The Attitude-Behavior Disconnect: Identifying factors that moderate behavior in BC's environmental movement

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The Attitude-Behavior Disconnect:
Identifying factors that moderate behavior in BC’s environmental movement

Jacqueline Geaney
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This study examines how attitudes of environmental concern affect the behavior of students on the Boston College (BC) campus. Conventional wisdom suggests that attitude would determine behavior, but past studies have been unable to find a connection between environmental attitude and behavior. This suggests that there are other factors at play, in addition to environmental concern. Using survey and in-depth interview data, this study focuses on the influence of the following factors: monetary cost, convenience, habit and visibility of consequences. The findings suggest that attitude itself does influence environmental behavior, but that the aforementioned factors play an important role in either increasing or decreasing the rate of behavior. I conclude by suggesting that the impact of cost as a barrier to behavior speaks to the importance of structural change in order to increase the rate of green behavior.
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INTRODUCTION

This study is of particular interest to me as a self-identified environmentalist. I firmly believe in the importance of changing the way our world operates in order to avoid the onset of climate disasters affecting humans and eco-systems alike. Through my pursuit of environmentalism academically and in extra-curricular activities, I have learned that sparking change is a difficult task. Much of the efforts to make Boston College (hereinafter BC) a more “green” campus have focused on changing student habits, that is to say creating change on an individual rather than societal level. The method of action is often to educate students about the consequences of their actions, relying on the notion that education affects individual behavior. Sociological studies, however, suggest that this is an ineffective method for creating significant change because having a high level of environmental concern does not necessarily lead to environmentally friendly behavior.

My observations of the general student body as well as the environmental subculture at BC reinforces this idea. In my work in the Office of Sustainability, efforts to change student behavior have not always panned out as hoped. Information in the form of e-mails, flyers, magnets and events have not been enough to build a student body that makes personal decisions based on environmental impact. Even at meetings for Ecopleudge, the university environmental club, members occasionally behave in ways that are environmentally negligent, by drinking bottled water or eating out of a disposable plastic clam-shell container. Though these are small acts, they reveal a larger disconnect between attitude and behavior. These students care enough about the environment to attend weekly environmental club meetings and are aware of the consequences of their actions, yet in certain instances they fail to align their actions with their ideology.
The failure of environmental concern to change behavior is something I also struggle with on a personal level. Despite my concern about and knowledge of environmental issues, I still fight to make “green” choices in my everyday life. One such instance occurred after attending a campus screening of the film “Kilowatt Ours.” The documentary focused on energy use in homes and sent the message that individuals can make a difference when large numbers of people alter their behavior in simple ways, like buy unplugging appliances when not in use and switching to energy-efficient light bulbs. I took notes on changes I could make, and halfway through the film I resolved to make changes of my own. I even contemplated getting my parents on board by retrofitting our home with the compact fluorescent bulbs, which use a three quarters less energy than incandescent bulbs. A week later I had forgotten all about this and nothing ever came of my plan. Going into the movie I already had a high level of concern about the environment, but that did not motivate me to make proactive changes (although it did impact my subsequent purchases when the time came around to buying a new bulb).

The incongruence that I have often noted between attitudes and behavior with respect to the environment fascinates me. It undermines conventional wisdom and many current efforts to create environmental change. Since environmental concern is not enough, I have a great interest in exploring what does cause people to engage in environmentally friendly behavior. For example, a study conducted by Diekmann and Preisendorfer (2003) suggests that cost is a moderator in performing environmental behaviors, and I believe that this and other variables affect behavior in addition to attitude. Understanding the root of the attitude-behavior disconnect and identifying the factors that moderate behavior could benefit the environmental movement by revealing how to make behavior-change strategies more effective.
LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical traditions most relevant to my research bridge the fields of sociology, psychology and economics. In studying the factors that impact behavior, especially with respect to the environment, a combination of different disciplines is necessary. Psychology, for instance, provides insight into the impact of internal variables on behavior, like an individual’s personal values and opinions, while economic principles help conceptualize external variables, like the greater structural sphere in which we operate.

The idea that attitude predicts behavior is a basic principle of social psychology. Literature on the attitude-behavior correspondence in general dates back to the 1970s (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). When it comes to the environment, attitude and concern are often used interchangeably to refer to how strongly an individual feels about protecting the environment. There are conditions that must be met in order for attitude to predict behavior: 1) there must be a sophisticated, internally consistent measurement to determine attitude, 2) there must be a certain level of specificity connecting the behavior to the attitude, and 3) other variables, such as the structure of the social arena, social influences and the visibility of consequences, must be taken into consideration (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975; Schuman & Johnson 1976; Weigel 1985; Ungar 1994). Another researcher cited a fourth criterion, that actors must be conscious of the attitude-behavior connection when engaging in the behavior: "Our attitudes predict our actions…if, as we act, we are conscious of our attitudes" (Myers 1990: 40). The correspondence rule of social psychology states that there is no attitude-behavior relation when these conditions are not met.
Studies of environmental behavior have often been unable to establish attitude as a variable that predicts behavior (Maloney & Ward 1973; Buttel 1987; Ungar 1994). Sheldon Ungar (1994) in his work “Apples and oranges: Probing the attitude-behavior relationship for the environment” seeks to explain this phenomenon. He suggests that the inability of the attitude-behavior model to apply to the environment does not result from a failure on the part of researchers. Instead he believed the inherent nature of environmental issues prevents researchers from meeting the conditions necessary to conduct a study of attitude-behavior correlation. The environment, Ungar argues, is a “synthetic macrocategory,” and is therefore unable to fulfill the aforementioned conditions necessary to determine a strong attitude-behavior association (Ungar 1994). He believes that the attitude-behavior relation method is unsuitable for studying the environment, operating under the assumption that it is impossible to meet the necessary conditions with respect to the environment.

Other research studies have contested Ungar’s theory by conducting studies that did fulfill one or more of the required conditions. As noted, a third condition of attitude-behavior correspondence states that one must consider other variables, in addition to attitude, that impact behavior. When taking other variables into account, some studies have been able to establish a correspondence between environmental attitude and behavior, often without fulfilling the second condition and using an overly specific definition of attitude. This suggests that the reason other environmental attitude-behavior studies have failed was actually due to a failure to effectively account for these variables. Though it is difficult to test for many of the variables affecting behavior, it is not, as Ungar (1994) suggests, impossible to do so.
One way that researchers were able to find an attitude-behavior correspondence was by breaking down environmental concern into three different “value orientations” or motivations to act (Stern, Dietz & Kalof 1993). The first value orientation is social-altruism or motivation to act, stemming from a general concern for other human beings. Egoism, the second, is a motivation that stems from concern with self-interest. The third is biocentrism, motivation to protect the biosphere for its own inherent value. In their study, Stern, Dietz & Kalof (1993) found that all three value orientations impacted behavior in the form of political action, but only egoism sparked a change in individual habits. In other words, people were willing to change their behaviors in order to help themselves, but not to contribute to a greater humanitarian or ecological cause.

A study on curbside recycling by Guagnano, Stern and Dietz (1995) tested for the effect of altruism on behavior instead of environmental concern. According to the researchers, “recycling, because it usually involves individual costs and collective benefits, is best conceptualized as a problem in the activation of altruistic moral norms rather than as a direct function of general environmental concern” (Guagnano, Stern & Dietz 1995:705). Due to the nature of recycling, the researchers expected a tendency toward altruism to impact recycling more than broad environmental concern.

Variables, like the nature of the structural arena in which we operate, shape our behavior as well and when incorporated in to research studies, lend insight to the dilemma facing those who are concerned about the environment. For example, to account for the impact of context, Diekmann and Preisendorfer (2003) look to rational choice theory for inspiration in their research. This economic theory provides a lens through which to look at the broader structural factors that impact environmental behavior. According to rational choice theory, when faced with a decision, individuals
will make the choice that best suits their individual interests. Applying this theory to environmental decision-making suggests that people will do what is best for them even if it has a negative environmental impact.

It might seem that rational-choice theory would conflict with social psychology’s attitude-behavior prediction, because it suggests that people will violate their attitudes when it suits their own interests. Within psychology, however, the idea of a cost-benefit analysis in decision-making is not unheard of. Psychology uses principles similar to those of economics, such as social exchange theory which states that “social behavior is an exchange of goods, material goods…Persons that give much to others try to get much from them, and persons that get much from others are under pressure to give much to them (Homans 1958). In other words, humans are rational actors and thus consider personal gains and costs when it comes to building, maintaining and ending friendships and other relationships. Together the attitude-behavior prediction and rational choice theory have a great deal of explanatory power. They reveal that attitude does predict behavior under certain circumstances.

As Diekmann and Preisendorfer (2003) state, social psychology has explanatory power when the cost of making the “green” choice is low. For example, when there are recycling receptacles readily available the cost of recycling is low. When the cost of making the “green” choice is high, attitude is no longer a significant predictor of behavior and most people, regardless of attitude, will make the low-cost choice. This suggests that people are enacting the rational choice principle in high-cost situations. The researchers called this melding of theories the low-cost hypothesis. The low-cost hypothesis is strong because it considers both internal and external factors, attitude and cost. It is helpful in
that it explains why environmentally concerned people do not always make the “green” choice; the cost is too high.

Diekmann and Preisendorfer (2003) were also able to establish a connection between general attitude and specific behavior. This is beneficial because in many studies focused on creating “conceptual congruency” between attitudes and behaviors, the attitudes were so specific that the results lost explanatory power. As Ungar (2003: 295) notes “Effectively, conceptual congruency requires the setting of behavioral priorities based on knowledge of the life-cycle impact of phenomena.” In other words, specificity often means measuring environmental attitudes in terms of intentions to perform a particular behavior. Similarly, another study found that “attitude and intentions to recycle household newspapers were significant predictors of recycling behavior” (Boldero 1995: 440). The causal connection between intentions to perform and act on that behavior is not particularly revealing of human nature. Not only is it fairly intuitive, but it side-steps the core disconnect between attitude and behavior. When attitude is defined in such a specific sense, there is no explanation as to why people with a general concern for the environment lack the intention to perform behaviors like recycling. Diekmann and Preisendorfer (2003) define environmental concerns as “insight into the threat to our natural resources, connected with the willingness to do something against it.” By this definition, “concern” is a general attitude that measures the rate of performing a variety of behaviors.

Other studies, without stating the intention to use tenets of economic theory, conceptualized the variables that impact environmental behavior in terms of cost. A variety of studies have explored the impact of the cost of performing a behavior. Guagnano, Stern & Dietz (1995) look at cost in terms of the convenience of performing a
behavior. In their study on recycling, they found that environmental concern had a limited impact on behavior without “structural convenience,” that is, the presence of a recycling bin. In another study, researchers looked at cost in terms of effort. Schultz & Oskamp’s (1996) study on recycling determined that effort was a moderating force that impacted the attitude-behavior correspondence, with attitude impacting recycling behavior only in instances where less effort was required to recycle. These two studies are complementary because they show that the less effort required to perform a behavior, the more convenient it is.

A study by Clark, Kotchen & Moore (2003) on a green electricity program looked at cost in monetary terms: the ability to pay for alternative forms of electricity. Their study determined that households with higher income and fewer members were more likely to participate in a green electricity program than low-income families and larger families. The researchers attributed this result to the initial cost of green electricity programs. While green electricity initiatives often save money over time, they require a greater upfront expenditure. This creates a barrier that moderates behavior, even the behavior of those with a high level of environmental concern.

