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# Gathering emPOWERS Brown's climate crew

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Some Brown students are ready to get emPOWERed this academic year. Last night, students attended the general body meeting for emPOWER to discuss ways in which the Brown community can become more aware of the University's effect on global warming.

Filling about half of the seats in MacMillan 115, the meeting was attended by a mixture of returning and new members. Zindzi McCormick '09 and Aden Van Noppen '09 opened the meeting by describing the group's purpose and its plans for this academic year.

"Our group's original goal had been to cut down Brown's carbon emissions by 20 percent by 2020 - but we realized that is not enough. We want to serve as an example throughout campus. We want to push the envelope of what's possible," Van Noppen said.

During their first year, Van Noppen, McCormick and Michael Glassman '09 started emPOWER in a discussion section of ENV5 0110: "Humans, Nature and the Environment." The group operates as an open forum and strives to include initiatives that can extend beyond Brown.

The group began to work closely with Brown administration on the University's carbon emissions, and eventually participated in the three-year Campus Climate Challenge, a program that includes more than 600 college campuses nationwide and addresses the development of environmental reforms and implementation.

In the first two years of the Challenge, each student group brainstorms methods to make its school more environmentally friendly and eventually get its school to invest in researching methods of climate change. This year's goal is to inspire students to vote in the 2008 presidential election, making climate change their most pressing concern, McCormick said. "It is fundamentally important that we try to get substantive national legislation dealing with climate change this year," McCormick said.

Another part of the Challenge's third phase is a program called PowerVote, designed to get one million signatures from young voters making energy efficiency their top priority in the presidential election.

The group's plans for the academic year stretch beyond the goals set by the Campus Climate Challenge. Every Sunday at 9 p.m., the group will divide into five separate subcommittees, each addressing a different environmental initiative at Brown. This is the first year the meetings have been organized in this way.

"I think that this meeting is much more organized from what we did last year," emPOWER Secretary Aaron Zick '11 said.

The five subcommittees are designed to be open forums where emPOWER members can propose new projects or work on pre-established initiatives from past years.

One committee focuses on PowerVote and the Rhode Island Student Climate Coalition -- a network of

Rhode Island colleges and high schools dedicated to stopping global warming. The endowment committee focuses on getting Brown to use more of its \$2.3 billion endowment on environmental concerns. Community Carbon Use Reduction at Brown, whose work has been reported on by CNN, focuses on reducing energy use and pollution by the University and surrounding community. The Brown Progress Initiative, in its second year, focuses on brainstorming ideas for technology and products that are more environmentally friendly.

Glassman also introduced a subcommittee focused on campus activism about climate change, which reflected emPower's main goal. "As a college group, it is hard for us to have a meaningful national impact -- we need to force Brown to be a model of sustainability, but this won't happen without students pushing for change," Glassman said.

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