

Consultation Minutes

“Assessing Progress Toward Sustainability in Higher Education” March 30 – 31, 2001

Friday, March 30, 2001

Rick Clugston welcomed everyone and asked each person to say a few words of introduction about themselves.

Peter Blaze Corcoran gave a general introduction to the consultation. He explained that the event was called a consultation with the expectation that everyone present would serve as a consultant. Peter also stated that some of the papers presented during the consultation would appear in an upcoming joint issue of the *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* and *Higher Education Policy*.

PLENARY SESSION I: Perspectives on sustainability in higher education (SHE). A review of various approaches to sustainability in higher education, including general declarations and specific institutional statements. How are various institutions and organizations framing the central tasks of sustainable universities?

Arjen Wals: “Sustainability in Higher Education: From Doublethink and Newspeak to Critical Thinking and Meaningful Learning” [PAPER]

The opportunity to look critically at sustainability sounds inherently positive, but in higher education it must be looked at pedagogically.

The hope is to sensitize people on issues that emerge when you try to educate them around sustainability. Orwell’s cautionary novel, *1984*, provides a parallel for the emerging issues:

1. Erosion of meaning (“newspeak”)
Non-terminology – all is in black and white
Sustainability can be made to mean everything, but when something means everything, it ends up meaning nothing in the end
2. Removal of ambiguity (“doublethink”)
Unification of opposites (“sustainability of growth”)
Emphasizing recycling can mean lack of emphasis on reducing
3. Narrowing choice (“thought police”)
Prescribing sustainability and the road that will get us there

Vantage points of environmental education: Continuum between open and closed learning process: predetermined, prescribed, closed vs. discovered, self-determined, open; and continuum between authoritative bureaucracy and participatory democracy.

Sustainability can serve as a catalyst for educational reform. Many universities still need to be educated about sustainability. Thinking needs to be based on conflict and debate – not simply

reproducing old ways of thinking. Integrating sustainability pre-supposes the re-thinking of institutional missions.

“No use crying over vague definitions” – instead, bring the community together to start discussing and deciding what sustainability means to that specific community. There is no universal remedy (formula) for programmatic/curriculum reconstruction. Need to explore alternative ways of learning.

Programming sustainability demands didactical re-orientation. Many issues don't initially seem to relate to the environment (particularly to students), but on deeper look, they do.

There is a need to set standards without standardizing; we need standards, but who do we involve in setting them? Critical questions arise with regard to content, outcomes, process, and standards.

Education for sustainability and the creation of space:

- Space for alternative paths of development; recognizing that sustainability is one moment in environmental thought.
- Space for new ways of thinking, valuing and doing.
- Space for participation minimally distorted by power relations – reduce barriers to participation.
- Space for pluralism, diversity and minority perspectives. Educators should create just enough conflict to get people to look at the world in a different way.
- Space for deep consensus and respectful dis-sensus.

Question: Bioregional notions of sustainability (vs. absolute definition) – The notion that what is appropriate for specific universities will vary can be equally problematic when it leads to relativism.
AW: Autonomous development that is sensitive to parameters is needed. Standards for quality and assessment are necessary... but whom do we involve in doing this? There is a danger of relativism.

Question: How to reconcile call for standards with the prevalent “less is more” idea?

AW: So often standards are about extrinsic inspections, punishment and reward.

Discussion: Does the presence of reward = the presence of punishment? Not necessarily.

Question: The term standardization can be used with reference to an individual student and/or for an institution. Can the time frame of evaluation be expanded so that the reflection and integration after the “official” learning years could be measured?

AW: It is like planting a seed – it is hard to “prove” that the later actions/thoughts are the result of the earlier seeds. What you can't measure does exist.

Tarah Wright: “A Review of Definitions and Frameworks for Sustainability in Higher Education” [PAPER]

The elements of international declarations and policies for sustainability in higher education provide a sense of the many factors that determine what makes a sustainable university. There is a tendency to consider sustainability an end point – perhaps a better vision would be to see it as a multi-branched continuum.

