

Bennington Honored for Sustainability Practices

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Efficiency Vermont has recognized Bennington for achieving the highest energy savings of any college or university participating in its two-year Energy Leadership Challenge.

The Challenge tasked nearly 70 large institutions and businesses in Vermont, including eight Colleges, with achieving 7.5-percent energy savings from July 2011 through June 2013. Bennington was one of only two colleges to achieve the Challenge, reducing its energy consumption by 12.4 percent through 11 efficiency projects—the most completed of any participating organization.

"That's a huge accomplishment," said Efficiency Vermont spokeswoman Kelly Lucci. "Such an impressive achievement is a sign of great dedication to the environment and of using energy wisely."

The College completed projects in multiple buildings across campus to reduce electric, fuel oil, and wood and water usage. Specific measures included the installation of digital control heating and cooling systems, occupancy sensor lighting technology, thermal glass windows, and energy-efficient showerheads in every student house.

The Challenge aligned with Bennington's ambitious long-term goal—as a signatory of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC)—of achieving complete carbon neutrality by 2030.

"From the food that we serve to the fuel that we use," said Bennington President Mariko Silver, who was selected this fall to serve on the ACUPCC Steering Committee, "Bennington's commitment to sustainability aims to minimize our environmental impact and operational costs, while maximizing the comfort and performance of our buildings, as well as the quality of life of our students. This recognition is a great credit to the College's staff, as it reflects their hard work and dedication to ensuring Bennington is a responsible steward of our natural resources."