

[< Back](#) | [Home](#)

# U.'s actions economically and environmentally sound

**By:**

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**To the Editor:**

In these challenging economic times, Brown needs to be both innovative and smart when planning its financial future. The best way to do this is to make secure investments that are sure to bring high returns. I'd like to provide Mr. Ryvkin with a simple answer to the question he raised in Wednesday's opinion column ("Don't feed the environmental troll," March 4). He asked, "Why is Facilities Management, after exacerbating our shortfall with a \$5 million loan for an energy efficiency program, pushing ahead with this scheme?" After a quick search on the Facilities Web site for the 2008 Sustainability Report, you will see that Facilities spent \$1 million of the \$5 million University loan in 2008. That \$1 million was spent on energy efficiency projects that save the University \$300,000 annually in energy bills. I don't know about Mr. Ryvkin, but it seems to me that a 30 percent guaranteed annual return is a pretty tidy investment. Certainly better than the nearly 30 percent loss the money would have seen as a portion of the endowment. I won't bother speaking to the benefits of a decreased carbon footprint, the increased student awareness that will result from dorm energy monitoring systems or the important example that Brown is setting for the rest of the world, because frankly, I don't need to. You can complain all you want about University hiring freezes and tuition increases as a result of the recession, but by committing to energy efficiency improvements, the University is investing its precious assets in the lowest-risk, highest-return option available. I only wish more Americans were engaging in such economically rational behavior.

Kirsten Howard '09  
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