The declarations and policies share several themes in common:

1. Environmental literacy – mostly focused on students, but some on campus and wider community; development of inter-disciplinary curriculum
2. Interdisciplinary education
3. Partnerships – transcend competition and move to collegial relationships (w/ ngo's, government and industry)
4. Public outreach – working directly w/ the public
5. Encourage sustainability research, funding and related tenure decisions
6. Sustainable operations – greening the campus
7. Moral obligation to affect change

International declarations' major thrusts:

- Moral obligation
- Need for environmental education and literacy
- Partnerships

GAPS:

- Token mention of greening physical operations
- No “prescription” for implementation OR implementation plans

Institution specific policies' major thrusts:

- Moral responsibility
- Greening of physical operations

GAPS:

- Little mention of inter-university cooperations partnerships.

Issues and further research:

- Efficacy? How effective is the signing of these declarations – is it just PR?
- Accountability?
- Degree of implementation?

The branches of the multi-branched continuum towards sustainability may twist and turn and even break off with time. There is no direct path to sustainability, but it is possible/necessary to ID themes and priorities.

Question: Do all of the declarations deal with the ecological aspects of sustainability?

TW: The issues that spanned all the declarations were the environmental issues. Some of the declarations had some other elements, but the environment was the over-arching theme.

Discussion: The problem of accountability after signing the declarations.

– Mike Shriberg is doing his dissertation on assessing the U.S. Talloires Declaration signatories' current activities.

– It was suggested that it might be more effective to change the tone of accountability to “sharing” instead of reporting.

– Comparison of international treaty signing and institutional declaration signing.

– Use stronger language to require signatories to report back on their activities.

– Need suggestions, not prescriptions.

– Report failures on a scheduled basis, with intention of improvement.

Question: Can we identify those institutions that haven't signed but have made progress in sustainability?

TW: This is addressed in Tarah's paper. There is a parallel between three different types of campuses that determine where they are at and why. Based upon this information, one can develop a suggested course for action. Of those who signed: some have not implemented change; others are trying, but facing obstacles.

Question: Is there much that talks about process of implementation?

TW: The international declarations do not contain much discussion of process. Among the institutional policies, about one third address process. There appears to be a growing movement to discuss the challenge of implementation.

Hans-Peter Winkelmann stated that one should not underestimate these declarations. It is not fair to compare the declarations and charters because they all have different backgrounds. We must look at all of these declarations with point of view that takes into account their age – most of them are quite old. We should maintain sense of no-competition, cooperation, working together towards same goal, not to have a global declaration, but to work together in different ways.

Wynn Calder added that the declarations are a vehicle. Not all of them put enough emphasis on socio-economic issues, and perhaps there should be some effort to re-visit these declarations to update them in light of this. Or one could look to the Earth Charter, which embodies a broader vision, as a document that universities could embrace (some U.S. c/u are considering doing so).

Tony Cortese explained that the Talloires Declaration was an attempt to get university presidents to stand up and say that these things need to be addressed. Yes, there are many presidents who will not sign declarations, and some of the most successful schools are ones that have never signed but have gathered great support for sustainability.

Nan Jenks-Jay shared that at Middlebury they are working to address how universities can sign/endorse/ support the Earth Charter. The language of endorsement needs to be crafted so that the EC is made relevant to higher education institutions – packaging and timing are important. (Nan is working with ULSF staff in crafting such a statement for Middlebury.)

Arjen suggested that the more people that sign a declaration, the more suspicious we should be – these declarations are political and when many sign, one is forced to wonder if it is PR, or if the declaration is weak. Not signing can be just as important because it raises discussion and provides areas for exploration and activism on campus.

Tarah concluded by saying that signing is not the end-all/be-all, these declarations are one of many vehicles to sustainability.

Tarah Wright's paper will be published in the summer 2002 joint issue of the International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education and Higher Education Policy.

PLENARY SESSION II: A broad review of the methodology and results of campus environmental assessments in North America and Europe, and an analysis of existing campus assessment tools. What do these instruments tell us about what is essential to sustainability in

higher education? How much do these instruments actually assess what sustainability is? How useful are they in helping institutions move toward sustainability?