Thus, although Ungar’s (1994) work suggests that there is no attitude-behavior connection, other studies have shown an environmental attitude-behavior connection when accounting for other variables. The literature suggests that in addition to attitude, cost is a significant factor that affects behavior. Cost, in terms of both money and convenience was shown to be a critical variable. Essentially, when cost is low, people who are concerned about the environment make “green” lifestyle choices. When cost is high, it overpowers attitude in affecting behavior.
JUSTIFICATION OF TOPIC

Through my research I wanted to identify and explore the other variables, in addition to attitude, that influence environmental behavior. Based on the literature cited above, I hypothesized that cost, habit and concealment of consequences would all be critical variables that moderate the attitude-behavior correspondence. I would test this by surveying and interviewing students involved in environmental groups on-campus.

I conceptualized attitude in a broad sense as opposed to specifically relating the attitude to the behavior in question. For example, in the study below I looked at how general attitude affected recycling instead of measuring how attitude towards recycling affected recycling. The literature cites the many downsides to measuring attitude too specifically and studies (Diekmann & Preisendorfer 2003; Stern, Dietz & Kalof 1993; Guagnano, Stern & Dietz 1995) have shown that it is not necessary to do so. I also chose to look at environmental attitude as one entity without separating it into the smaller value-orientations (egoism, social-altruism and biocentrism.) Although Stern, Dietz & Kalof (1993) showed that egoism was the only value-orientation leading to individual behavior change, distinguishing between the three different subfields was not feasible for my study. Breaking down attitude into smaller categories would have greatly complicated the research process and so attitude was not divided into subcategories.

I conceptualized environmental behavior as performing different everyday actions that could have a varying degree of environmental impact depending on personal choices. This included actions tied to resource conservation like turning off lights to save electricity, taking shorter showers to save water and keeping the thermostat low to save gas. Environmentally friendly purchasing habits were another key category. By eliminating unnecessary purchases and buying new when possible, people can conserve
resources. They can also conserve by using reusable containers for food and beverages. As for shopping, people can choose products from environmentally conscious companies that use recycled materials or use factories that do not emit dangerous contaminants and chemicals into the environment. Along with purchasing, food choices are critical behaviors with buying local and/or organic foods serving as an environmentally friendly behavior. There are also behaviors tied to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, namely cutting down on vehicle use, driving a hybrid vehicle and reducing meat consumption. Finally there are the choices we make when it comes to our waste disposal, with recycling and composting being the environmentally friendly choices. With all of these actions, people have the option to make the “green” choice or the environmentally damaging choice.

Building off Diekmann and Preisendorfer’s (2003) suggestion, the link between cost of performing an act and moderating behavior was my key variable. For my study I tested for cost in terms of convenience, as it was used by the Diekmann & Preisendorfer (2003) study, and also in a monetary sense as in the study by Clark, Kotchen & Moore (2003). In addition to looking at cost in terms of a price-comparison (buying a generic good or a more expensive eco-friendly good,) I modified the concept; I compared how the monetary cost of performing one behavior changes depending on the situation. For example, the cost of leaving the lights on in your hotel room is zero because you pay a flat rate regardless of electricity usage, but the cost of leaving the lights on in your home is higher because you pay for your own electric bill and every kilowatt of electricity you use. The same comparison could be made between on and off-campus students, where some students have a cost incentive to save while others do not. Clark et al. (2003) showed that money is a moderator of behavior, and so if increased price can serve as a
barrier to behavior, it follows that the threat of losing money could also motivate people to act a certain way.

There were two further variables that I suspected might modify behavior to a degree that I did not encounter in previous studies. The first is habit, which can be viewed as a further extension of the cost variable, and the second is concealment of consequences. The importance of habit as a variable stems from my belief that convenience is subjective. No action has a set degree of convenience because convenience is a factor of perception. I suspect that habit plays a big part in determining whether or not an individual perceives and action to be convenient or not, and along with this family values often influence habits. For example, if someone grew up in a household that stressed turning off the lights, that behavior becomes habit at an early age and continuing it is low in cost. Actions, I suspect, require less effort for the people who are used to performing them compared those who are adopting a behavior for the first time.

I also believe that the concealment of consequences likely impacts behavior by making it easier for people to engage in behaviors that contradict their attitudes. This concealment of consequences is inherent to the nature of conceptual environmental issues. When it comes to the environment, we rarely see the impact of our behaviors because the results are not immediate and visible results often are the product of collective decisions, not just our own (Szocs 2007, Speth 2008). Such is the case with issues like global climate change and water scarcity. If the consequences of our actions were more direct, it would be more difficult for environmentally concerned people to engage in environmentally negligent behaviors. This relates to Myers’ criteria for studying the attitude-behavior connection that people must be conscious of their attitudes.
when performing the behavior, or else attitude will not predict behavior. Unfortunately
the nature of environmental problems makes it difficult for people to comprehend the
consequences of their personal everyday actions. This disconnect facilitates people to
behave in ways that contradict their environmental attitudes.

**METHODS**

Data collection was conducted in two segments: 1) an online survey and 2) in-
depth interviews. The online survey was designed for BC undergraduates with some
degree of environmental concern, though the respondent pool was mostly comprised of
students with an above-average degree of environment concern\(^1\). The overall goal of the
survey was to determine if attitude predicts behavior, or if cost (in terms of convenience
and money) operates as a moderator for the attitude-behavior relationship. To determine
this, I compared the behaviors of people with medium and high degrees of environmental
concern. The interviews, which were conducted exclusively with undergraduate students
involved in the BC environmental subculture, were more exploratory. This subculture
included students with an academic focus on environmental issues, as well as
involvement in environmental organizations. The interviews served to investigate
potential variables that affect behavior among students such as habit and concealment of
consequences, and to enhance the study with a qualitative research component.

**Survey Data Collection**

In gathering my survey data I relied on the Facebook social networking website
and various campus e-mail listservs with environmental themes. A survey link was sent

\(^1\) Based on responses to attitude questions, 150 students scored in the “high concern” category, 53 scored in
the “medium concern” category and one student was determined to have “low concern.”
to students on the Ecopledge environmental club listserv, the Environmental Studies minor listserv, and to students registered in a few environmental sociology courses. Members of these environmental groups and courses would likely have a higher degree of environmental concern than the average BC undergraduate. I also sent out the survey link to my Facebook friends in the BC network, a group with more varied levels of environmental concern. Initially I planned to survey off-campus students in order to acquire a data sample more representative of the general BC student body in terms of environmental concern (and because some of my survey involved comparing on and off-campus student habits.) Due to administrative issues, however, the Residence Life office was unable to e-mail my survey to the off-campus student listserv.

The survey begins with general demographic questions and questions about the students’ current living situation. These questions helped me determine if my respondent pool was representative of the BC campus; I did not expect to find a connection between these demographic responses and attitude or behavior. Next, there is a short section exclusively for off-campus students to determine their type of recycling system and how they are charged for utilities.

To measure environmental attitude, I included 14 statements with which students could agree or disagree using a five-point Likert scale response system. Some of the questions were taken from the Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig & Jones New Ecological Paradigm scale, which is “the most widely used measure of environmental concern in the world and been employed in hundreds of studies in dozens of nations” (Dunlap et al. 2008: 3). The others were custom-made for this study and largely influenced by questions asked in the Diekmann and Priesendorfer (2003) study.
The section on environmental behavior began with a ranking question. Students were asked to rank five different behaviors in order of their likelihood to perform each one, with “1” being most likely and “5” being least likely. A subsequent question asked students to rank these same behaviors, but this time in order of how important it is to perform each behavior in order to protect the environment. Finally students were asked how often they engaged in a variety of behaviors related to conservation and waste disposal.

The survey served to address six different research problems, the first being to test whether the attitudes of BC students affected their everyday behaviors. Though previous studies were unable to establish attitude as a significant predictor of behavior without taking additional variables into consideration, I was interested in testing this claim with my own data. Along these lines, the second research problem was whether Environmental Studies minors had a higher level of environmental concern than non-minors, as their involvement in the program implies a particularly high level of concern.

The next two research problems involved a comparison of on and off-campus student behaviors. I looked at cost as a factor affecting behavior by testing to see if recycling rates change based on the nature of the recycling program in place. While on-campus students have recycling rooms, off-campus students often have a curbside pickup system. I hypothesized that the cost of recycling with a curbside pickup system was higher, so students with recycling rooms would have a higher recycling rate. I also compared utility usage of on and off-campus students, based on my hypothesis that paying for your own utilities provides a cost incentive to conserve. At the beginning of the survey, I determined which off-campus students paid for their own water, electricity and/or gas to see if their responses to questions on water, electricity and heat use differed.
from the answers of on-campus students. I predicted that students paying for their own utilities off-campus would have a higher rate of conservation than students living on-campus who are not charged for utilities by use.

The final two research problems were rooted in the low-cost hypothesis. For the ranking section, I predicted that students would not rank items in the same order for both likelihood and importance of performing each behavior. I also asked students how often they performed a particular behavior in two different situations. I expected students to perform the behavior more frequently in the low-cost situation than in the high-cost behavior.

**Interview Data Collection**

As a supplement to the survey, I performed unstructured in-depth interviews with members of the environmental subculture at BC. I had access to this group as a member of Ecoplege and the Environmental Studies minor. Through my classes and extra-curricular activities I was already acquainted with most of the students interviewed. I was attracted to this form of interviewing due to its flexibility. It would me to test for habit or concealment of consequences. Unlike rigid multiple-choice surveys, the interview framework also allows respondents to present new ideas that the researcher did not anticipate. I believed there are many more variables in decision-making than I anticipated in my survey, and felt that unstructured interviews would provide some interesting insights that could warrant further research. Finally, since part of my reason for conducting this study stemmed from my personal struggle with behaving in an environmentally responsible way, and I was interested to see if my peers have had similar experiences.
I interviewed 11 undergraduate students all who demonstrated a degree of environmental concern through their involvement in environmental organizations and/or their academic course work. Seven of the eleven students interviewed were female and four were male. This is not quite representative of the actual environmentally conscious population on-campus, which is more skewed towards females. The female to male ratio of students enrolled in the Environmental Studies minor this year is 32:18, and the Ecopledge club has been a female-dominated club throughout my BC experience. All but three of the students I interviewed were white, which is reflective of the BC population actively involved in environmentalism. Nine of the students I interviewed were seniors, partly because these are the students I had access to and also because upperclassmen generally have had more experience in dealing with these issues synthesizing their personal opinions.

I made a particular effort to speak with students who are involved in different areas of environmentalism in order to get a variety of opinions. For instance, in addition to interviewing fellow Ecopledge members, I spoke with two members of Real Food BC, the campus chapter of a national campaign advocating for organic, sustainable local food. I also interviewed a student involved with the Leadership Campaign, a state-wide initiative calling for 100% clean energy in Massachusetts by 2020. I varied my pool in terms of major as well by interviewing a few Geosciences majors in addition to students in the social sciences, other natural sciences and two in the BC Carroll School of Management.

Interviews were semi-structured and varied from 30 minutes to an hour in length. All interviews were recorded on my computer so that I could later transcribe them. The interview guide was comprised of four sections: personal information, environmental
concern, lifestyle, and decision-making. The first section asked basic personal questions to see if there were any trends in everyday behaviors, like shopping or food choices and to see if the type of household people grew up in was an influential factor in determining environmental concern. The next section served to uncover what drives each individual’s concern for the environment, egoism, altruism or biocentrism (Stern, Dietz & Kalof 1993). I also asked questions to determine how students view the role of the individual in environmentalism.

The third section focused on lifestyle, with a particular emphasis on life at BC. In I was interested in learning what they thought an individual should do in order to live an environmentally friendly lifestyle, as well as what changes, if any, they are unable to make. In the final section on decision-making I asked students directly what aids them in making green choices, and what discourages them from doing so. Based on my hypothesis, I expected to hear that cost was a factor either financially or effort-wise. In the last question I asked students to walk me through a normal day in their lives and point out the times in which they are conscious of their environmental impact.

