



THIS SUMMER, AUXILIARY SERVICES AND THE Energy Systems and Sustainability Management (ESSM) Department had solar thermal panels installed on 20 three-bedroom apartment buildings on South Campus to heat water. All told, there are 240 panels for 40 hot-water systems, with each system containing six panels. When the sun's ultraviolet rays hit the panels, they heat glycol that is pumped through copper pipes in the panels. In turn, the heated glycol runs into a heat exchanger tank, which warms up water and sends it into the original hot-water tank. And during the night or on days when the sun isn't packing much of a punch, the water tanks still have electric heaters. "Solar thermal is direct heating," says Emily Greeno '10, energy conservation manager with ESSM. "When the temperature is high enough in the solar thermal panels, as compared to the water in the tank, the system has the ability to use this heat."

According to Greeno, the solar thermal project evolved out of the University's Climate Action Plan, which aims for

SU to reduce its greenhouse-gas emissions and achieve carbon neutrality by 2040. This project is estimated to save 300,000 kilowatt hours per year of electrical usage. "The panels are supposed to produce about 50 to 60 percent of the energy needed to heat the water for those apartments," Greeno says. The project, supported by a \$450,000 grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, also incorporates real-time sensors and data loggers, allowing ESSM and FIXit staff to track such aspects as changing temperatures in the panels and tanks and when the systems are kicking on and off.

In addition to cost and energy savings, Greeno hopes the presence of the panels will generate student interest. "It's really exciting that we have renewable energy on campus, especially in an area that is so visible to students and the campus community," she says. "We hope it raises their awareness of sustainability and the University's commitment to it."



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