Niko Roorda: “AISHE: A Method for the Assessment of Sustainability in Higher Education” [PAPER]

The Auditing Instrument for Sustainability in Higher Education (AISHE) is one method for assessment of sustainability in higher education. AISHE contains six basic principles; two examples are:

1. Focus on education
Educate students with a focus beyond greening the campus, because they will eventually be going into the work world.
2. Inspiring, not limiting
Think about what could be done, not just what should be done

Five stages of EFQM method (an organization can be in one of five possible stages):

1. Activity oriented – based on actions of individuals; decisions made ad hoc
2. Process oriented
3. System oriented – objectives are student focused, evaluated, etc.
4. Chain oriented
5. Total Quality – long term strategy

This method seeks to combine the efforts of many, and can be envisioned as a key ring that combines the keys of many people’s ideas and efforts.

An institution using AISHE would have individuals rank their institution on 24 criteria, then bring them together to discuss their assessments. After discussion, they would choose which items to focus on, and which to set aside. Next they would seek consensus on a general score for each criterion, then discuss where the institution wants to move on the chosen criteria. The group would conclude by prioritizing the chosen criteria.

Preliminary tests are being run on AISHE this spring, and it should be ready for use later this year.

For more information on AISHE, or a copy of Niko Roorda's paper, contact him at nroorda@planet.nl.

Mike Shriberg: “Cross-Institutional Assessment Tools for Sustainability in Higher Education: Strengths, Weaknesses and Implications for Practice and Theory” [PAPER]

I. The ideal tool:

- Identifies and evaluates important issues
- Goes beyond eco-efficiency into long term strategies
- Comprehensible
- Calculable/Comparable (not necessarily quantitative)
- Focus on Processes (how?) – reward structures
- Motivations (why?) – Ethical obligation? Compliance?

II. Current Tools [See paper]

Common Strengths:

- Process-oriented
- Strategic planning
- Gathering of baseline data

Weaknesses:

- No way to make comparisons
- Motivations overlooked
- Operational, eco-efficiency focus

III. Lessons Learned

- Decreased throughput (energy, water, material flows)
- Incremental & systemic progress at the same time (starting recycling program while developing zero waste goal)
- Sustainability education as a core function (core part of curriculum, internships, practicums)
- Cross-functional reach (inter-disciplinary, other departments and offices on campus)
- Cross-institutional action (community engagement, land stewardship, other schools, etc.)

IV. Unresolved Issues

- Can there really be a “Universal Tool”? Would that be desirable? Necessary? Possible?
- Resistance to rankings. Might it not be good for students to know?

Michael Shriberg's paper will be published in the summer 2002 joint issue of the International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education and Higher Education Policy.

Harold Glasser: “A Review of Campus Environmental Assessments” [PAPER]

The focus of this research project is on actual assessments of campuses over the past ten years with the goal of documenting what has been done and making that information accessible to others. This involved an anecdotal survey, outlining best practices, and offering guidelines for campus assessments. Currently there is no database or assessment of campus assessments.

Project scope: 16 categories (some have many qualitative elements), over 140 indicators

Project status: 256 assessments evaluated, database is almost complete and the paper will be finished this summer.

Preliminary findings:

- Necessary to consider the issue of standards and standardization
- Importance of doing goal-setting exercises
- It is necessary to expand the criteria to take note of qualitative indicators because these factors help campuses move forward

Question: Concerning the conflicts and trade-offs associated with ranking, college presidents put so much value on *US New & World Report* rankings. Isn't there value in adding an environmental element to that scale? Do the cons outweigh the pros?

Discussion:

- Sentiment against ranking because a high ranking tends to simply indicate wealthy students and alumni (annual giving).
- Ranking usually misses important factors, and rarely illuminates what is unique about a campus. What is key is assessing student demand for eco-socially responsible schools.
- There is a difference between providing more (descriptive) information about a school and doing traditional “ranking.”
- Assessment can be a marketing tool intended for prospective students and their parents to use in choosing a school.
- The term “labeling” was proposed as an alternative to “ranking” – some sort of “Green Seal.”
- The issue remains of how to make information available to parents and prospective students in a digestible consumer format.
- Schools could produce an annual environmental report and make it accessible to parents & students.
- The issue of qualitative information vs. quantitative information was raised.
- Evaluating quantitative data can still be subjective – qualitative data can then be much more valuable.
- Certification or accreditation (using the models of shade grown coffee and sustainably harvested wood) was suggested. However, this could lead to inaction because it may be perceived as the end point.
- The question remains how to capture qualitative measurement – there are models available.
- Labeling reflects the values of the labeler, and so in effect turns quantitative into qualitative.
- These issues have a parallel in the socially responsible investing field, which struggles to determine whether a corporation is sustainable or not.

