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BRANDEIS, TUFTS

In wake of Philippines typhoon, Brandeis, Tufts students to fast to urge more be done to stop climate change

Posted by Matt Rocheleau November 18, 2013 12:58 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

More than 20 students from Tufts and Brandeis universities plan to fast this week as part of a broader campaign urging for more to be done to stop climate change in the wake of typhoon Haiyan, which devastated the Philippines.

Climate activists say the typhoon is a wake-up call for why change is needed.

“It is shocking to me that this crisis has gotten so little attention, that the connection has not been explicitly linked to climate change,” said a statement from Tufts student Ben Weilerstein, who plans to fast for five days.

The fasting movement began with Naderev Yeb Saño, the Philippines’ climate change commissioner and head of the Philippines climate delegation at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, sometimes referred to as the “COP 19” summit, in Poland.

On Nov. 11, three days after the typhoon, he announced at the conference that he will not eat food “until a meaningful outcome is in sight.”

“We can fix this,” he said, according to a [prepared statement](#). “We can stop this madness. Right now.”

Weilerstein and others said they are fasting to show solidarity with the Philippines official.

“I feel compelled to support Minister Saño,” he said. “I feel the need to give of myself to raise awareness to this crisis. It pains me to see the destruction in the Philippines, and disturbs me deeply to witness the inaction of our government at the COP conferences”

Nearly 800 people have said on a [Facebook event page](#) that they will fast this week.

The Tufts and Brandeis students said they plan to host other events this week to raise awareness of their cause, including sitting with empty plates at lunchtime and holding a candlelight vigil in Harvard Square Monday from 5 to 7 p.m.

The students also posted online [an open letter](#) to the State Department’s Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern and the department’s negotiator Trigg Talley.

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at mjrochele@gmail.com. Looking for more coverage

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