SURVEY ANALYSIS

My survey received 203 responses. Of these, only about 30% were male, though males make up approximately half of the student population. My data pool was also 82% white, with 166 of the respondents identifying as “White, non-Hispanic.” A little more than half of the respondents were seniors. Juniors and sophomores each represented 18% of the respondents, and 7% of the respondents were freshmen. Unfortunately only 17% percent of the respondents were off-campus students, which is too small a sample size to extrapolate my results to the rest of the off-campus students.
Attitude-behavior prediction

My first survey research problem was whether attitude predicted behavior. To test for this, first I assigned a general attitude score to each respondent based on the answers to the 14 attitude-related questions. (See Appendix for list of the 14 attitude questions). I coded the responses with a numerical value from 1-5, coding positive and negative statements differently so that the answer that signified the highest level of environmental concern would always receive a value of five. For example, one of the positive statements was, “It is critical for us to reduce our consumption in order to protect natural resources.” Agreeing with this statement demonstrates a high level of concern, so I coded the response “strongly agree” as a five. For the four negative statements, for which agreement suggested a lack of environmental concern, I coded the response “strongly disagree” as a five. With 14 questions, the highest possible score was a 70, representing the highest level of environmental concern, and the lowest possible score was 14, representing the lowest degree of concern.

I split my responses into three equal categories. A score in the 14-32 range was considered low concern, 33-51 was medium and 52-70 suggested a high level of environmental concern. The lowest score was a 31. This was the only student polled who scored within the low concern category. Two students scored a 70, the highest possible score expressing the greatest possible concern for the environment. My results showed that the sample of students I polled did not vary in their levels of environmental concern, with the vast majority of the students demonstrating a high level of concern as demonstrated in Figure 1. Thirty-nine students were found to have a medium level of concern, while the majority (163 students) had a high level of concern.

**FIGURE 1 HERE**
It is doubtful that this sampling represents the general BC population. My data collection strategy targeted a disproportionate number of environmentally concerned people and the selection criteria were responsible for the overwhelming number of respondents with a high level of environmental concern. The majority of the sources I used to gather survey data were environmental groups, and it makes sense that the students on these e-mail lists would have a high level of environmental concern. I had initially hoped to send out my survey to a more random sampling of students using the off-campus student listserv, but structural restraints prevented me from doing so, leaving me with a skewed population. The only group to which I administered my survey that was not directly tied to the environment was my Facebook friends. Even with this less biased group, however, it is possible that my survey attracted more of the environmentally-inclined students from this group. My brief explanation stated that they survey has an environmental focus, which could have discouraged students who are not concerned about the environment from answering, while encouraging responses from students with an interest in environmental issues.

It is likely that the targeting of environmentally concerned individuals in the sampling also relates to the low male response rate. As mentioned before, most of the students involved in Ecopledge and in the Environmental Studies minor are women. Administering the survey to environmentally conscious students means that more women would have received the survey link in their inboxes than did men. At the same time I suspect that contacting students through Facebook might also have elicited a disproportionate percentage of environmentally concerned responses, since students would have chosen whether or not to answer the survey based on the topic. Since women
make up a higher percentage of the environmentally concerned population on-campus than men, this also would have led to a higher female response rate.

With one respondent in the low concern category, I was only able to compare the behaviors between students with high and medium levels of concern. I did not anticipate there to be any significant difference in behavior between these two attitude groups based on the literature and the fact that both groups demonstrated some degree of environmental concern. The results showed, however, that people with a high level of concern outperformed those with a medium level of concern in all 23 of the behavior-related questions. In most cases the disparity between the two groups was not very large, but a few questions produced very different behavioral results and are worth noting.

As Figure 2 demonstrates (see Appendix D), both groups recycled a very high percentage of plastic bottles and cans, which is unsurprising as these are probably the two most well-known recyclable items for a number of reasons. Recycling receptacles, including some on-campus, are often designed with small beverage-sized holes so that only these types of items are put into the recycling. Most cities and towns in the U.S. have a recycling system for bottles and cans, and so people are constantly being exposed to signs about recycling these items. Batteries and ink cartridges, on the other hand, had the lowest recycling rates for both groups, which is also not unexpected due to the cost of performing these behaviors. Receptacles for bottles and cans are abundant, while there are very few for recycling batteries and ink cartridge. Not only are these items less convenient to recycle, but fewer people are aware that they are recyclable due to the absence of visible structures promoting people to recycle them.

FIGURE 2 HERE
Comparing batteries and ink cartridges, there are more structures in place for recycling ink cartridges which reduces the cost relative to batteries. Many companies now supply purchasers with a pre-paid envelope to mail back the used cartridges for recycling. Producers of batteries do not have the same cost-reduction system; people must seek out special facilities to recycle batteries. The cost of recycling batteries is also higher on-campus. Each laundry room has a small container for recycling ink cartridges, but batteries must be taken to O’Neill Library to be recycled. The higher cost of recycling batteries compared to ink cartridges explains why, for both groups, ink cartridges had a higher recycling rate.

Recycling of food containers, printer paper and cardboard all had about a 17% difference in recycling rate between the two groups. The number of environmentally concerned people who recycle paper products was also fairly low, with only three out of four highly environmentally concerned people recycling these items. This is somewhat surprising, as paper products are fairly commonly recognized recyclable items. Food containers, which could include anything from the plastic clamshell salad containers in the dining halls to a plastic milk container, are not as highly publicized recyclable containers. The fact that only about half the students with a medium level of concern recycled food containers is not unexpected.

The relatively low rate of recycling paper products might be due to a perceived lack of access to the necessary resources. During this 2009-2010 academic year BC switched to a single-stream recycling program, which means that commingled items (plastics, aluminum and glass) can all go in the same receptacle with paper products. This shift has not been very well publicized and many of the on-campus receptacles have not been changed to accommodate the switch. There are still on-campus receptacles that
were designed for either paper or beverage containers exclusively, which can be confusing to students and also prevents them from recycling certain items in certain locations. For example, in Eagles Nest there is a receptacle with a hole for drinks and a sign that says “Bottles and Cans Only.” Even students who are aware of the single-stream recycling program might be discouraged from recycling paper due to the structures in place. There is no receptacle exclusively for paper in this area, and therefore when students are done reading their latest issue of the BC newspaper, *The Heights*, they are likely to throw it in the trash perceiving a lack of access to the appropriate receptacle.

One of the biggest behavioral disparities between the group with medium environmental concern and high environmental concern was with respect to composting in the McElroy and Lower dining halls, as shown in Figure 3 (Appendix D). On average, students with a high level of environmental concern composted 16% more than students with a medium level of concern. While recycling bottles and cans has become mainstream with every big city in the country having its own recycling program, composting is not so widespread. Most composting initiatives at this point in time are personal initiatives, not local governmental programs. In general there is not much publicity about composting; consequently fewer people are aware of this option and know how to compost correctly.

**FIGURE 3 HERE**

At BC, composting in the dining halls is relatively new to many students. The McElroy program began two years ago, with the help of Ecoplege volunteers educating their peers on how to compost, and the Lower program was introduced for the first time this year. As such many of the upper-classmen are not accustomed to composting in the
dining halls and have developed a habit of quick and easy waste disposal. After these students graduate, it will be interesting to see if the composting rates increase.

The survey asked students how often they compost in McElroy and Lower dining halls, two locations that have compost buckets readily available, meaning that access is not a barrier to behavior here. These are all students with a medium to high level of environmental concern who are aware of environmental issues. The failure to compost is more likely attributed to the waste disposal habits people have already formed or a lack of education on how to compost correctly. There is no infrastructure in place to teach students about why composting is important and how to compost correctly. Any student with this information would have picked it up in the occasional random class or more likely, conducted research on their own, which students with a higher level of concern would be more apt to do. To reduce the cost of composting, an educational campaign on how to compost correctly would probably benefit the campus.

Drinking bottled water had the greatest disparity in responses between the two groups with a difference of 24% as shown in Figure 4 (Appendix D). While students with a high level of environmental concern said they rarely drink bottled water, students with a medium level of concern answered in between “sometimes” and “often.” This is surprising because avoiding bottled water has a relatively low cost. You must pay more at once for a reusable container than you would for one bottled water, but for a frequent purchaser of bottled water it will pay for itself in a short period of time. I suspect that once again the differences in behavior rates are a matter of difference in environmental education, not access.

FIGURE 4 HERE
Eliminating bottled water from everyday habits is associated with waste reduction, conservation of oil and reducing the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere. Bottled water companies are also associated with human rights violations in the developing world, which could motivate people with a social-altruistic value orientation to reduce usage. Students at BC involved in environmental classes and clubs are exposed to media about the problems associated with bottled water, and it is possible that the students with a medium level of concern do not have the same exposure to documentaries such as *Blue Gold* and *FLOW* which have both been shown in core classes for the Environmental Studies minor. Environmental concern and environmental education feed into one another. The more concerned people are about the environment, the more likely they are to expose themselves to news articles, films and classes about the state of the environment, which in effect increases their level of environmental concern. Since avoiding bottled water is relatively easy, I believe that people with a medium level of concern drink more bottled water on average not due to the cost of switching but a lack of knowledge.

In examining environmental attitudes, I also tested to see if the level of environmental concern of the average Environmental Studies minor was higher than that of non-minors. As the responses demonstrate, the majority of the students surveyed had an unusually high level of environmental concern. In spite of this, Environmental Studies minors did have a slightly higher rate of concern on average than non-minors. The 53 Environmental Studies minors scored an average of 60 on the attitude questions, while non-minors scored an average of 56. Both of these scores fell within the range of high concern. The slightly higher degree of concern of Environmental Studies minors is probably both a factor of and a contributor to environmental concern. Students with a
high level of concern are attracted to the minor, while at the same time learning more about environmental issues can increase levels of concern.

**Comparing on and off-campus students**

Examining off-campus students, I predicted those with a recycling room in their apartments would have a higher rate of recycling than those with a curbside pickup system due to increased cost. With the limited number of off-campus students polled, only 24 respondents had a curbside bin pickup system. Compared to the recycling rates of on-campus students with a recycling room, students with a curbside pickup system had very similar rates of recycling for each particular item. With some of the items, for example, food containers, printer paper and cardboard, the rate for students with a curbside pickup system was actually slightly higher, but never by more than 7%. For the ranking question, the type of recycling system students used had no impact on how they ranked the likelihood of recycling.

When asked whether off-campus students recycle more on-campus, in their apartments, or about the same in both places, most students felt the amount they recycle did not vary based on location. Figure 5 (Appendix D) demonstrates the ratio of responses. Of the students who noted a difference in recycling behavior based on location, 13 reported recycling more off-campus, while only five reported recycling more on-campus. Three of those five students reported being unsure as to what type of recycling system they currently have off-campus.

**FIGURE 5 HERE**

In an open-ended response question, I asked students what accounts for the difference in recycling between the two locations. All five students who said they
recycle more on-campus attributed this difference in recycling rate to access. They stated that the recycling system at BC is more convenient, some suggesting that BC recycles a wider range of items than the system in place off campus. Three of the responses to the question, “What accounts for this difference in recycling rate?” are listed below:

“More recycling bins available on-campus. Also my apartment complex abuses the recycling bins, filling them up with non-recyclable goods.”

“Campus has an easier system, bins for recycling in every room, etc.”

“The building provides limited recycling.”

Many of the students who reported recycling more off-campus also cited access as being responsible for the difference. In addition to an insufficient number of recycling receptacles on-campus, some students stated that the current receptacles are not conspicuous enough. A couple of students also mentioned personal responsibility as a factor, stating they take more responsibility for their off-campus behavior, as noted in the responses below:

“On-campus recycling is inconsistent and many times inaccessible. If it is accessible there isn't much attention being brought to the recycling bins so there is so much trash in the bins even if there is single stream recycling.”

“When I live off-campus I take it upon myself to recycle more. I don't see the same opportunity or commitment when living on-campus.”