For more information on the CEA review, contact Dr. Glasser at harold.glasser@wmich.edu.

PLENARY SESSION III: A review of "case studies" and "best (and not so best) practices," and a consideration of factors for success and failure.

John Glyphis: “Second Nature’s approach to ‘best practices’ and other related benchmarking concepts” [PAPER]

Key Concepts:

- The campus as a dynamically integrated community – one with a systems view of itself
- Create and foster communities of practice
- Diffusion of innovation and sustainability
- Highlight and support the sharing of best practices

Brief history of higher education was presented.

Changes and adaptations helped the U.S. develop into a global leader:

- Liberal arts tradition + German research university = tension
- Innovative science and technology driven by WWI and WWII
- Success of the German research model for institutional research and policy

University modeling sustainability (society and biosphere). Areas of overlap increasing over time (elements moving towards each other):

The numbers of people graduating every year is huge, which is both overwhelming and full of opportunity.

Best Practice Focus

- Encourages out-of-the-box thinking that leads to rapid learning
- Model for action
- Encourages networking
- Differentiates real change from green washing

Common themes of Emory University and the New Jersey Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability (NJHEPS):

- Development of communities of practice to share best practices
- Shared leadership to achieve institutionalization
- An overall plan
- Rapid and intentional expansion
- Sought and gained support from various constituencies at the right time
- Received outside support (including some funding)

Case Study Panel

Nan Jenks-Jay – Middlebury College

Middlebury historically has a longtime commitment to excellence in environmental education (35 year old program). Middlebury's understanding of environmental education has broadened with time.

Success due to:

- Shared institutional values
- Clearly defined purpose and goals
- Vision and leadership at all levels
- Institution has been able to see benefits
- Recognized role as contributing to well-being of New England
- Committee that reports directly to the President

Three ways to think about Middlebury College:

1. Institutional commitment at a senior level:

Budget, positions, Environmental Council is in place.

Environmental Council small grant program – takes the burden of failure off individuals.

Access to highest administrative people on campus.

All environmental work is part of strategic plan process.

2. Ongoing programs (many tied to student research):

Energy reduction.

Leftover food composted.

Recycling program and facility.
 Being recognized as a regional/state player and consumer.
 Ideas emerging from within many different arenas of campus.
 Standardized campus audits.

3. New initiatives:

Higher 3rd party compliance consultant team.
 Electric vehicles available on campus.
 Working with Vermont's Clean Cities program.
 Sustainable issues lunches with many different (surprising) people showing up.

Recognition from external and high-level sources speaks volumes.

Question: Why are staff and administrators so interested and engaged?

NJ-J: Vermont attracts a certain kind of people – it's all about values. People everywhere like to know they have the ability to make a difference in their place of work and/or study. Middlebury celebrates that the value system is good and enables opportunities to happen. A lot of stories are shared, more so than statistics.

For more information about Middlebury's environmental programs, go to www.middlebury.edu/~enviroc.

Geoff Chase – Northern Arizona University

In the 1980's the university began to develop an environmental focus. In the later 1990's 100+ faculty gathered several times to revise 150+ courses in order to implement a sustainability element.

The Center for Sustainable Environments is an umbrella organization within the university for research, outreach/engagement, curriculum, and operations.

Barriers (in society and at NAU):

- 70% of high school graduates are attending college, and many of them are ill prepared (like Bartleby the Scrivener, they would "prefer not to"). What kind of society are we allowing our youth to grow up into?
- Ongoing tension between research and teaching.
- Money goes to tech research because research is perceived to be much more important than undergraduate educating.
- Administrative turnover is fairly quick. How do we sustain sustainability efforts in the midst of such turnover? Schools must rely on faculty to be the continuity for sustainability efforts. Thus, the educating of the administration must be constant.

For more information on NAU Ponderosa Project, go to www.secondnature.org/guides/faculty_guide/best_practices/bp_arizona.html.

