



LAUREN STIEGLITZ

WE MUST SUSTAIN FOR THIS LONG U of A President Samarasekera chewed the fat with students over breakfast recently

Unnecessary Courses 101

Global climate change may be a growing concern, but a mandatory course on Environmental Sustainability would be the tipping point of common sense



CANDICE MALCOLM

Last Friday, I was one of about 20 random students chosen to attend a roundtable discussion with the President of our University, Dr Indira Samarasekera. It was an early breakfast at the prestigious Faculty Club, and there were student representatives from seemingly every demographic on campus, ranging in faculty, year and background.

You will be happy to hear that Dr Samarasekera listened intently and seemed very receptive to the concerns of the students, but one issue brought forth stood out for me in particular. It's a hot topic that everyone seems to be talking about right now—it was even given lip service during the normally staid SU elections a few weeks ago. And if you're like me, you'll just sigh and feel slightly annoyed when I tell you about the topic brought forth: environmental and ecological sustainability.

Now don't get me wrong, I love trees just as much as everyone else and believe that it's about time people start showing more love for our planet. But I also feel that the recent hysteria regarding climate change and the environment has compelled people to react in an overly emotional manner instead of properly consulting that calm voice of reason that each of us possesses.

Yes, Al Gore made an interesting

movie about how our civilization's misuse of the planet has led to trends of global warming. Yes, when I first saw this film I was alarmed and reminded that we need to be more considerate of our ecosystem. I don't, however, think that this University needs to go so far as to create a mandatory class for all students entitled Environmental Sustainability 101. Personally, I find this idea preposterous and wonder what this class could possibly teach us. Remember to turn off the lights when you leave a room? Don't throw garbage on the ground? One day when you're running a large corporation, try not to be evil?

Our generation has been taught these important lessons from a young age—in many ways, we've been enrolled in Sustainability 101 our entire lives.

We should be smart enough to realize that the major messages addressed in films like *An Inconvenient Truth* or the arguments brought forth by people like David Suzuki—be ethical, be conscious, be respectful—aren't aimed at audiences like us. Our generation has been taught these important lessons from a young age—in many ways, we've been enrolled in Sustainability 101 our entire lives.

Perhaps taking these messages home and encouraging our parents or

our place of work to be more conscientious of the environment is where we should be focusing our efforts and concern.

I don't need a mandatory course to teach me not to be needlessly wasteful and unnecessarily careless. I actually feel as though my education thus far in life has been very sufficient in instilling a moral conscience and an understanding of cause and effect in the world. I also don't see my peers as ignorant hogs in need of enlightenment on the values of sustainability. In fact, I'm confident that our generation already possesses these skills and values, and that we'll work to compensate for prior abuses when it's our turn to take over in important leadership roles.

As far as Sustainability 101 goes, well, any student who's taken an Earth and Atmospheric Science class knows that such topics are already discussed at our school, and if one were very interested in our planet, that person could choose to make this their main area of study.

Furthermore, the relevant issues and general backlash are already addressed at our university, from the Kyoto discussions occurring in social science classrooms to the renewable energy solutions coming from Mechanical Engineering.

As for the rest of us, I think that reading the odd article or hearing the backlash from a film made by a political has-been is as much education as we need considering we all grew up under the educational banner of "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle." For now, we could stand to reduce the number of hare-brained schemes that only preach to the sustainability choir.



Bumps on the head

In the 19th century, phrenologists placed "Writing" as the brain's fifth faculty—right next to "Beating Up Slaves" and "Lesbianism," apparently.

Prove your intellectual worth: write for *Gateway Opinion*. We'll even waive the head-measuring exam.

GATEWAY OPINION
Perpetuating the pseudo-sciences since 1910

A U T H E N T I C
JULIO'S
BARRIO
MEXICAN RESTAURANT

**Julio's Barrio
(10450-82nd Ave) is
accepting applications
for kitchen positions.**

**If you are interested in a great
summer job on Whyte Ave with a
flexible schedule, great discounts
and competitive wages, please
apply in person with resume or
online at juliosbarrio.com**