“Not sure - probably because I take more responsibility for my living situation in general.”

Some of the students also appeared to be ignorant of BC’s new single-stream recycling program, suggesting that they can recycle a greater variety of objects off-campus than they can on-campus:

“My apartment allows for the recycling of different plastics, metals, glass, cardboard, and paper. There is also a voluntary compost section, to really minimize the trash.”
“We all bend over backwards to recycle paper, boxboard, plastics, glass, etc. in my apartment. On-campus, receptacles for material types that can be recycled are limited to plastic bottles and paper, though it's common to see these full of trash.”

In fact, all the items these students listed (paper, cardboard, glass, etc.) can be recycled on-campus. BC contracts with a facility that recycles a wide variety of waste items, but it seems that some students are not aware of this. The two respondents quoted above have high levels of environmental concern and a strong willingness to recycle, but a lack of information currently limits their recycling rate on-campus. This suggests that BC is not doing enough to publicize what can and cannot be recycled on-campus. It is creditable that BC provides access to recycling bins, but this accomplishes little when students are unsure about how the system operates.

The administration limits its dissemination of recycling-related information to posters and signs. This method is proving to be ineffective based on the abundance of trash that students see in the recycling bins and the general confusion about what can and cannot be recycled on-campus. Campus recycling rates could probably be improved by educating students about recycling, using a more direct approach. One such approach would be to speak to students at an event like Freshmen Orientation.

Last summer, my fellow interns and I in the BC Office of Sustainability requested a time-slot at Freshman Orientation to present a PowerPoint slideshow about BC’s recycling and compost system. After initially being granted permission to speak for five minutes, this was later reduced to two minutes, and then we were told that the Orientation agenda was too full to squeeze us in. This type of approach, which would have targeted students as they enter the university, would have encouraged a whole class of students to make recycling on-campus a habit from the beginning. Such a program would also reach more students; while not everyone pays attention to posters and signs, all students must...
attend Orientation. At the same time, having the administration devote time to speak to students about recycling and composting sends the subtle yet powerful message that the BC community values the environment. Overall such a program could establish recycling as the norm, which would avoid the problem that BC is struggling with now: trying to change environmentally damaging behaviors that students have grown accustomed to performing.

The wording of the question itself also was a factor leading to the disproportionate number of students who feel they recycle more off campus. To ask, “Do you recycle more when on campus, off campus, or equally the same,” suggests a comparison in absolute quantity of items recycled rather than a comparison of rate of recycling. Off-campus students might use more recyclables in their apartments, and would thus recycle more items when they live off campus. One student responded by saying just that:

“I just spend more time and use more recyclables off-campus. When I'm on-campus, I do recycle whatever I use, though.”

This student remarked that he recycled more off campus, but in the comment section he revealed that his rate of recycling is essentially the same in both situations. Other students might have answered differently had the question compared recycling rate, rather than the absolute number of recyclables.

Another research problem I tested for was whether paying for utilities based on usage operated as an incentive to conserve resources. All on-campus students pay a flat rate for utilities, but most off-campus students pay for at least one type of utility based on monthly usage. I compared the behavioral patterns of the 169 on-campus students to the 35 off-campus students. I asked all off-campus students to check off which of the three utilities they pay for by use: water, electricity and gas. Of the off-campus students, 30
paid for electricity, 14 paid for gas and six paid for water based on rate of usage. The water results are displayed along with the other results in Figure 6 (Appendix D), but it should be noted that, with only six students, this is much too small a sample size to draw any meaningful conclusions. In the survey I asked two behavioral questions relating to conservation of electricity, one relating to water conservation, and one to conserving gas. The results of the gas and electricity questions suggest that when people have the potential to save money through their behavioral choices, this does create an incentive to perform the money-saving behavior (in this case conservation of resources.)

FIGURE 6 HERE

Off-campus students who pay for their own gas were slightly more likely than on-campus students to put on layers and keep the thermostat turned down. They were also much more likely to save electricity by unplugging chargers than on-campus students. The rates of shutting off the lights were the same for both groups, possibly because this is a behavior that is commonly stressed. Shutting off the lights is likely to be motivated by habit, rather than saving money. The results supported my hypothesis that, in terms of the opportunity to save money, cost can impact behavior.

For all of these off-campus questions, it is important to stress that there was a very small sample size of off-campus students. If more off-campus students were polled the results would likely change, as small sample sizes are prone to error. The results for the off-campus portion of the survey should not be extrapolated to apply to the greater BC off-campus community. The fact that my hypothesis was supported in this small sample project, however, does warrant the potential for further research on these issues.
Ranking problem

The five behaviors that students ranked were: 1) repair things that are broken rather than buying new; 2) use a refillable thermos instead of disposable coffee/tea cups; 3) recycle cans and plastic bottles; 4) plan trips around avoiding automobile use, and 5) take shorter showers and/or turn water on and off as needed. As Figure 7 demonstrates, students did not rank these five items in the same order for likelihood of performance and importance in protecting the environment. This suggests that environmental importance was not the primary factor in determining whether an environmentally concerned individual would perform a behavior.

FIGURE 7 HERE

The only behavior that was ranked the same for both questions was recycling cans and plastic bottles, which was ranked as both the most important behavior and the behavior that people were most likely to engage in. Based on the low cost hypothesis, it follows that people would be likely to recycle because the cost is relatively low due to the structures in place. It is surprising that students ranked recycling as the most important behavior, however, because in general conserving natural resources is considered secondary to efforts to reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (often associated with alternative energy, or in the case of this question with reducing automobile usage.) One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that since recycling is one of the most widespread environmental behaviors, people assume that it is important. In fact, it is probably the low cost of recycling that makes it so widespread; recycling is more convenient than other environmentally friendly behaviors, so governments and organizations push for what is feasible.
The low cost hypothesis also explains why avoiding car use was ranked as being the behavior people were least likely to perform. When travelling short distances, alternatives to driving (like walking or biking) are generally more time-consuming. When traveling long distances, alternatives to driving are sometimes non-existent. Since Boston is more car-friendly than pedestrian-friendly, reducing automobile usage has a high-cost and people are unlikely to engage in this behavior even when they are concerned about the environment.

The two verticals bars in Figure 7 highlight the disparity between the likelihood that people will perform behaviors and how important they think these behaviors are to perform. Planning trips around automotive use and taking shorter showers were cited as the two most important behaviors (after recycling) yet these were also the two behaviors that people were least likely to perform. This highlights the attitude-behavior disconnect. Though people are concerned about conserving water and reducing air pollutant emissions, their actions do not correspond with their attitudes. Once again the low-cost hypothesis has a great deal of explanatory power. As mentioned before, avoiding car use is extremely inconvenient. Taking shorter showers is also inconvenient, and shutting water on and off is uncomfortable for people who are unaccustomed to such behavior. Compared to the other behaviors listed, these two behaviors have the highest cost and thus people are less likely to perform them.

**High and low-cost situations**

I predicted that students would perform a particular behavior with more frequency in low-cost situations and with less frequency in high-cost situations. To test this, I looked at the following four behaviors: 1) use of to-go containers; 2) buying locally
grown and/or organic food; 3) composting and 4) shutting off the lights. For most of these behaviors it was clear which situation had a higher cost. Avoiding the use of to-go containers when you want to take food to-go has a high cost, requiring students to change their plans or “borrow” a plate from the dining hall. Reducing the use of to-go containers when eating in the dining hall has a much lower cost. As for composting, access to the necessary bins makes this a low-cost behavior in the dining halls, while the absence of bins in the dorms makes for a higher cost of composting in those locations. Shutting off the lights in your own room is low-cost for a few reasons: it is a social norm, people are often accustomed to performing this behavior, and sometimes there is a personal monetary incentive to do so. My hypothesis that habit affects perceived cost would suggest that turning off the lights in a public space, which people are less accustomed to, has a higher cost. Additionally, there is no monetary incentive for turning lights off in public spaces.

Making “green” food purchases was the one behavior for which cost was unclear. Organic food often costs more, so buying it at off-campus venues could be perceived as high cost, while price is rarely considered in on-campus food purchases due to the meal plan system. On the other hand, there are very few organic options on-campau. For this behavior I had no prediction as to what the data would show.

Figure 8 (see Appendix D) shows the average frequency of each behavior across all attitude groups. A score of “1” indicates the behavior is never performed, “3” indicates that it is sometimes performed and “5” indicates that it is always performed. Note that for the first question, students were asked, “How often do you use to-go containers?” For this question, an accordant response indicates a negative environmental
behavior. For the other three behaviors, an accordant response indicates a positive environmental behavior.

FIGURE 8 HERE

The results supported my low-cost hypotheses. As I expected, students were more likely to use to-go containers when taking food away (high-cost situation) than when eating in the dining hall (low-cost). Students also had a higher incidence of composting in the dining halls, where there is access to composting bins, compared to in the dorms/apartment buildings.

Out of all eight situations, turning off the lights upon leaving their room had the highest rate of behavior with an average of 4.61. As predicted, students were much less likely to shut off the lights in a public space. In addition to habit and monetary incentives as possible explanations for this difference, there is also the impact of social norms. In the interview section to follow, some students mentioned how the social environment can serve as a barrier to environmentally friendly behavior. Shutting off the lights upon leaving the laundry room and drinking out of a jar (an environmental behavior described in the Interview section to follow) are not typical behaviors in society. Sometimes engaging in less common “green” behaviors can be socially uncomfortable, and this can discourage even students with a high level of environmental concern from making certain “green” choices.

Out of all four behaviors, there was the smallest disparity between buying organic food on and off-campus. Students reported buying organic off campus at a slightly higher rate, but there was only a .42 difference between the two locations, with both receiving a rate essentially equivalent to “sometimes.”
INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

The degree of involvement in “environmentalism” of the students I interviewed varied greatly. At a minimum, all of the students received education about the environment through their academic major or minor. A few of the students’ environmental protection efforts were limited to changing their personal behaviors and occasionally offering advice to friends and roommates. Participation in environmentally-focused student organizations varied, with some receiving club e-mails and attending meetings on occasion, and others serving as club leaders. Only one student was active in off-campus environmental efforts. To protect the anonymity of the students, each student quoted in this section has been assigned a pseudonym.

Before moving on to address the content of the interviews, I first must make a note on the semantics of the word “environmentalism.” Throughout this study I have used the term “environmentalism” to encompass any efforts, great and small, to protect the environment by people who are concerned about the environment. In the interviews I used the term environmentalism with this broad definition in mind, asking students how long they have been involved in environmentalism and if they planned to continue with environmentalism after graduation. While some of the students interviewed had a definition of environmentalism similar to my own, others took the word to mean something different and were quick to distance themselves from the “environmentalist” label. It seems the word “environmentalism” does not have an agreed-upon definition among people that are concerned about the environment. The following interview excerpts are suggestive of the ambiguity of the word “environmentalism:”

“I mean you’re not going to be a true environmentalist unless you’re like, living in the woods, making your own food in your garden, like, that’s not reasonable if you want to be in society.”

-Erica, Undecided CSOM
Would you say that you’re involved in environmentalism?

“I’m not, I mean, like I’m in Ecoplege-I don’t really do any activist type things.”
-Dave, Environmental Geoscience major

“For my part, I guess. I wouldn’t call myself an activist.”
-Ian, History major

“I guess, it’s hard to call it “environmentalism” now because, yes, it is in part, my environmental work is through the food-system issues. But I’d say, you know, that’s also my social justice work. Like I’m more inclined to call it social justice work I think…”
-Emma, English major

Like many other terms related to the environment (e.g. “sustainability,” “green”) “environmentalism” is vague, containing many different connotations. The students above associated the word environmentalism with activism and radicalism, and some were eager to distance themselves from such labels. As of now, there is no term in the English language to define the combination of both radical and mainstream everyday efforts to protect the environment. For lack of a better word, I will continue to use “environmentalism” as the general term to describe any and all of the following acts: making personal behavior choices with the state of the environment in mind, spreading environmental awareness interpersonally or through events, working on environmental campaigns/grass roots movements, preparing oneself for a job related to protecting the environment, working in a job related to protecting the environment and self-education on issues and current events related to the environment.