Chris Uhl – Pennsylvania State University

It can be helpful to think of the campus as an ecosystem. In efforts to promote change at PSU, sustainability is expressed in terms of values.

Five Sustainability Principles:

1. Respect Life
2. Live Within Limits
3. Value the Local
4. Account for Full Costs
5. Share Power

The *Penn State Indicators Report* (2000) took ten different sectors on campus and asked what sustainability would be in that sector (such as energy, water, built environment, community...). Most universities are a perfect reflection of society in their use of energy, water, etc.

We strive to educate by making the issues real. Make invisible ecological dependencies visible. For example: post a sign in the elevator stating that the electricity necessary to ride the elevator once requires 1/2 cup of coal.

History:

A group of faculty and students came together and drafted a mission for Penn State entitled Green Destiny, which contains one page for each category, stating the perceived problem, solution and goal. The mission attempts to work with a long-range vision of 20 years or 50 years. After the mission was written, the group called all campus leaders (100+ people) and asked them to look at it and give feedback. The feedback was compiled and found to be mostly supportive. Then the mission went to faculty senate and was signed by the president just last week.

But the mission is only part of the process – what are the next steps?

One goal is get the commitment of faculty and students to reduce the science building's ecological footprint. Building-specific policies for paper, energy, supplies, etc., have been developed. The idea has emerged of adopting the building as a model for the rest of campus once

Question: How do you set the boundaries/indicators for evaluating ecological footprint?

CU: Don't obsess over small things (eg., chalk), focus on big items.

For more information on the work at Penn State University, go to www.bio.psu.edu/greendestiny.

Andy Johnston – Forum for the Future's Higher Education Partnership Initiative (UK)

Forum for the Future is the leading UK sustainable development charity. It's mission is to accelerate the building of a sustainable way of life by taking a positive solutions-oriented approach, and it prioritises partnership work with decision makers in business, government, higher education and professional bodies. The Forum is a charitable consultancy, and the Forum Directory contains a database of good ideas for sustainability.

Higher Education Partnership

Aims, Objectives and Principles

Aims:

To establish a pioneering partnership group of HEIs that are seen to be achieving strategic objectives through positive engagement with the sustainable development agenda, and to generate the transferable tools, guidance and the inspiration that will encourage the rest of the sector to do likewise.

Key Objectives:

- To embed a strategic approach to sustainable development into partner institutions
- To create a sense of common purpose and leadership amongst partner group - to better influence the sector-wide change
- To design and trial an (eventually) web-based system for Sustainability Reporting for HEIs that has broad support in the sector and is consistent with best practice within the sector (e.g. HE Sustainability Measures) and beyond it (e.g. Global Reporting Initiative for business). It will also be consonant with government policy (e.g. Sustainability Indicators).
- To leave senior management in partner institutions with the knowledge, motivation and skills to structure sustainability into the university strategic and operational planning processes; research policies; and curriculum planning across the university.
- To build similar capacity in the HEI's stakeholder community - business partners, local and regional government, funding councils and other associated organisations, research councils, students, suppliers.
- To complete a number of innovative partner-designated initiatives that drive forward the agenda, demonstrating clear benefits.
- To develop materials and processes which are communicated and shared with partners

Working Principles:

- To work, wherever possible with an extended network of partners (within sectors, with other organisations, people)
- To maintain a good information flow to the sector as a whole, and to the key HE constituencies
- To engage with and include key bodies relevant to the sector from the outset - funding councils, CVCP, national and local government etc.
- To transfer knowledge and skills to partners and others, so the human capital and capacity of partner institution(s) is enhanced - and learning is shared
- To remain focused on what value the Forum can add to the partnership (sustainable development expertise, facilitating, co-ordinating, communicating, convening, connecting (ideas, people, organisations, sectors))
- To ensure the time of people is used with maximum economy and efficiency (i.e. use electronic communication, well-prepared meetings, lean documentation, forward planning, respect for academic timetable)
- To seek opportunities to promote the profile of partners - in and beyond the sector - for strategic purposes (e.g. student applications; research and other funding opportunities; business partnerships; local community relations).
- To measure, wherever possible, progress and achievements against desired outputs and outcomes.

