

The Day I Met a Nobel Laureate

By Terry Carroll, 1st year MES student and Center for Sustainable Infrastructure Graduate Assistant.

Tasked with helping to coordinate the speaking presentations at the Climate Change Research and Action Symposium: "It's Happening. Now What?"—I arrived to a mostly empty recital hall about an hour before the event was set to begin. I'd been working with Rhys Roth (MES '90), Director of Evergreen's Center of Sustainable Infrastructure (CSI), since the beginning of fall quarter. This job has proven to be challenging and interesting.

As the Center's graduate assistant, at times I am delving into research projects, working on updating the Center's website, or enrolling guest writers into producing content for the CSI blog. Or I am sitting in on meetings with a diverse group of people from the fields of energy, waste, transportation, or water infrastructure. This climate symposium was the first big event that I had been involved in, although I previously sat in on smaller speaking engagements throughout the last few months.

After Rhys arrived and set up his presentation, The AV staff made their final adjustments to the lighting and cameras and waited nervously for Dr. John Byrne to arrive. The Director of the Center for Energy and Environmental Policy (CEEP) and Professor of Energy and Climate Policy at the University of Delaware, Dr. Byrne contributed to Working Group III of the U.N.-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and shares the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with the Panel's authors and editors. He has helped pioneer an equity- and sustainability-based strategy for resolving socioeconomic and environmental inequality and serves as chairman of the board of the Foundation for Renewable Energy and Environment (FREE). Evergreen President George Bridges ended up arriving ahead of Dr. Byrne. He shook hands and introduced himself to those of us who had arrived early.

We didn't know what kind of turnout to expect but the recital hall seemed full—maybe even close to capacity. Not only did a good crowd show up, but they seemed extremely engaged with the subject matter. Both Rhys and Dr. Byrne fielded several questions from some very passionate members of the audience. One student pressed Evergreen on its timeline for upgrading facilities to be more efficient and sustainable. Rhys, who this question was directed at, passed off the mic to Scott Morgan, putting him on the spot, which

was rather entertaining. Another questioner was skeptical about the amount of optimism both speakers had conveyed. The audience clearly showed a real desire for concrete steps and action that we could take as a community. All in all, the question and answer session generated a lively discussion that really helped bring both the activism and science perspectives to the surface.

The message of both seemed to be that although we've got a lot of work to do, and the ball isn't rolling as quickly as it should be, it is in fact rolling. Big changes are happening, and we may have the potential to avert the worst impacts of the climate crisis. Clean energy technology has evolved at an unprecedented rate over the past few years. It would be hard to talk about these issues to an engaged crowd and completely avoid the gloom and doom scenarios that we are so used to thinking about, but both speakers managed to paint a fairly optimistic as well as realistic picture of where we're currently at with these issues. Dr. Byrne ended his presentation by urging us to make connections with others in the room and to continue this conversation, pointing out that some of the biggest changes that we need to make as a society must arise from a grassroots polycentric movement rather than from the top down.



Dr. John Byrne and those in attendance.



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MES Invades the Clean Energy Committee

By Rhianna Hruska, 2nd Year MES Student, Secretary/Treasurer of the Clean Energy Committee, and Sustainability Resident Assistant for the Mods.

This academic year, three out of the five student members of the Clean Energy Committee (CEC) are MESers.

And on February 4, 2016, the CEC presented a panel at the Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference (OHESC). The conference was held at Lane Community College in Eugene, Oregon and engaged roughly 300 attendees. OHESC brought together faculty, staff, and students interested in sustainability at campuses in the Pacific Northwest.

Our panel presentation was on Evergreen's green fee, the Clean Energy Fee, that was passed by students in 2009. At the time of voting, 28% of the student body voted with 91% of voters being in favor of the green fee. The green fee is used to fully cover the green tags (also known as renewable energy credits) for the college. The rest of the money that does not go toward green tags is managed by the Clean Energy Committee. Many colleges have different ways of managing their green funds, and OHESC was a great opportunity for CEC members to share the unique way that Evergreen manages its

green fund. CEC also learned from other colleges and universities and came back from the conference with many great ideas on how to improve our process to further benefit campus.

After we presented our panel, the CEC team was able to relax and attend other sessions at the conference. There were diverse sessions; from case studies on sustainability curriculum to a film on food waste in North America. We all left the conference feeling empowered. We all had new ideas of sustainability projects we could bring back to Evergreen in some capacity.

At the end of the conference, the CEC team went to meet representatives from Arcimoto, an emerging Oregon-based electric car company that currently has models driving around Southern California. They have many interested potential customers that would like to purchase the final electric vehicle design once they hit the market. CEC got to see Arcimoto's various prototypes and their shop. It was great for CEC to meet with the Arcimoto team and it was inspiring to see the amazing work that Arcimoto is doing to rethink electric vehicle design.

The national version of OHESC is the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education



Rhianna excitedly waits to present.

(AASHE). I was able to attend AASHE last year and it helped set a course of direction for me at Evergreen. One of our students wrote about his experience at AASHE and it can be found on our blog.

A CEC student and I have submitted a proposal for the 2016 conference to present a case study on how Evergreen manages its green fee fund, the Clean Energy Fund. We will hear back in Spring about whether the proposal is accepted, but for now, CEC was glad for the opportunity to share the amazing work that we do at OHESC.



Rhianna and other Greeners at their panel presentation.

