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DECEMBER 5, 2014

Energy Executives talk options to empower local areas

Guest speakers describe green solutions for community power needs

Emilie Leroy

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Energy bills may not be the highest priority for students while studying during final exams, but according to Binghamton University President Harvey Stenger, the University spends approximately \$10 million of taxpayer and student tuition every year for electricity and heating.



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SUNY BEST (Business and Education Cooperative of the Southern Tier) hosted the New York Winter Statewide Energy Tour Thursday at BU to discuss the state's clean energy policies and initiatives and how changes in policies will affect consumers.

Featured speakers discussed the problems with the state's current energy policies such as affordability and efficiency, extreme weather effects on energy costs and how new technologies and community input can have an impact.

John Rhodes, the president and CEO of NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority) highlighted issues with transporting energy to consumers. Many consumers get electricity from central grids that are connected to consumers' homes and businesses by transmission lines through which power may be lost. Rhodes warned that if the grid is not modernized, New Yorkers may end up spending nearly \$30 billion on energy in 10 years.

"We can't just use public dollars, ratepayer funds, customer funds to patch an antiquated system," Rhodes said. "We've got to modernize the system and take advantage of all the opportunities to do things smarter and better."

Instead of centrally located plants pumping power to consumers, Rhodes emphasized providing locally generated power to communities through solar power, wind power and microgrids, which are energy networks that can fully separate from the larger electrical grid. He said with locally generated power, consumers will have more control over energy policy.

"They can produce energy locally, they can decide how they're going to manage the energy locally," Rhodes said. "That is going to create a lot more opportunity for making choices."

Micah Kotch, NYSERDA director of NY Prize, a \$40 million competition that incentivizes communities to design local power structures, discussed how New Yorkers

discrimination at BU Lecture Hall 13 was overflowing Thursday night as students dragged in extra chairs and filled doorways to discuss the prevalence of discrimination on campus. A group calling itself Students for Change at BU, reviewed a list of 25 reforms being submitted to provost Donald Nieman to address racial, sexual and ethnic discrimination. Students who partook...

In finals stretch, Bartle becomes base for last-minute studies Pei Qi Yang sat at a secluded computer in the Glenn G. Bartle Library Pods Tuesday evening as she put the finishing touches on her history and psychology final papers. Everything she needed was laid out on her desk: two empty teas from Jazzman's, a box of crackers, lip balm, hand lotion and a bag...

Local businesses brace for January slow-down When finals end and students head home for winter break, favorite Downtown businesses have learned to adjust to the time off from the University rush. Binghamton has a population of approximately 47,000 and when school is in session, students account for another 15,000 in the area. This means that when students are on vacation, a...

Binghamton University revamps finals scheduling system According to the motion presented before the Faculty Senate, the week before finals

can get involved in energy policy through his program. With extreme weather and emergencies like blackouts costing New Yorkers billions of dollars, Kotch emphasized the need to come up with innovative and cost-effective ways to supply power.

“There’s a real sense of urgency and we need good projects that are ultimately serving community needs,” Kotch said. “A lot of answers are going to come from the community.”

NYSERDA will fund 25 feasibility studies across the state. Ten designs will be selected and at least five will receive funding for construction. Projects must be replicable across the state and include third parties, such as private businesses, the local utility and local government. Criteria for the feasibility will be available in the next few weeks.

An example would be a community setting up a microgrid that could power residential areas and private businesses. The feasibility study would address legal impediments like zoning laws, space, environmental impacts, equipment needed, financial costs and overall benefits for the community.

The event was the first in a four-part energy series that will run through March. The second part of the series will discuss NYSERDA’s renewable heat initiative and K-Solar, a program that brings solar power to schools and surrounding communities. The third and fourth parts will have regional speakers describe energy-related progress from across the region.

...had become a de facto final exam week for professors

For finals week, many flock to favorite study spots In the spirit of finals week, Binghamton University students are rushing to their favorite study spots around campus. And while all have the same goal of getting good results on tests, papers and projects, they have different places where they like to prepare. Students camp out all across the University during this time of the...



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