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For immediate release

Bishop's University Becomes First in Quebec to Ban Sale of Single-Use Bottled Water

Sherbrooke, QC – Bishop's University students who began a new semester of classes this month are likely to notice that something is missing. Bishop's has officially become the first university in Quebec to ban the sale of single-use bottled water on its campus.

The initiative to “ban the bottle” at Bishop's began over a year ago when environmentally conscious students initiated a “Think Global, Drink Local” campaign to raise awareness of the negative impacts of bottled water on the environment. The campaign culminated in a student referendum where three-quarters of students voted to ban the sale of bottled water at Bishop's.

Fourth-year student Katrina Kroeze, the University's sustainable development intern, helped lead the “Think Global, Drink Local” campaign, successfully convincing her fellow students and the University's administration of the environmental benefits of eliminating bottled water.

“The plastic waste from discarded water bottles is only the tip of the iceberg. Transportation from the bottling facility to the retail outlet leaves a large carbon footprint,” said Kroeze, “Each bottle of water requires twice its volume in water to make the plastic bottle, and one-quarter its volume in oil over the course of its life cycle. These environmental costs add up very quickly.”

Following the student referendum, Bishop's University worked with its campus food provider, Sodexo, to permanently stop the sale of all single-use bottle water at its food outlets and in all vending machines. As of early September there were no longer single use water bottles available for sale on campus.

“Bishop's University prides itself on being a leader among Quebec's universities in implementing sustainable practices,” said Bishop's Principal and Vice-Chancellor Michael Goldbloom, “Ending the sale of single-use bottled water from Bishop's is a success story demonstrating what can happen when people work together to find better, more sustainable ways of living.”

Further efforts this academic year will include the removal of all 18L multiple-use water dispensers on campus, and the upgrading of water fountains to include a special spout to fill reusable water containers.

Bishop's University put its commitment to sustainability in writing earlier this year when it signed the Talloires Declaration, joining universities around the world in adopting sound environmental principles.

Bishop's is implementing several other measures that will lessen its environmental impact. It is currently replacing its antiquated natural gas heating system with one that is geothermal-powered, it has recently purchased an all-electric maintenance vehicle, implemented a composting program, and will soon begin construction on a new sports and recreation centre which will conform to Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) standards.

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