EQUITY AND JUSTICE

How to be an EcoFriendly Longhorn

Social equity and environmental justice are critical in understanding sustainability. The individuals most marginalized throughout our societies are the ones who suffer the most from the consequences of environmental degradation. An environmental movement is growing that intentionally centers communities in the margins.

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

According to the EPA, environmental justice is the fair treatment and involvement of all people in the development and enforcement of environmental regulations and policies regardless of race, color, income or gender. Populations and communities that have been disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards, or who are experiencing the worst consequences of environmental damages, are those that environmental justice aims to center upon; this includes people of color, low-income individuals and families, farmers, women, disabled people, members of the LGBTQ+ community, refugees, and indigenous communities. Environmental justice includes several branches and specific causes. These include climate justice, food justice, air and water pollution, and indigenous land rights.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COLLECTIVE

The Environmental Justice Collective (EJC) is a project teams with the Campus Environmental Center that aims to integrate environmental justice into UT Austin’s education, research, and service with faculty and community. EJC works to increase student awareness through a social media presence, educational programs, and proposing curriculum changes. Follow EJC’s Instagram (@utejcollective) for more information.

MULTICULTURAL ENGAGEMENT CENTER

The Multicultural Engagement Center (MEC) is a student resource office that supports a culturally diverse campus and helps cultivate a positive campus climate. The MEC houses six student-run agencies, provides leadership development opportunities, presents peer-facilitated social justice and education trainings, offers a number of support services to student organizations, and hosts community outreach programs such as culturally relevant campus tours and student panels. More information is available on MEC’s website.
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GENDER AND SEXUALITY CENTER
The Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC), a unit hosted by the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, is a resource for students that aims to provide opportunities for all students to explore, organize, and learn about gender and sexuality. The GSC offers training and workshops for student organizations and individuals to help foster allyship practices. More information is available on GSC’s website.

ALTERNATIVE BREAKS
Alternative Breaks allows students to utilize the time that they have off to participate in creating change and implementing social justice. The immersive program sends cohorts of students to different areas of the United States where they work hands-on with community leaders to help advocate and alleviate issues pertaining to social justice. More information on how to get involved or to apply is available on Alternative Break’s website.

RACIAL GEOGRAPHY TOUR OF UT AUSTIN
Take a self-guided exploration across the Forty Acres with African and African Diaspora Studies professor Dr. Edmund T. Gordon. Learn how racism, patriarchy and the militarist nationalism of the New South are embodied in campus architecture and landscaping. Follow this link to take the virtual tour.