

College Republicans put new spin on being green

By [Emily McFadden](#)
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Although sustainability is typically an issue advocated by left-wing politicians, the UW College Republicans are bringing a new perspective to the ideas of sustainability and what it means to be green.



Photo by [Jennifer Malone](#).

College Republicans club President Justin Bryant, holds a meeting in Smith Hall.

They're putting a different spin on it, though. The focus of the College Republicans' sustainability efforts target technological advances that allow consumers to live a comfortable lifestyle while minimizing harm to the environment.

These different views about sustainability offer room for technological advancements that would otherwise go unutilized.

"It's definitely not a partisan issue, it just has to be economically feasible," UW sophomore and College Republicans Director of Off-Campus Affaris Will Hagen, said.

Rather than an emphasis on public transportation and localized communities, the College Republicans find that living sustainably can be as easy as having the will to support and advocate for the advancement of technologies that allow lifestyles to be maintained.

"Changing lifestyles is hard," guest speaker and Director Todd Myers of the Washington Policy Center for the Environment at a Jan. 13 meeting said. "Environmental sustainability lies in the advancement of technology, not forcing people to change the way they live."

While advancements made in hydrogen-powered and electric vehicles are supported by Republican

policies, the College Republicans are more interested in changes made to technologies that students use more readily. Specifically, they are advocates for the efforts made by the Coca-Cola Company to develop a drink bottle made of 30 percent plant matter.

“I’m really excited,” Hagen said via telephone. “This is the first time a large company has approached us with a plan to become more sustainable and has actually followed through.”

Instead of trying to reduce or ban the use of plastic drink bottles on campus, they plan to introduce more advancements made by the Coca-Cola Company to the campus community so that the changes made to individual lifestyles will be minimal. With their focus on advancements made in technology rather than lifestyle changes, the College Republicans support not only campus sustainability, but also the advancement of the free market.

“No resource has an inherent value, it only has value as we need it,” Myers said.

Because Republican policies rely on the advancement of the free market, such initiatives promoting sustainability also support the Republican paradigm. By maintaining issues of sustainability as functions of the free-market economy, the College Republicans support these green initiatives in a much different way than previous popular methods.

“Rather than trying to get people to stop using plastic bottles, we advocate for the production and consumption of Coke products because we support the use of technology to help sustainability efforts,” Justin Bryant, College Republicans president, said. “Buying and recycling is best for the environment, because it both allows people to live the way they want and supports the free market.”

With the current emphasis on the necessity of lifestyle changes in order to live sustainably, the College Republicans feel that bringing a new perspective to these ideas will propel the UW campus toward even more complete sustainability and environmental awareness.

“[The College Republicans] strive to create awareness about Republican sustainability initiatives,” Bryant said. “I believe that there is so much more that we can do than is currently being done.”

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