Behavioral trend: second-hand shops

One unexpected trend I noticed in the interviews was in purchasing habits. In the first section of the interviews I asked students about their favorite places to shop. Three of the students cited thrift stores as being their favorite stores, a much higher number than
I would expect to find in a random poll of 11 BC students. Another stated that she rarely shops because she does not enjoy it, and swaps clothes with roommates instead. Though these students share a concern for the environment, none of them cited protecting the environment as a primary motivation for these purchasing habits. Helping the environment was seen as an added bonus, but the primary motivations were to save money and buy something distinctive.

“I shop at thrift stores, like, this shirt I got for three bucks, these pants for two bucks… I haven’t bought clothes for more than five bucks in the last past like four years, which is nice… I personally like the style better…I’d rather not spend $40 on jeans or shoes or whatever was made in third-world countries and having them ship it over and things like that…I feel like second-hand leaves the [least] carbon footprint”
-Carson, Accounting major

“I like the [thrift store] clothes better because they’re unique and more often than not people compliment me on the clothes. And hey, it’s recycled so I feel like I’m being good to the environment as well.”
-Erica, Undecided CSOM

“No, that’s [the environmental component] a nice result of it but I mainly just go because I like the clothes there and it’s cheap.”
-Dave, Environmental Geoscience major

It is interesting that though these students do not intentionally set out to make environmentally-sound purchases, they are in effect doing so. They also showed a tendency to want to stand out from the crowd through their personal style, which might connect to environmentalism still being a quasi counter-cultural movement. These students are separating themselves from the mainstream through the way they dress. At the same time, it could be said that the low-cost hypothesis is being enacted here. Carson and Dave suggested that they are trying to save money by shopping for second-hand clothing. This works in favor of the environment when it comes to clothes-shopping because the green choice costs much less than buying new, making second-hand shops more desirable to environmentally conscious students.

Geaney
Value orientations

As noted in the Justification of Topic section, I was unable to determine between value orientations in the survey. In the interviews, however, I was able to ask questions that revealed the core of each individual’s environmental concern. It is worth distinguishing between environmental value orientations because they can have a great impact on the types of behaviors that individuals choose to engage in. For instance, someone with an egoistic value orientation might be more motivated to purchase organic food, which directly affects their bodies, than to recycle, which addresses the collective problem of resource-conservation. Depending on value-orientation, environmentalists can also differ greatly in their stance on certain issues. For instance, an environmentalist with a biocentric view might be adamant about protecting endangered species, while a social-altruistic environmentalist might care very little. Though it is possible for environmentalists to have multiple value-orientations, understanding who or what an individual views as being the most critical victim of environmental degradation offers great insight into the decision-making process.

Most of the students interviewed had social-altruistic value orientations, one had a biocentric value-orientation, and two demonstrated a combination of both values. Students revealed their personal value-orientations indirectly through their plans for the future, as well as their involvement in campus activities and events. Some students were more aware of their value-orientations like Dave, quoted below:

“I guess my environmental concerns are mostly like aesthetic kind of, like it’s not so much about people being displaced by desertification or rising sea levels or something like that, like, I don’t really care about them. It’s kind of just more about I guess preserving the earth as we inherited it, or you know trying to not like f*ck it up too badly… I guess it’s just trying to preserve life the way it was and how I think it should be.”
-Dave, Environmental Geoscience major
His motivation to protect the environment is rooted in a concern for protecting the natural environment, rather than only protecting humans. This value-orientation reflects the notion of “deep ecology,” that nature has an intrinsic value independent of its service to humans (Næss 1989). Other students revealed that a concern for human beings lies at the core of their environmental concern.

What drives your concern for the environment?

“Just to keep people healthy. I think like for our society, it’s good to just have everyone have a high quality of life no matter their upbringing or social class. Just like they have a right to be healthy without people just throwing toxins in the environment.”

-Mike, Environmental Geoscience major

“My concern lies for our generation, that we’re sort of finding that there were risks that our parents and previous generations took or didn’t even know that they were taking, and our generation’s being affected by them in terms of health, future generations are going to be affected in terms of health. It’s just a lot to worry about, to have to clear up.”

-Molly, senior, Sociology major

“People are really affected by the way that we exploit our natural resources, or just our attitudes…people end up really suffering because of the way that our society basically views the rest of our earth.”

-Emma, English major

Emma, the student who in the previous section spoke of her passion for social justice, revealed in this and many of her other responses that human beings were her primary concern in protecting the environment. Molly, who hopes to enter the field of public health after graduation, stated that the problems of human health associated with environmental degradation were a key issue, and made no statements suggesting she views environmental degradation itself as an intrinsic problem. This social-altruistic view looks at nature in a more utilitarian way, suggesting nature derives value from its use to human society.
None of the students suggested that egoism was a motivator for being concerned about the environment. While self-interest did impact people’s personal behaviors, as will be explored later on, fear for one’s personal well being was not expressed as a factor leading to general environmental concern. This might have been due in part to the structure of the questions. By asking “who or what is being threatened by environmental issues?” I did not really prompt people to answer with “I am.” If the students were indeed concerned for their own well being, they might also be reluctant to admit this motivation because it is not as socially acceptable; protecting a cause is considered to be much more honorable than looking after oneself. Some of the students with social-altruistic value orientations might have viewed themselves among the people threatened by environmental degradation, but no one chose to say so.

For both groups of people, biocentric and social-altruistic, all but one student interviewed traced their concern for the environment to spending time outdoors (with the one exception tracing his concern to classes in high school). For people with biocentric values this is not surprising, but it is striking that all the students with social-altruistic values began with an appreciation for the outdoors. Potentially, people could also arrive at environmental social altruism by beginning with a general concern for social justice. After all, it is humans, not the environment itself, that are truly at the heart of social-altruistic environmental concern. This suggests that people who begin with a concern for the environment are making the environmental justice connection, but people concerned about people are not. As a Jesuit university, BC emphasizes the importance of being one for others. In the “Message from the President” listed on the BC website, Father Leahy states that, “Boston College endeavors to educate a new generation of leaders for the new millennium—men and women who will be capable of shaping a new century with vision,
justice, and charity—"with a sense of calling, with concern for all of the human family."

The student body reflects these ideals, and a large percentage of students are involved in service trips and volunteerism. Though there is a plethora of students concerned with poverty and social equity, these students are not making the critical connection between environmental issues and social justice.

Many authors have written about the failure of environmental and social justice groups in the U.S. to recognize their common goals and interests. At the onset of the environmental movement in the 1960s, environmentalism was essentially limited to an argument over land conservation and preservation, and nature was viewed as something separate from human society. Groups fighting for racial equality saw the environmental movement as competition to the civil rights movement. Both environmental and social justice groups failed to see the intersection of these causes, and though that the divide seems to be shrinking, its legacy continues today. The interviews show that people interested in environmental justice are filtering in from environmental groups, but not from volunteer-oriented programs or other organizations concerned about the issue of poverty. This disconnect between the environmental and social justice causes is problematic, since environmental issues have the greatest impact on people in the lower economic strata.

**Environmentally friendly lifestyle**

Efforts by organizations like the Ecopledge club at BC, often attempt to minimize environmental degradation by encouraging individuals to alter their personal behaviors. It is not unusual for magazines and newspapers to release lists of the top 100 ways to reduce personal environmental impact. Of course this all operates under the assumption
that making these personal changes is actually important. As someone who sometimes goes through trouble to make environmentally friendly behavioral choices, I have moments in which I question the value of my personal efforts. The interview results spoke unanimously in favor of performing environmentally friendly behaviors. Whether or not each individual’s behavior change has an impact on a global scale, engaging in everyday environmentally friendly behaviors serves other lesser known purposes.

A few students suggested that individual lifestyle changes serve as a sort of publicity campaign for environmental issues. Even students who view structural change as the only solution to the climate crisis (like Erica, quoted below) make personal behavioral changes and feel that doing so fulfills an important role; making visible changes places the environment at the forefront of people’s minds.

“I mean I definitely think it [environmentally-friendly lifestyle] is a thing of setting a good examples.”

-Claire, Political Science major

“Well, one good thing it [environmentally-friendly lifestyle] does if you can do it stealthily, that is without alienating yourself from people by being sanctimonious about it, if you can just kinda do it and do it in a low-profile, people you know will catch on to it. I think that’s something like it kinda starts from there, like that’s how you can change cultures…”

-Ian, History major

“I mean, the little individual changes, things I do like me carrying my water bottle around…it’s more of like, I’d almost say an image kind of thing because like people know that you care about the environment if I’m walking around with my water bottle and wearing my recycled clothes, like they know who you are…when people see you they’re like reminded that climate change kind of exists, I guess. It’s a good thing and a bad thing because, it’s a good thing in that people are aware of things like that, but then it’s a bad thing in the sense that they kind of put you in the category of like, oh it’s a crazy liberal environmentalist, I’m not going to take them seriously, which is kind of a problem.”

-Erica, undecided CSOM

Not only do visible behavioral changes bring attention to environmental issues, under certain circumstances they also can encourage others to change their behavior. At
the same time, Ian and Erica note the potential for environmentalists to alienate people by being too extreme. Molly, a senior in the Environmental Studies Minor program, echoed their idea of environmentalists alienating others from the movement.

“This is a fine line to walk, to not be pushy and not push people too hard, come across as this huge radical that won’t make people want to get involved…I’d say just be open and encourage other people to kind of follow the green footsteps I guess, be there as a source of information…”

-Molly, Sociology major

These students believe that being labeled a radical can undermine efforts to enact change. They recommend that environmentalists present themselves as mainstream members of society in order to maintain the capacity to influence others. This modern form of environmentalism greatly contrasts the more radical movement of the 60s characterized by protests and sit-ins (Dunlap, Riley & Mertig 1992). Environmentalists at BC today view subtlety and patience as being critical to promoting change.

Another interesting latent function of engaging in environmentally friendly behaviors is that it can make people feel good. For those who are concerned about the environment, making small green behavioral choices can ease their minds by allowing them to stop contributing to the problem, if only for a moment. Some people also derive a sense of pride from making green choices.

“I think for some people they do get a good sense of self-worth out of it, they get a sense of like showing off. I know my mom loves to talk about, ‘Oh Molly, told me I should compost so I’m doing this’ or ‘We haven’t bought new light bulbs in two years…”

-Molly, Sociology major

“It [making green choices] makes me feel like I’m actually, when I can’t make those big changes I have to do something or else I’d be upset with myself. So I can’t, one person can’t just change the system so I have to do what I can, and me making those individual decisions is I guess me making myself feel like I’m doing ok towards the environment, even if I’m really not (laughs) in reality with like living and these lights (points to overhead lights in Campanella). So I guess it’s just to make myself feel like I’m a being a little bit less impactful.”

-Erica, Undecided CSOM
In one sense, as Molly suggests, green behaviors can provide a feeling of accomplishment. Each green lifestyle change is another tangible step of personal progress. Erica, on the other hand, alludes to a sense of self-worth of a very different character. In her case making small personal choices helps make up for feelings of disempowerment stemming from the difficulty of enacting large-scale change. Environmental problems have complicated structural underpinnings, but within that structural framework we do have some control when it comes to our little everyday choices. As Erica suggests, whether or not these choices really make a difference on a global scale, they make a difference to one’s state of mind.