– How will the HEPI be funded and managed?

The HE Partnership initiative is funded by the Higher Education Funding Councils of England (Collaboration Fund); Scotland (Sustainable Development Initiative); the funding councils of Wales

and Northern Ireland have agreed to fund one institution each. Funds are being made available over the 3 years total over £750,000.

In addition, each participating institution is contracted to bring to the partnership 'in-kind' contributions valued at at least £10,000 per year over 2 years (in Scotland) and 3 years (in England and Wales). Staff time, use of facilities for meetings and so on are eligible for inclusion. This will bring the total value of the scheme to £1.3 million.

Commitment to active engagement in the partnership is agreed at Vice-Chancellor/Principal level, with overall management residing with a member of the senior management team. Operational relationships depend on the agreed work programme. Middlesex University is acting as lead institution, and the partnership will be guided by a Steering Committee.

The HE Partnership scheme will be able to draw on the knowledge, experience and networks of Forum for the Future which will also manage the programme.

AJ: It is necessary to appreciate and understand that each university has its own mission and agenda that may very well have nothing to do with sustainability. Our perspective is that sustainability can be incorporated into a university's agenda only through a non-negative, holistic approach. Any small thing a school is doing in the name of sustainability is a positive ("It's a good start, and there's so much more you could do"). That holistic approach needs to allow for limits. The most important thing is to engage with individuals and empower them to do more. Initially it is good to let go of expectations for the outcome.

For more information on the Forum for the Future, go to www.forumforthefuture.org.uk.

Open Discussion:

Tony asked about tenure/promotion format for interdisciplinary faculty at NAU?

Geoff replied that the review chair collects information from both department heads to form a single set of recommendations.

Niko asked why curriculum tends to get less focus than operations/greening the campus?

Nan responded that it's a process of balancing and integrating.

Chris added that curriculum does tend to get neglected at the bigger schools.

Geoff: faculty development at NAU: Ponderosa program; supports distance education

Debra: we should support professional development for business community as well as faculty.

Saturday, March 31, 2001

PLENARY SESSION III continued: A review of "case studies" and "best (and not so best) practices," and a consideration of factors for success and failure.

Trish Jerman: "Lessons from the South Carolina Sustainable Universities Initiative (SUI)"

The SUI approach has been to start a lot of efforts and see which ones work. SUI also engages people so they have a sense of ownership (i.e., faculty development and incorporating student efforts).

Observations:

A leader must be:

- Well integrated into campus life
- Respected in his/her discipline
- Capable of “spider web thinking” (sense opportunities and problems)
- Able to recognize “toxic” people and work around them

Lessons Learned:

- Need for buy-in at all levels
- Motivations differ:
 - Monetary
 - “Bragging rights”
 - Control
 - Fun, stimulating
- Monetary savings impress legislators
- Baseline data is often not available – start getting it early
- Figure out how long something should take to accomplish, and double it!

Use internal incentives to advantage:

- Tenure and promotion
- Institutional culture (does it reward?)
- Cost savings

External incentives are critical:

- Societal (if everyone is doing it...)
- Disciplinary and professional societies
- Research (current awards for interdisciplinary are infrequent)
- Granting agencies
- Institutional (accrediting, NGOs, etc)
- “Sticks” can help too (EPA crackdown)

In carrying out such an initiative, the management team needs to work with a realistic goal, striving to be “roughly right and directionally correct.”

Question: Dieter Hessel asked if this kind of effort can deal with the major polluting problems in the state (e.g., paper mills, water quality)? Are the universities dealing with larger patterns?

TJ: Individual professors do some with their research. Universities shouldn’t tell other institutions/corporations how to be sustainable before becoming sustainable themselves.

For more information about SUI, go to www.sc.edu/sustainable/.

Mark Starik: “Descriptions of Four Greening Universities Using an Organizational Excellence Model” [PAPER]

Business schools are not completely separated from the topic of sustainability.

In our paper, we look at four greening universities using an organizational excellence model. Here, the “8S Integrated” model will be used, with the 8th term, “success,” replaced by “sustainability.” Thus the eight categories include: Shared Values, Style, Strategy, Structure, Skills, Systems, Stakeholders and Sustainability.

