to be held Wednesday, February 18 from 6:00pm – 8:00pm, please email [sustainvu@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:sustainvu@vanderbilt.edu).

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## 50K Tree Day with TN Environmental Council – February 21

Join Tennessee Environmental Council in meeting their goal to plant a total of 50,000 trees at multiple locations in each of Tennessee’s 95 counties! Tree planting is happening on Saturday, February 21 at 10:00am. Individuals can register to plant in locations around their county with volunteer groups, or homeowners and businesses can register to pick up 5-10 trees to plant on their own property! Registration and more details [here](#).

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## Urban Green Lab Compost Workshop – February 28

EPA presented 23 awards to Food Recovery Challenge participants and endorsers in two categories: data-driven and narrative. The Predators, who play their home contests at the Bridgestone Arena, were the Facility Winner in the Sports Venue category. The data-driven award recipients achieved the highest percentage of wasted food diversion and prevention. The narrative award winners excelled in areas of source reduction, leadership, innovation, education and outreach, and endorsement. Congratulations Predators players and fans!

Read the full story [here](#).

## MTA/RTA public meetings for transit improvements



The Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and Regional Transportation

Authority of Middle Tennessee (RTA) will hold five public meetings on Feb. 3 and Feb. 5 regarding proposed improvements for its biannual system changes, including a new BRT lite service for Charlotte Avenue and many other routes. Locations, times and bus routes that serve the meeting locations can be found [here](#).

## Turn your Valentine’s Day from Red to Green

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a list of “Tips for February Fun,” which encourages Americans to step away from the age-old Valentine’s Day traditions and incorporate some Earth friendly practices into the holiday!



- Invest in potted plants, bushes, shrubs or trees instead of fresh-cut flowers, which die within a few days of harvesting.
- Send electronic valentines or make your own using materials around the house such as magazines, paper bags, old greeting cards and scraps of fabric.
- Avoid the aisles of chocolates at your local markets and bake homemade treats for your loved ones, packaged in reusable containers.
- Consider local restaurants when dining out. Check our list for some Nashville-area restaurants [here](#).
- Purchase gifts that are fair-trade, locally made or grown, or organically grown.

Looking for a free, easy, fun way to improve your gardens? Start with the soil! Learn about the art and science of composting in the first workshop of the Urban Green Lab Compost Series on Saturday, February 28 at 10:30-11:30am at the Green Hills Library. Troy Foley, of [Gardens of Babylon](#), will lead the workshop and will give the practical basics of how to start your own compost pile and insight into how compost revitalizes your soil. More details [here](#).

### Engage Green: Saving April Showers – March 4

Want to learn how to save money and reduce your environmental impact? As part of [Team Green's Engage Green Sustainability Series](#), [Urban Green Lab](#) is partnering with [Cumberland River Compact](#) and [Mill Creek Watershed Association](#) to learn about the benefits of collecting rain water. There will even be a hands-on demonstration of how to make your own rain barrel! Join the workshop on Wednesday, March 4 at 6pm at the Cumberland River Compact Bridge Building. More details [here](#).



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For more ways to have a fun February without the waste, click [here](#).

### EPA releases air quality data tool – RETIGO



Many people, communities, and organizations collect their own air quality monitoring data, but often the data are difficult to analyze or compare with other data sets. The [Environmental](#)

[Protection Agency's](#) Real-Time Geospatial Data Viewer, or [RETIGO](#), is designed to let anyone explore air quality data they've collected or gathered. The program is publically available and designed to be easy to use for both professional researchers and citizen scientists. Online are [RETIGO tutorials](#) and detailed examples how to prepare data.

### Follow us on our new social media accounts!

We have added more accounts to our social media arsenal! Here are more ways you can connect with us online:

[Facebook](#) @SustainVU  
[Instagram](#) @SustainVUVanderbilt  
[Twitter](#) @SustainVU  
[Google+](#) @Vanderbilt SustainVU



For more information on any of these stories, events and more, visit the SustainVU website at [www.vanderbilt.edu/sustainvu](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/sustainvu) or contact the Sustainability and Environmental Management Office at [sustainvu@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:sustainvu@vanderbilt.edu) or (615) 322-2057.



