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# The Elm

ELM STORIES

## Sustainability Champion Series: Benjamin Eglash

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The SEI Climate Corps Fellow has helped UMB make strides in its first Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, & Rating System Report.

The **University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) Office of Sustainability** would like to recognize Benjamin Eglash as a **Sustainability Champion!**

Eglash was an **SEI Climate Corps Fellow** sponsored by **HASI**, a leading climate positive investment firm. He worked in the Office of Sustainability as a waste and data fellow starting in March 2024 and finished his 10-month fellowship in December.

Eglash's roles included facilitating **UMB's Community Composting Dropoff Pilot**, engaging with stakeholders on campus in support of sustainability projects, gathering data for the **Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)** Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, & Rating System (STARS) Report, and creating an analysis, report and presentation on UMB's positive impact on environmental justice.

Eglash's passion for sustainability stems from his experience as a caterer in college, where he witnessed an immense amount of food waste. This pushed him to pursue a Master of Science degree in energy and sustainability and go into a career where he could be part of the solution.

He has been involved with environmental and sustainability-related topics in academia ever since, including working toward submitting UMB's first AASHE STARS Report.

Outside of work, Eglash integrates sustainability into his life by composting all of his food scraps and limiting unnecessary purchases. He uses reusable silverware, plates, food storage containers, and bags. Eglash also tries to avoid using plastic as much as possible. He tries to buy locally and use public transportation when he can. Before his fellowship in Baltimore, Eglash lived in Chicago, where he enjoyed biking and walking to local businesses. Finally, Eglash makes sure to turn off his lights, run his washer on cold settings, and be energy efficient where possible.

When asked what students, faculty, and staff at UMB can do to contribute to sustainability efforts, Eglash emphasized taking action. While there can be so much fear, anxiety, and hopelessness around the state of the world, especially with climate change, taking action and contributing in any way can be the best antidote to those feelings. One example he gives is to be cognizant of what you eat and buy.

"So much energy, pollution, and resource extraction went into the food and products we consume. If we consume less, we pollute less. If we consume less meat, we pollute a lot less. If we reuse bags and say 'no' to as much plastic as we can in our lives, we are all contributing to campus sustainability efforts," he says.

To read Eglash's final report and view his presentation, check out the **Environmental Justice Resources page** on the Office of Sustainability's website.

Do you have a UMB Sustainability Champion you would like to nominate to be featured? **Please fill out this form.** Self-nominations are welcome.

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