When asked what the most important lifestyle changes are that an individual should make, many of the students cited a general thoughtfulness about personal behavior as being critical, rather than pointing out any particular actions. As the following quotes demonstrate, living an environmentally friendly lifestyle involves more than just cutting down on certain behaviors or buying certain goods; there is a distinct kind of mindfulness that is intrinsically tied to environmental behaviors.

“I guess the first thing to do is try to understand better what you’re doing, because I think you can’t be like, alright, well you should stop, you know, stop eating meat, if you’re not aware of what it kind of means.”

-Ian, History major

“I guess to me it seems like one of the bigger things is just to, under everything, is just to be conscious about what you’re doing. Cause I feel like people, I mean you see this at Lower all the time, people like, it literally would take one second to throw your shit in the right like place and not just dump everything in the trash but people are just on auto-pilot and just throw everything away.”

-Dave, Environmental Geoscience major

“Just be conscious of what you’re consuming…I think just being conscious of where things are coming from.”

-Carson, Accounting major
“I think too like education, knowing where things come from. So just the very basic realization that when you buy something it came from something else and when you throw it away it’s actually going somewhere...getting into a more cyclical model.”

-Emma, English major

Truly living an environmentally friendly lifestyle involves changing your way of thinking. As Dave suggests, you must be more attentive to everyday actions. Living green also involves a change in perspective, by learning to look at products in terms of their life-cycle. When looking at a soda can, for instance, an environmentalist would see much more: all the raw materials used to make the container and the beverage, the processes and materials used to convert the raw materials into the product, the emissions and materials used to transport the product and where that item will go when it is no longer being used. More than making any particular change, the first step to living green is exercising one’s environmental consciousness, that is being generally aware of personal behaviors and questioning both the production and disposal aspects related to material goods.

Erica, the student involved in the Massachusetts Leadership Campaign for clean energy, was the only one to suggest asking legislators and administrators to change social structure as being an important environmentally friendly behavior. She cited the general cause of working for structural change as being the most important way to achieve lifestyle change.

“Right now I would say, ask for it [green lifestyle change]. As much as you can recycle and turn off the lights, that’s not going to do anything large. You have to change the infrastructure to be more environmentally friendly I feel like, and so calling to impose more energy legislation...I don’t know even just like telling BC, hey, we want to be more environmentally friendly. I mean there’s only so much you can do in your daily life unless the actual system is changed, and I think the biggest thing an individual can do is ask the system to change.”

-Erica, Undecided CSOM
Erica’s reply reveals an understanding of how the structural framework of a society limits personal behavior. The low-cost hypothesis and survey data results definitely support this structural approach to promoting individual behavioral change. Structural changes can increase the convenience of performing certain green behaviors and thus the rate of performance. This concept of engaging in environmentally friendly behavior is essentially a two-part process: first advocating that the system become more conducive to green behavior, and second, engaging in green behavioral practices.

**Cost as a moderator of behavior**

Students cited a variety of cost-related factors that moderate environmental behavior. These factors varied depending on the choice being made and the given circumstances surrounding the choice. In support of the low-cost hypothesis, most of the students I interviewed cited convenience as being a critical factor in determining behavior. Essentially the more convenient a behavior is, the lower the cost of performing the behavior. Time and access could be viewed as subcategories contributing to convenience. Finally, cost in a monetary sense was also cited as an important factor influencing environmental behavior.

*What makes it difficult for you to make “green” choices?*

“I mean, I think it’s just convenience. It’s just there’s an easier way to do things and people, like [with] everything, will take the path of least resistance.”
-Dave, Environmental Geoscience Major

“Sometimes it’s just a pain in the ass, the inconvenience of it, unplugging your computer charger and then having to plug it back in.”
-Cassie, Mathematics major

“Because sometimes it can hinder the convenience of things. Like you’re gonna walk somewhere instead of drive, obviously it takes a little longer. If it’s raining obviously you’re gonna get wet. I mean if you’re talking about buying food it’s more expensive. I mean you couldn’t like take a plane.”
-Claire, Political Science major
In order for people to behave in an eco-friendly way, the effort associated with the green option must be minimal. In certain situations, like the ones mentioned below, one way to decrease the amount of effort required to perform a behavior is to provide structural access:

What makes it easy for you to make the green choice?

“Sometimes it’s in terms of accessibility, what’s there. If I’m gonna have to carry trash or recycled material around with me for three hours and it’s full of food residue or it smells or it’s gonna spill in my bag, sometimes I will slip and I will throw it in the garbage… but if there’s nowhere around for me to put it, I’m not gonna have yogurt stains all over the inside of my bag all day long.”  
-Molly, Sociology major

What makes it difficult?

“Again the availability thing… With ‘No Impact Man’ last night, he lived in a city and he had that grocery store that he could go to and he could just get all of his cereal right there into his own cloth bags, and I just feel like he might have had access to a lot more things than we would have here.”  
-Molly, Sociology major

Can you think of a dilemma you’ve had in making a “green” choice?

“You only have Coke products to buy on-campus. What do you do? If you want a soda it has to be a Coke product. But if you know Coke is this awful company, it’s a dilemma, like, what do you do? In like in the same sense, Coke has this huge deal with BC so like, BC relies on us buying Coke for it to make all this money…”  
-Susan, Economics major

In the hypothetical situation suggested by Molly, the lack of access to recycling bins was temporary, making recycling less convenient but not impossible. Eventually the food container could be recycled in a different location at a small personal cost. The same could be said for the situation Sudan mentioned about Coca-Cola products on campus. On BC we students are essentially a captive consumer audience at the will of the structural framework. For students who disagree with Coke’s environmental
practices, the green option is to refrain from drinking soda in the dining halls and purchase soda elsewhere.

Time is also a critical factor affecting the cost of a behavior. In our fast-paced American society, people are busy and often seek to complete tasks as efficiently as possible. At various points in the interviews, the students I spoke with expressed that having to budget time limits what their ability to make certain green choices.

*Are there any lifestyle changes you’d like to make but haven’t?*

“As a student, especially lately I’ve been so busy that I can’t always cook for myself. Like I really would love to take time to cook all my meals for myself and to share them with other people and to really slow down my own life but right now that just doesn’t really seem feasible.”

-Emma, English major

*Do you feel you’re doing enough to address these greater environmental issues?*

“I feel like I’m doing as much as my time allows me to do. Maybe that’s not even true, I’m sure I can skip one day of playing video games and go out & protest. I’m always worried about efficiently using my time, well, I feel like everyone does that.”

-Carson, Accounting major

*What makes it difficult for you to make “green” choices?*

“Buying your own food and preparing it takes a lot of time.”

-Cassie, Mathematics major

“I think it varies from thing to thing. A lot of times it’s just amount of time, where doing the green thing takes a little longer, sometimes a lot longer than doing the standard, the convenient thing.”

–Dave, Environmental Geoscience major

“I mean I’d just say time. I don’t have enough of it. Sometimes the convenience factor needs to be considered in expediting certain processes and sometimes it’s like, ok well I need to take care of myself and my own personal happiness as well…you know maybe I can just indulge-make the easier decision because for me right now it’s what my body needs or it’s like mentally, emotionally going to be better for me. But if I had more time and more control over where I was living, what kind of work I was doing…that would make things easier.”

–Emma, English major
When faced with a decision, people are inclined to make the most expedient choice even if that conflicts with their personal attitudes. Unfortunately in many cases, particularly related to food and transportation, the green option is often the more time-consuming option.

In support of my hypothesis that monetary cost affects behavior, students cited price as an important factor affecting decision-making. Price can impact behavior in two different ways: 1) in purchasing, people often opt for the less expensive item, and 2) with resource use, people often conserve more when there is a monetary incentive to do so.

“[At home] there’s more of an incentive to be conscious because of the money issue again, whereas like here you pay like a flat fee for room and board and tuition. You can do whatever you want and not have to conserve water or turn the lights off cause that’s not helping you at all, whereas at home we have a well so I have to be conscious of how much water I use, are we gonna run out of it…”

-Susan, Economics major

“Being a student I’m not really able to shop at like Whole Foods that has fair trade stuff and things like that, and BC doesn’t have a shuttle there. So like if I go shopping it’s like on a Sunday, go to Shaws and I get the cheapest thing there. So that’s one place where I’d like to be better at, but at the point I am now I’d rather try to save some money and spend $50 on groceries, rather than $100 and get the same things but greener.”

-Carson, Accounting major

Susan’s statement supports my survey results regarding off-campus student utility use, which showed that monetary incentives motivate students to conserve more. In addition to pointing out the importance of access, Carson mentioned that as a student he cannot currently afford to buy environmentally friendly products. This suggests that when it comes to making essentially purchases, like food, people will shop within their means even if that leads them to contradict their personal attitudes.
Social environment as a moderator of behavior

Making environmentally conscious choices is not the norm in our society. This means that in order to act in an environmentally friendly way, people must deviate from the social norm. In this way, the social environmental can create a barrier to engaging in green behaviors because social deviation often comes at a cost. Some of the students I interviewed mentioned feeling uneasy when making certain green choices due to the nature of the social climate.

What makes it hard for you to make green choices?

“Sometimes it’s socially uncomfortable, carrying the compost across campus…”
   -Cassie, Mathematics major

“Making those choices it’s almost like, people kind of make fun of you for it, like, ‘Oh there’s Erica and her water bottle again,’ like it’s silly, why would that be bad thing...I don’t know it’s hard for me to do that when nobody else does.”
   -Erica, Undecided CSOM

“Anytime you have to like go out of your way to recycle, clearly it’s like not, it’s almost like you’re not supposed to recycle because there’s no recycling, you don’t see any recycling around. You’re like, well I’ve got to bear this thing with me for the next, whatever. And everyone’s like just throw the thing away and you’re like no, I gotta recycle it. Then you’re gonna get picked on for sure. Cause you’re a druid.”
   -Ian, History major

“I had one of my water bottles...confiscated at a football game and for a while I didn’t have one so I was just using a glass jar as my bottle. I mean tons of people, the funny thing like, tons of my friends or at least where my brother lives, drinking out of jars, like in general, it’s not a weird thing…but anyway last semester I was sitting in class drinking out of my jar and some girl just looked at me and from across the room like ‘is that girl drinking from a jar?’ And it was stupid but I was still a little embarrassed you know…even though I knew that this girl was like ok whatever, she hasn’t been exposed to this, it could be a little weird but it still made me feel a little bit like, fuck (laughs)…So I have like small moments like that…”
   -Emma, English major

In order to maintain the status quo, society often imposes sanctions on those who deviate from the norm. The function of sanctions is to preserve social stability, but in this
case sanctions help preserve a social system that is not sustainable. Engaging in conspicuous environmentally friendly behaviors, like drinking from reusable containers, sometimes means risking involvement in an uncomfortable situation. As Erica and Ian mentioned, sanctions for engaging in environmentally friendly behaviors at BC often take the form of teasing. The threat of being teased by one’s peers essentially raises the cost of performing environmentally friendly behaviors. Teasing is an example of a direct sanction for social deviation, but as Emma illustrates below there are also indirect sanctions for social deviation.

“I definitely also refrained from like getting coffee at certain places when other people wanted coffee there…and it is sometimes socially debilitating a little bit, not only being a vegetarian but being kind of concerned with I don’t want to go to a fast food restaurant, I don’t want to support that…it is really hard when it becomes a social thing."

-Emma, English major

In this case, the cost imposed on performing green behaviors is incidental to the social structure rather than intentional on the part of individual actors. Since the majority of the population does not make personal decisions based on environmental concern, social events often involve behaviors that are not environmentally friendly. This can create a dilemma for environmentalists; they must choose to either engage in behaviors they disagree with or miss out on social bonding.