The four universities: Brown University, George Washington University, Tufts University and the University of South Carolina

Cautionary Conclusions:

- Shared Values/Style: Different founding documents and motivations, and different styles (formal/informal)
- Strategy/Structure: All expressed leadership intent, Tufts/GW more active earlier, but Brown/USC are enacting it more recently
- Skills/Systems: All focus on environmental education, though Brown and USC have leaned a bit toward operations, with GW/Tufts more toward research
- Stakeholders/Sustainability: All attend to stakeholders, with GW/Tufts focusing on a wider set of less committed stakeholders; Brown/USC appear more sustainable and vibrant lately, with Tufts/GW in a regrouping phase

Limits and Implications:

Limits: Data, Model, Sample, Bias, Reliability

Implications: Champions, Indicators, Network Activism.

Question: Rick Clugston asked why do (specific) efforts at schools seem to weaken or even disappear? Mark replied that circumstances change, the people involved change or leave. At GW, the sustainability efforts have become de-centralized – it’s now up to the individual departments to move on their own and network with one another.

Question: Sara asked how you mobilize middle management?

Mark responded that it is like a patchwork – a few supportive deans, a few supportive VPs, some interested students and faculty. The sustainability effort can still be supported by such a patchwork.

Rick Bunch: “Determinants in Moving Business Schools toward Sustainability: Lessons from the Management Institute for Environment and Business (MEB) Experience” [PAPER]

Influencing Business Schools:

The first step is to get in the door. Tree huggers don’t fit with business schools – one has to become the wolf in sheep’s clothing. It is necessary to speak the language that business schools understand and are interested in. Another avenue is to use surrogates by connecting with the businesses that say they care about sustainability. Such partnerships lend legitimacy.

Business schools will say:

1. “We don’t know anything about sustainability.”
Show them how it fits in. Introduce them to teaching materials and methods.
2. “There’s no curriculum to teach – so few case studies on sustainability; it’s barely mentioned in textbooks.”
We’ve published 50+ cases (mostly written by BELL network members). Course syllabi are also available.
3. “I can’t base a teaching career on sustainability in business because there are no publication opportunities.”
Sustainability is the victim of tight disciplinary limits found in academia. Persuade A-list, peer-reviewed journals to issue special editions focused on the environment.
4. “No credit or support from deans/administration. Courses dealing with sustainability in business go outside the boundaries of the department, and publications don’t count towards tenure.”
Get outside attention and support for sustainability efforts. *Beyond Grey Pinstripes Report* (see website) is a resource. Subversive strategy within business schools – there are people outside the business schools that care deeply about these things. Outside recognition gets the dean’s attention and demonstrates how much activity is actually happening. Organizations change in response to their external environment.
5. “Lack of student interest.”
Perceived lack of employer interest leads to lack of student interest. MBA students are there to advance their professional careers. Schools are building advisory boards with representatives from reputable companies that value sustainability, hire graduates and provide internships. It is necessary to be aware of where MBA students are likely to work – those companies might not have “environmental” in the title, but may be quite committed.

For more information on MEB, go to www.wri.org/meb/.

Open Discussion:

Question: Dieter Hessel asked to what extent ecological economics is penetrating business schools. Mark replied that it tends to stay in the economics department and is not crossing over to business schools. Natural resource economics crosses over more.

Question: Sara Parkin noted that in the UK increasing numbers of projects involve whole-life-costing and wondered if that is beginning to appear in the US.

Tony responded that the Kresgie Foundation, which funds a lot of university building in the U.S., is starting to insist on sustainability standards for anything built (preparing EBD criteria for all schools funded). Trish Jerman added that thinking is still fairly short-term.

Question: Harold Glasser inquired as to the differences between SC and GW programs.

Mark Starik answered that the main factor is money – there is a significant difference in resources available. Money and culture need to be directed towards environmental initiatives in order to advance them.

Tony suggested that how one measures sustainability at a school is important. While Middlebury is very green in some ways, it has done little to integrate sustainability across the curriculum. Northern Arizona University, in contrast, has transformed 150+ courses. Many effective, long-term activities can be almost invisible.

