

WORKING TOWARD a SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY | LIVE GREEN!



Elizabeth Seth

Director of Sustainability
ISU Student Government

What is your year and area(s) of study?

I am a junior studying Environmental Science with minors in Spanish and Meteorology.

What are some of your main responsibilities as Student Government Director of Sustainability?

My main responsibilities as Student Government Director of Sustainability largely revolve around amplifying students' voices with regards to sustainability on campus. As such, I work on various projects with sustainability focuses, oversee the Green Fund with Sustainability Committee, and organize and lead a Student Government Sustainability Committee. I will also answer emails from any student or faculty member about projects they want to start with a sustainability focus, and will do my best to help them get it off the ground!

Why were you interested in this position?

I served in Sustainability Committee last year, and I really enjoyed being on that committee because I felt like what I was doing was leading to tangible change on campus, so I decided that I wanted to take things a step further and become a sustainability leader on campus.

What kind of an impact do you hope to make on campus with this position?

My overarching goals for the year are as follows:

- begin the process of normalizing sustainable actions on campus (i.e. recycling, shutting off lights, etc.)
- tackle sustainability projects such as adding more composting and recycling to our waste stream
- building long-lasting connections between varying sustainability organizations on campus so that we will see increased collaboration in the future
- promoting and taking steps to combat the climate crisis

What do you wish students knew about sustainability?

I want students to know that sustainability isn't and shouldn't be an "extra" thing. Sustainability is so much more complicated than just recycling your disposable water bottle or not using a straw; it has deep economic and social implications, and so many other societal issues we face are inherently tied to sustainability. In our society, sustainability has historically not been something we have encouraged or practiced from all standpoints. Thus, in order to build a better world for ourselves and those who come after us, it is imperative that we think every day about the choices we make and whether or not they are sustainable, in order to unlearn these behaviors that have been reinforced for years.

TL:DR on that is that basically we need to unlearn our wasteful and harmful behaviors (this could be towards other people, the environment, etc.), but in order to do so, we must make sustainability a priority and think about it daily.

What resources (especially at the Student Government-level) are available to students looking to be more sustainable in their everyday lives?

I would say that there are a few. The LiveGreen website has a lot of good resources for students to look at with respect to sustainability, and especially the sustainability efforts at ISU. At the Student Government level, there is the sustainability committee, which you can apply for starting Monday! (I can send you the application, if you like). The people in the Sustainability Committee are very knowledgeable about this subject, so they can answer questions you may have. If a student has a sustainability-focused project they need funding for, they can apply for the Green Fund to help kick-start it.

Anything else you'd like me to know?

Most pizza boxes cannot be recycled! And don't throw your recycling in plastic bags into the bin; plastic bags cannot be processed (generally) with normal recycling on campus, so plastic bags contaminate the stream (which is not good).