**Motivators of green behavior: self-interest, hypocrisy and guilt**

Students were motivated to perform green behaviors by the potential for personal benefit, as well as by a desire to avoid hypocrisy and feeling guilt. Some of the interviewees suggested that when performing a green behavior also offered a personal benefit, this could serve as an extra incentive to engage in that behavior. Examples of
such win-win behaviors benefitting both the environment and the individual are included in the quotes below.

“If you live simpler, not necessarily simpler even but with less toxic products or with cleaner things, I think it will be a better benefit to your health overall and the health of your family and those who you live with and those around you.”
- Molly, Sociology major

“It’s like taking the stairs versus taking the elevator, like one you take the elevator and you’re using the electricity to make it run and you’re also not exercising, so by taking the stairs your can help yourself and you can help the world.”
- Susan, Economics major

In the cost-benefit analysis of deciding whether to perform a behavior, the opportunity for immediate personal benefits can encourage green choices. The desire to avoid feeling guilty, which can operate as a motivator for green behavior, could be viewed as an extension of self-interest.

**What motivates you to make green choices?**

“Some of it is just guilt, I feel guilty, and I think that’s a long running thing. When I went to Ecu [Ecuador] I felt so guilty about throwing away an aluminum can...”
- Cassie, Mathematics major

**Where do you think that came from?**

“I think a lot of its just documentaries. They’re really good at creating the fear factor.”
- Cassie, Mathematics major

**What motivates you to make green choices?**

“Just a sense of just doing what’s right basically, it’s the same thing as like giving money to a homeless man or like not stealing from people, like just a general sense of responsibility, of ethics.”
- Dave, Environmental Geosciences major

**What motivates you to make green choices?**

“I guess just knowing that it’s the better choice.”
- Susan, Economics major
The way some of the students spoke of green behavior implied a sort of moral component to making green choices. Students with a high degree of environmental concern seem to internalize green behavior as being just plain right, and as Cassie suggested sometimes they feel guilty for making environmentally damaging choices. When environmental choices are viewed with such esteem, likened almost to religious commandments as Dave suggested, this creates a strong motivation for people to engage in green behaviors. After all, breaking the green moral code comes at the personal cost of feeling guilt. In a similar vein, a number of students also cited avoiding hypocrisy as a motivating factor for performing green behaviors.

“Once it has been integrated to me that’s the only way I can pass it on to other people. I can’t be a hypocrite, throw away a plastic bottle…”
- Carson, Accounting major

“Like if I’m already putting so much effort into spreading awareness and doing activist work around these issues, why wouldn’t I put in the extra effort to maintain myself? Cause I think that, I dunno, I wouldn’t feel comfortable spreading awareness about other people changing their behavior if I didn’t change my behavior as well.”
- Emma, English major

**What are the most important things an individual in the U.S. should do to live an environmentally friendly lifestyle?**

“I think it’s really important to practice what you preach. If you’re going to support a green lifestyle you can’t go out there and spend umpteen bajillion dollars on something really nice.”
- Molly, Sociology major

Along with the theme of morality, environmentalists do not feel comfortable encouraging others to change their behavior unless they have changed their own behaviors as well. It is almost as if environmentalists must acquire the right to spread environmentalism to others by making personal behavior choices. As Emma suggests, even environmentalists who seek to publicize environmental issues in general (not promote individual behavior change) feel compelled to make personal green choices.
Regardless of what form your role in the environmental movement takes, there seems to be an expectation that individuals involved in the green movement are making personal behavior changes.

**Lifestyle at BC**

When asked whether students are more environmentally friendly at home or at BC, there were mixed responses. In determining which location better facilitated a green lifestyle, transportation the most popular factor noted by the students. Other factors affecting the decision as to which location was greener included food, energy use, transportation, waste disposal and peer influence.

I mean at home I drive whereas here I don’t, but like things are more controlled: food and energy consumption. It’s probably equal. I feel like basically the same.”
- Erica, Undecided CSOM

“I feel like basically the same…like a lot of the food I have at my house is like the Kirkland signature organic stuff so that’s good. My family has this really complicated recycling system. But at home I drive a car and at school I don’t. I feel like basically the same though…my whole family’s pretty conscious of it.”
- Claire, Political Science major

“I feel like I’m more environmental here [at BC] because of my proximity to things like public transportation, whereas at home there’s no bus I could take, and it’s hard for me to carpool with anyone because I don’t really live near anyone.”
- Susan, Economics major

“I think at home I’m more green. Uh maybe not, because I don’t drive a car here and I drive a car at home, that might be it (laughs). But I eat better at home and like um more like locally grown foods and stuff like that, definitely more. Yeah, yeah I think the car is like the biggest thing because I drive a lot at home and I drive a big car…then I’m more environmentally friendly at BC.”
- Nicole, Environmental Geoscience major

“I think living at BC I’m able to be more environmentally responsible. At home I can’t walk everywhere, I mean I really could but it’s just like you know, a walk to the grocery store is like 40 minutes. It’s not a long bike but uh, like I was saying before it’s a bigger house so it’s like more expensive to heat. I also watch more tv and stuff at home…”
- Dave, Environmental Geoscience major
“I think I’m more environmentally friendly at BC just cuz I’m surrounded by more people that care about the environment, so I’m going to Ecopledge meetings and things. But then at home it’s just kinda like, you’re kinda like away from that and then you start getting lazy and you don’t recycle as much… it’s just easier I think at BC just cause I’m more involved with the environmental movement in the college setting.”

-Mike, Environmental Geoscience major

Many of these students viewed cutting down on driving as the most important environmentally friendly behavior to perform. This led some of them to conclude that they live a more environmentally friendly lifestyle at BC where there is access to public transportation. Mike, a junior in the Environmental Studies minor, had a unique response noting his fellow students as a resource that encourages green behavior. For him, being around environmentally conscious people leads him to engage more in environmentally friendly behaviors.

Despite the number of students who felt they live a greener lifestyle at BC compared to at home, most of the students interviewed were critical of the university’s sustainability efforts. When asked how BC facilitates and/or hinders environmentally friendly behavior, students were apt to note a variety of hindrances. The two major criticisms were that the administration is not receptive to student suggestions and is unwilling to make changes on a large scale.

“...they can’t do one of those really big projects on campus, like maybe doing that solar panel idea, just cause like BC’s kind of conservative with its style. They don’t want to do anything costly or fancy to promote environmental things.”

-Carson, Accounting major

“Well you know they like to do all the small things, like posters and signage and light bulbs, but the big stuff, it’s hard to do. It’s hard to get through to the administration, get them to listen to you...they’re slowly seeing like the big picture of it all, but they’re still not like even close to doing anything huge towards making BC a more environmentally conscious place.”

-Susan, Economics major
“I definitely feel like they’re into it and like want to be environmentally friendly but they want to kind of monitor the progress they make on it… They still kind of seem reluctant to adopt an idea that comes from you rather than them which can be kind of frustrating and, what’s the word, defer your interest in doing it.”

- Claire, Political Science major

Three students cited different examples of instances in which administrators were not receptive to student efforts to make the university more sustainable. As these students note and as Claire suggested above, the administration’s resistance to student initiatives can be discouraging.

“Even like sophomore year with that whole petition thing…it was the petition that they wanted to give to Father Leahy to sign, because there was this thing for all the [university] presidents in the country to sign, like a sustainability commitment. We did all this work and got all these people to sign and jump on board and then he just like looked at it and said no and didn’t listen to anything that they said. So I guess while I haven’t dealt directly with the administration…I’ve heard that it’s really hard to get anything done.”

– Susan, Economics major

“Another one of the huge barriers that I’ve run up against a lot is just the hierarchy at BC and the really, really convoluted bureaucracy…it’s basically gotten to the point where as a student I feel completely powerless in terms of affecting…you know forming any kind of relationship with someone in power at this school that could make change a lot faster, because it’s such a top-down model, and I feel like people at the top are completely unreachable. You know, all my efforts are concentrated among students and around like the staff that are supportive and Dining Service representatives that will listen to me, meet with me. That’s a huge burden as kind of an activist on campus that even if I have gone into a meeting with the Board of Trustees before it’s like, it’s still, you can tell by people’s faces that they’re not being receptive to certain ideas. And when our first garden attempt was destroyed, that was one of the those moments when I just really realized on this campus that I didn’t matter to the upper administration, that you know I’m a student, I’m paying full tuition here, so you know I’m part of the biggest investors in this business of a university institution and my voice isn’t heard. They don’t give a shit about me; they know I’m going to be leaving at the end of this year.”

– Emma, English major

“With my Leadership Campaign we were trying to have sleep-outs. We did this every Sunday from October twenty-fourth, the International Day of Climate Action, to December seventh. We slept outside in the Boston Common every Sunday night in tents and sleeping bags to show that we were refusing to sleep in
our homes and dorms powered by dirty electricity…Other schools had sleep-outs on their own individual campus and we tried to do that at BC but we were having a lot of difficulty getting a strong ok…I mean BC is a more conservative school I suppose, so we didn’t wanna push too many buttons trying to get a sleep-out…”

-Erica, Undecided CSOM

The sustainability commitment that Susan mentioned is the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, stating that a university will devise a comprehensive plan towards achieving climate neutrality. Since its release in 2007, 662 college and university presidents have signed the commitment. Other universities that did not agree with all the terms, such as Tufts and Georgetown, created their own personal climate commitments. In spite of the student petition for BC to make a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Father Leahy declined to sign the ACUPCC petition and to create a BC-specific commitment to sustainability.

Emma had a negative experience working with the administration in 2008 on the creation of what is now the Real Food organic garden. Though the organic garden project did eventually succeed and is now flourishing, there was controversy surrounding the administration’s decision to relocate the garden to its present spot on Brighton Campus. The administration realized they needed the space where the garden was originally located for events, which upset the students who had put their time, labor and organization’s funds into creating the first garden. The issue cited by Erica occurred Fall semester 2009 and is the most recent. Though nearby universities including Boston University, Northeastern, Tufts and University of Massachusetts Amherst approved student sleep-outs on campus to raise awareness about the Copenhagen Climate Conference, BC did not. This semester, however, a club raising awareness about homelessness was granted permission to host a sleep-out on BC campus, where students slept in cardboard boxes.
The administration’s resistance to student input is not only seen as a hindrance to environmental sustainability, it is also frustrating for the students to have their efforts ignored as these anecdotes demonstrate. These anecdotes also suggest another issue: that BC is less receptive to sustainability initiatives than other universities. The administration’s failure to commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to approve the Leadership Campaign sleep-out is flagrant in the face of the increasing number of universities that are receptive to green ideas.

**CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS**

When I commenced this study, I was skeptical about the attempts of environmental media to increase a people’s concern with the intention of spurring behavior change. I questioned the connection between concern and behavior based on studies showing that environmental concern alone does not significantly impact behavior. I also questioned the overall significance of making individual behavior changes as part of combating climate change. Together the survey and interview datum shed some light on these two issues.

In contrast to what past studies have shown, my data *did* demonstrate a connection between level of concern and environmental behavior. On average, BC students with a high level of environmental concern outperformed those with a medium level of environmental concern for all 23 of the behavioral questions in the survey. My study supported the notion that as individual environmental concern increases, so does that individual’s engagement in environmentally friendly behaviors. Due to the small sample size in my work, this is an area that warrants further research.
As for the actual value of performing green behaviors, the interview responses revealed that green behaviors serve four major functions in addition to the conventional wisdom that every little bit counts. First engaging in green behaviors serves a publicity function, reminding people of environmental issues. This is important since our environmental impact is rarely visible in our everyday lives, and students cited being conscious of personal environmental impact as being the key to living a green life. Second there is the potential for a snowball effect of change, with environmentalists setting an example and influencing others to change their behaviors.