PLENARY SESSION IV: Next steps in researching and promoting sustainability in higher education, focused on these questions:

1. **How can we strengthen and rapidly advance sustainability in higher education?**
 - a. **What research and assessment tasks are essential?**
 - b. **What education, public awareness and training tasks are essential – and which key stakeholders and constituencies should be involved?**
2. **How can we utilize the Rio+10 review process? Emerging networks (GHESP, HENSE)? Are there other opportunities to study SHE and motivate this change?**

Kim Walker – Consultant

Action Research Model:

1. Identify the problem - developed in a positive sense (how do I improve...).
2. Determine what you need to find out, who to talk to - identify all stakeholders
3. Check out literature - what has worked/not worked in the past; revise problem if necessary.
4. Look at possible solutions - take into account what has been found out; find out more if necessary.
5. Implement the most appropriate solutions - may need to revise problem, find out more.
6. Evaluate the Solution
7. Where to next? Identify the next problem and so forth.

Keep motivation high – don't get bogged down.

Keep people documenting what they're doing so it can become a case study.

Who are the facilitator? Are they internal or external? The process should be owned by everyone who participates, not simply by a facilitator. Allow many voices, constantly revisiting what is being done, why and how.

Bob Ford – Southern University and A&M College

GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) emerged from an effort to see what higher education can do to move sustainability to the public schools (without using the term sustainability). GLOBE gets kids involved in data collection about something in which they are interested. They learn science by doing science. The data that the students collect is used by adult scientists to better understand Earth systems (protocols used are very strict). Teachers are trained to use GLOBE as a curriculum enhancement (not a full curriculum) in the classrooms.

GLOBE is a “children’s environmental program” that also:

- Engages teachers K-12

- Gets young people more interested in science/math
- Involves parents

For more information about GLOBE, go to www.globe.gov/.

Sara Parkin – Forum for the Future (UK)

The Forum for the Future was established to:

- Collect examples of good practice in sustainability and make them available to others
- Discover simple and effective ways of explaining sustainable development

Sustainable development has a triple bottom line (Environment, Economy, Society) that sets an ethical and values framework; it sets limits, the real bottom line.

Big questions for the Forum:

- How to communicate Sustainability
- How to build capacity, and build it fast
- How to acknowledge contribution of individuals
- How to build collective responsibility
- How to connect to the key sectors

Using economic language, there are many types of capital: natural, human, social, manufactured, financial. It is good economics to keep the stocks of all the types of capital in solid shape in order to ensure long-term success.

To measure whether you are going roughly in the right direction, you have to have an idea of the destination.

Criteria for a sustainability framework:

1. Comprehensive
2. Consistent
3. Culturally neutral
4. Non-judgmental
5. Straight forward
6. Constructive

Using this framework, we've developed a list of initiatives (see Andy Johnston's presentation, Plenary Session III).

For more information on the Forum for the Future, go to www.forumforthefuture.org.uk.

Hans-Peter Winkelmann – CRE-Copernicus (Germany)

Copernicus is the secretariat for signatories of the University Charter for Sustainable Development.

What can each university do to become more sustainable? What is the role of the university in the community around the issue of sustainability?

The Copernicus charter intentionally does not include an implementation plan – the process is meant to be open-ended, not to give universities a prescription. Instead it lets them develop their own individualized approach.

Copernicus provides assistance to universities and acts as a resource:

- Supports an information exchange among universities (benchmarking, case studies, good practices).
- Brings universities together to collaborate with one another and identify common projects.

Everyone agrees on the importance of saving energy, so the “low-energy university” is especially promoted.

The topic of sustainability in higher education relates directly to the Rio+10 process. We are looking closely at the Rio+10 process – the issue of education for sustainable development, higher education component in particular. Copernicus is working with UNESCO and other members of the Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP), which was launched in December 2000.

There will be a higher education for sustainability conference in Lüneburg, October 8-10, 2001. We will attempt to endorse a “Lüneburg Declaration” at the end of the conference, urging all higher education stakeholders to ensure that education remains on the agenda for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002.

For more information about CRE-COPERNICUS and the conference, go to www.cre-copernicus.de/.

*Prepared and edited by Anastasia MacDonald.
Also edited by Kathy Cacciola and Wynn Calder.*