

Appalachian Energy Summit

Thursday, July 18, 2013

Academic Integration

Three questions:

How do we legitimize the importance of integrating energy savings and sustainability into learning outcomes and research activities?

Rather than a tacked-initiative, make it a real value on campus with faculty.
Also bring to the table those who are missing.

Who are stakeholders?

Faculty:

- a real understanding of how it's all connected to their discipline
- What is the reward for their efforts?
 - Tenure
 - Needs to be more than committee work
 - Service learning
- Have administrators reward faculty, especially in the disciplines that we usually think of as NOT associated with sustainability (we all have a role in creating healthy, just, sustainable societies]
- Barrier of thinking of sustainability as a *separate* discipline.
 - So maybe all syllabi have pieces on this
 - Faculty development on the topic
 - Explicitly addressed in courses
- Healthy defense of academic freedom can be part of this; infusing the value into the curriculum. Flip side to academic freedom is faculty's ability to say no. Has to be rewarded.
- "Sustainability is Everything!" Everyone has something to bring to the table
- mentorship – starts at the administrative end.
- Operations: Assist faculty in finding research support for sustainability-related research
- Needs to come from provost; but it can't be added to faculty's already full plates – incorporate into existing duties!
- Many faculty simply don't know "sustainability" so there's a knowledge absence.
- Time, \$\$, credit, knowledge
- Faculty-to-faculty transmission is very important to "convert" many faculty. (acknowledging that the best journals in the world are NOT interdisciplinary and also that faculty are evaluated on a "bizarre" matrix

Administration

- Own outside commitments of university
- Engage career services – growing jobs for grads
- Alter criteria for tenure
 - Others argue that it needs to not be spelled out in this way, as that might create faculty resistance
- Industry dollars that come from sponsors who care can be used as a carrot
- Key to recruiting students & parents – use studies, research data to support this
- Research centers that foster collaboration between researchers
- Teaching – can be done, but many folks don't know how
 - Mentoring from faculty who do know how!
 - Flipping the expression – do preach to the choir, they'll sing louder.
- Sustainability course designation included in Gen Ed requirements
- Peer pressure for administrators – look at what other institutions are doing.
- Majority of parents also care about this, so it gets to the development administrators

Students

- Jobs – they want them!
- Need to see it on campus –
- Saturation in curriculum, student opps, internships, extra-curriculars, etc.
- Breaking down silos will help students, too. Holistic perspective and experience
- Message – not to “preserve” lifestyles, but to change their lifestyles . . . radicalization(?) of human values. What are the comforts that they are willing to forego?
 - Give students a way to live differently . . . in turn students can help us understand.
- Students need to feel empowered, because they are truly powerful as students.
- Students need to think: here's what we DO. Have expectations that hold them to high standards.
- IF students already get it, then don't we need to let students lead since they're ahead of us?
 - Have to have faculty who are legitimate in their knowledge and skills, experiences, etc.
- Students need to know who they can work with to achieve their goals.
- Make this a part of orientation, for students, faculty, staff, etc.
- Summer readings – across the university system

STAFF

- Policies and enforcement of policies
 - Not all agree with this; some say this works against the goal

- Opportunities for learning/development and for having their ideas heard.
- Emphasize the social/human part of sustainability
- Provide the tools to make it easier for them to change
 - Give them time and resources to participate in learning
- Celebrate staff successes!
- Sustainability helps protect jobs
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What are potential organizational structures that integrate energy savings and sustainability into the campus ecosystem, allowing knowledge and skills to flow between campus operations and faculty/student expertise.

- Dual reporting
 - Office of sustainability reports to academic office as well as business affairs- an opportunity to keep sustainability in the conversation. Also a liaison position between staff and faculty
- Faculty fellows: competitive for infusing sustainability
- Accountability and transparency in reporting – helps everyone see where strengths and opportunities are. A specific set of standards that’s all encompassing.
 - Provides the structure to make these sustainability practices obvious
- **De-politicize**
- Define learning outcomes for sustainability education
 - Emerging, cutting edge research is working toward this.
 - Is there a sustainability literacy we can measure, as part of our mission? Needs to be systemic.
 - Brings together administrative and academic choir
- Institutionally define what sustainability is, maybe a set of principles
- A transference of knowledge between campus educators/students and campus operations/administrators.
 - What are barriers?
 - Operations in the past have attempted to do and they were burned in some way for their efforts to work with students.
 - Maybe too much too early, in some attempts, with no oversight/responsibility/structure
 - Needs assessment of facilities at Warren Wilson results in research for students on campus. Has helped moved the process along. Needs-based student learning & research.
 - Expectations – need to define expectations for students, but also client needs to understand it’s a learning experience for students, too. Often students don’t quite get there, but then operations take it and do it. Then students learn they need to know the details, too.
- Adding a line item to budgets for sustainability, so that units could decide, such a low-flow toilets, etc.

- Could we use post-docs to accomplish some of the gravitas of PhDs into the process, to avoid faculty not seeing the office as “legit” enough for them?
- Co-teaching a class using campus as a living lab – pair a faculty member with a operations person.
- Collaboration takes time – to get to know one another’s context and constraints. Need to spend this time early on, so that projects are truly jointly conceived and accomplished.
- Create student projects that also result in a line on their resume.
- Bring operations folks into classroom, and their projects/problems, for student learning opportunities
- Staff release time to work on these types of projects
- Academic experience vs. the curricular experience; different in how we infuse sustainability into these two.
- Putting a rotating faculty member in office of sustainability
- Internships
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Given the conversation about the first two questions what should we do differently on our campus and as a general state-wide colleges and universities?

- Rotating sustainability fellows (could be faculty, staff, students). They become cohorts.
- In-State sabbaticals, between campuses
 - With faculty needs to be exchange of teaching, but not all campuses have that opp.
- Training to address the gaps in faculty learning about sustainability.
 - Could be systems wide
 - Could include systems folks, too
 - Maybe it has an award attached
- Students who’ve graduated but who want an internship with university/college to learn further
- Electronic classrooms where we collaborate between 4-5 faculty at 4-5 campuses, etc.
- Creating opportunities for those who are interested in this to create momentum for those around them. For instance, cafeteria staff, etc.
- Share sustainability modules between campuses. Share the resources
 - MOOCs
- Faculty time is still an issue:
 - So provide them with course materials
 - Have them create 25% of a class, such as the team taught
- In-state competition between students.
- TEDtalks on Sustainability = among state faculty, which would be shared among campuses
- Structured work programs between these groups.

- Work by a student who is supervised by a operations person and overseen by a faculty member

Resources:

[Accelerating Campus Climate Initiative; Michael's book, free download- on RMI web site.]

[Portland State's sustainability web site is a good model]

Sustainable cities, university of Oregon