The third function relates to empowerment. As the nation’s leaders continue to make environmentally damaging choices against the will of environmentalists, disempowerment can be a serious issue. This is part of what makes Colin Beavan, the author of the book “No Impact Man,” so alluring to environmentalists; his story gives hope to a population that too often feels powerless in the face of a looming environmental crisis. While environmentalists cannot control large structural factors, such as where the energy in Massachusetts comes from, we do have some control when it comes to our personal behaviors, like how much of that energy we use. By allowing environmentalists to exercise some degree of control, however small, performing green behaviors helps keep environmentalists from feeling powerless and losing their resolve. Finally many students stated that they would not feel comfortable spreading environmental awareness if they were not making personal changes. Engaging in green behaviors gives environmentalists the confidence and the authority to spread the word to others.

My interview and survey data also have important implications for people in the environmental movement who are trying to spur individual behavior change. The data results revealed many different factors that moderate behavior in addition to concern,
namely: convenience, cost incentives and self-interest. When these factors are accounted for, rates of behavior can be increased.

Convenience was shown to affect behavior, with time, access and habit all contributing to the convenience. In the interviews, students suggested that they would perform certain green behaviors, such as preparing their own food, were they not so time-consuming and thus inconvenient. With respect to access, the survey results showed that students were more likely to compost in Lower, where compost bins are readily available, than in the dorms which requires much more effort. As for habit, the survey data showed that students were much more likely to turn off the lights when leaving their living space, a habit often stressed in households growing up, than when leaving a public space which is not as common.

Monetary cost was also shown to be an important factor affecting behavior. For example, students paying for their energy and electricity based on usage were more likely to conserve these utilities than those who paid a flat rate. In the interviews, students said that they are not likely to make certain green purchases because it is more expensive. Students were also motivated to act in terms of self-interest, when a behavior helped them individually in addition to the environment (like taking the stairs, which provides exercise and reduces energy.)

These factors are important for policy-makers and environmentalists trying to spur behavior-change because they explain in part why efforts to create a “green consciousness” in the U.S. have been unable to produce the desired changes; though hype about the environment has increased, the appropriate structural changes have not been made. Until these structural changes are enacted, environmental concern is limited in its ability to motivate behavioral change. Increasing the convenience, decreasing the
monetary cost and emphasizing the personal benefits of performing green behaviors can help increase the rate of performing green behaviors.

Stressing personal benefits is the one factor that environmentalists can really control. It is basically a matter of framing environmental issues and emphasizing how environmental problems impact individuals. On a local level, this could involve publicizing the effects that global warming will have on a particular location, such as flooding or crop failure. Looking at global warming as a personal problem will encourage people to pay more attention to their personal environmental impact. On a national level this would involve pushing for behavior change in different areas. Rather than promoting people to drive less which has no real personal benefit, environmentalists should emphasize behaviors like purchasing green products which often directly affect the individual. Organic food and eco-friendly products are not only better for the environment, but also for human health. Emphasizing how people can make green behavior choices and help themselves more directly is a better way to get people thinking about their personal impact; it makes use of people’s self-interested motivation.

Convenience and cost, on the other hand, are factors that require structural change. Policy-makers and government officials have the power to increase the convenience and decrease the cost of performing green behaviors. It is the responsibility of environmentalists to push for these structural changes in order to increase the incidence of green behavior on a large scale. Increasing convenience is often a matter of access. Just as local recycling programs decreased the cost of recycling, a similar program could increase the number of people who compost. In terms of increasing the convenience of cutting down on driving, for example, access to more efficient public transportation could make this behavior more attractive.
When it comes to monetary cost, reducing the price of eco-friendly products compared to other products is extremely important in order to increase the number of people making green purchases. In the interviews, Carson stated that as a student he cannot afford organic goods, implying that for him the barrier of monetary cost barrier is a temporary one and he will make green purchases once he gets a job. Unfortunately this is not the case for many Americans who cannot afford to buy green products now and cannot expect to in the future either. This speaks to the importance of structural change in combating environmental degradation. We cannot expect people on a budget to make green purchases when they lack the resources to do so. As of now, green products (such as organic food and hybrid vehicles) are essentially a luxury limited to members of the middle and upper economic classes. Not only does this system make eco-friendly purchases less desirable, it is also inequitable because green products are often healthier for the individual. In order to create a society in which green options are available to everyone, not just the elite, we need the government to subsidize the cost of green products so that the green choice is also the most cost-effective choice.

Large organizations have a unique opportunity to make structural changes that increase sustainability. Boston College, for example, could increase access to both recycling bins (as suggested by student comments in the survey) and to composting bins to make both of these behaviors more convenient. Administrators also have the power to institutionalize awareness campaigns as to what goes in the recycling and compost and why these behaviors are important. Together these two types of structural changes would greatly increase the number of people engaging in these types of behaviors.

As a microcosm, BC has full control over the products it chooses to use and sell. Those in charge of purchasing could make green product choices so that a larger
percentage of the items sold on campus (in the bookstores and in the dining halls) are eco-friendly. At the same time, the new Brighton Campus offers an opportunity to increase university sustainability. Normally an established institution would have to retrofit old buildings to be more sustainable, which can be expensive. BC now has the opportunity to expand the percentage of environmentally sustainable buildings on campus by building green from the bottom up. The BC administrators have full control over campus sustainability, with everything from energy choices to what type of fuel powers campus vehicles. They are in the unique position to create a mini sustainable society that can set an example for other institutions, large and small. They have the power to moderate the behavior of thousands of students and employees each year, by making structural changes so that green behavioral choices are more convenient.

Finally, the study shed some light on a way to strengthen and expand the environmental movement; by reinforcing alliances with social justice organizations. In the interviews, I noted that people in the environmental field were starting to make environmental justice connections, but BC students in the volunteer and service field were not. These people need to be more aware of environmental issues, because environmental problems have the greatest impact on the poor. Environmentalism is relevant to students working with the urban poor in Boston, who are poor likely to live near pollution facilities and live in food deserts. It is also relevant on an international level, with global warming increasing the risk of flooding and famine in many areas. Organizations concerned about the living conditions of people at an economic disadvantage share a common interest with environmental organizations and recognizing this connection will benefit both types of organizations.
A. Notes on Sampling

In the Data Analysis section I noted that more women are involved in the environmental subculture at BC than men, and many more women responded to the survey. One possible explanation for this is rooted in eco-feminist theory, which makes a connection between society’s exploitation of both women and nature (Merchant 1989). According to eco-feminism, our patriarchal society with its underlying value of dominance is responsible for the environmental crisis. Since both women and the environment have a history of being exploited, eco-feminism suggests that women have a unique connection to nature. As women we have a particular interest in putting an end to the exploitation of natural resources, since the forces driving the exploitation of nature are the same forces that led to centuries of female oppression. This could help explain why at BC more women are involved in environmentalism than men. Another explanation for female-dominated environmentalism is rooted in the nature of gender roles. Environmentalism implies a sort of protection of the environment, and the caregiver role is something women in our society are more inclined to take on than men.
B. Survey questions

What is your gender?
- Male
- Female

Which of the following racial/ethnic categories best describes you?
- White, non-Hispanic
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic
- Black/African American

Please indicate your graduation year.
- 2013
- 2012
- 2011
- 2010

What’s your major?

What’s your minor (if applicable)?

What is your current living situation? *
- Campus residence hall
- Off campus

FOR OFF-CAMPUS STUDENTS ONLY

Which of the following utilities do you pay for by use (not included in your rent)? Check all that apply.
- Water
- Electricity
- Gas

Which best describes your current recycling system?
- Curbside bin for weekly pick-up
- Indoor recycling room (for multi-unit apartment buildings)
- Not sure

Do you recycle more when..
- On campus
- Off campus
- Equally the same

What accounts for this difference in recycling rate?

Attitude Questions: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The earth has plenty of natural resources if we just develop the technology to use them sustainably.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans are severely abusing the environment.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The so-called &quot;ecological crisis&quot; facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There will always be enough water for human use.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are reaching a tipping point of the amount of green house gases that can be put into the atmosphere without changing the global climate.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To protect the environment, we all should be willing to reduce our current standard of living.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollutants in the air from industry and cars are an environmental health hazard.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We do not need to limit the amount of natural resources we use for production.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a dwindling amount of potable water on the planet.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is critical for us to reduce our consumption in order to protect natural resources.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is still true that politicians do much too little to protect the environment.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my opinion, environmental problems are greatly exaggerated by proponents of the environmental movement.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rank these five practices in order of how likely you are to perform each one. * "1st" for the practice you are most likely to engage in, "5th" for the practice you are least likely to engage in. Use each ranking only once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repair things that are broken rather than buying new.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a refillable thermos instead of disposable coffee/tea cups.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycle cans and plastic bottles.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan trips around avoiding automobile use.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take shorter showers and/or turn water on and off as needed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rank these five practices in order of their IMPORTANCE in protecting the environment. * "1st" for the most important, "5th" for the least important. Use each number only once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repair things that are broken rather than buying new.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan trips around avoiding automobile use.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take shorter showers and/or turn water on and off as needed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**How often do you:**

**Use to-go containers & plastic utensils:** *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When eating in the dining hall</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When taking food to-go</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Consume locally grown and/or organic food:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At campus venues</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the grocery store/restaurants</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compost food waste:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In McElroy/Lower</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your dorm/apartment</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Shut off the lights when leaving the room:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a public space (bathroom, laundry room, common room, classroom, etc.)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your dorm/apartment</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How often do you:**

**Drink bottled water?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Buy refurbished and/or "gently-used" items instead of new items?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Choose products (off-campus) that carry an environmental seal of approval?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Leave chargers plugged in (for cell phone, lap top, etc.) when nothing is being charged?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conserve water in the shower (i.e. low-flow shower head, shorter showers...)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Geaney 69
**How often do you:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoid products with excess packaging.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put on layers instead of turning up the thermostat?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**When disposing of the following items, what percent of the time do you recycle?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>&gt;98%</th>
<th>75%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>25%</th>
<th>&lt;2%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastic bottles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food containers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printer paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notebook paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardboard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shampoo bottles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batteries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ink cartridges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Any questions/comments about the survey?**
C. Figures

Figure 1

Distribution of environmental concern

Figure 2

Average Recycling Rate of Various Products Based on Concern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>MEDIUM CONCERN</th>
<th>HIGH CONCERN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ink cartridges</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batteries</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shampoo bottles</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardboard</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notebook paper</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printer paper</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food containers</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cans</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic bottles</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3

Average Frequency of Positive Behaviors Based on Concern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Medium Concern</th>
<th>High Concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoid products with excess packaging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conserve water in the shower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose products (off-campus) that carry an environmental seal of...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy refurbished/&quot;gently-used&quot; items</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shut the lights upon leaving your dorm/apt.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shut off the lights upon leaving a public space.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compost in your dorm/apt.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compost in McElroy/Lower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy local/organic food at stores/restaurants]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy local/organic food at campus venues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4

Average Frequency of Negative Behaviors Based on Concern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Medium Concern</th>
<th>High Concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leave chargers plugged in when nothing is...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink bottled water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use to-go containers when taking food to-go</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Geaney
Figure 5

Where do off-campus students recycle more?

- Off campus 37%
- On campus 14%
- Equally the same 49%

---

Figure 6

Average Frequency of Utilities Usage Based on Payment System

- Pay flat rate (on-campus students)
- Pay for utilities by use (some off-campus students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Put on layers instead of turning up the thermostat</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conserve water in the shower</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shut off the lights when leaving your dorm/apt.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave chargers plugged in when nothing is being charged</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7

![Collective Behavior Ranking](image)

- [Recycle cans and plastic bottles]
- [Use a refillable beverage container]
- [Repair things that are broken rather than buying new]
- [Take shorter showers/turn water on & off as needed]
- [Plan trips around avoiding automobile use]

Figure 8

![Average Frequency of low- and high-cost behaviors](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use to-go containers</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>4.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy local/organic food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn off the lights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Sources


