

**TO:** The Bennington Community

**FR:** Andrew Schlatter, Vice President for Facilities Management and Planning

Each fall, Buildings and Grounds monitors temperature trends and makes a determination about when to initiate operations at our central biomass heat plant, which provides heat via underground steam lines to most of the campus. This system takes several days to activate, and once it is "turned on," it must stay on until the end of the heating season the following spring. The decision of when to begin campus-wide heating involves considerations of sustainability as well as comfort, because of the potential for overheating spaces when heat is provided prematurely. Typically, we try to turn the heating system on when daytime temperatures are consistently in the 50's or low 60's, with nighttime temperatures in the 30's or below. This is the threshold at which, for most of our buildings, solar heat gain during the day is insufficient to sustain comfortable interior temperatures. In our area, this threshold is often reached in early October.

Next week, temperatures are predicted to be in the 60's during the day, and in the mid to upper 40's at night—which should be comfortable without the heating system on. However, factors such as daytime sun and humidity can also have an impact on interior temperatures, and each building is different. Please take care to close windows where possible (especially at night), throw an extra layer on, and put an extra blanket on the bed. We expect to be activating the campus steam plant in mid October, but in the meantime ask our community to bear with these intermittent temperature fluctuations as we cross the threshold into the heating season. Thanks for your patience and understanding.