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**Sustainability Initiative:**  
Hiring a Sustainability Coordinator and a Sustainability Intern

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## Overview

The Environmental Advisory Committee Workgroup on Institutional Sustainability formed out of a common concern to see sustainability institutionalized at Carleton College. We have sought, and continue to seek, permanent College-supported transformations that will turn the campus into an ecologically responsible and literate community. While many student groups work towards this same end, we have recognized that their efforts have been ineffective, potentially duplicative, and fleeting—once a leader graduates, the movement tends to quickly die out. We see our fellow students' valiant efforts to make necessary improvements—bio-diesel, composting, waste reduction, and energy conservation—and admire their commitment, but we fear that without institutional memory these efforts will not lead to lasting results. Upholding our mission as an academic institution and a liberal arts college must happen at the administration level, hence the need for a staff position for a sustainability coordinator.

Though we have an ENTS intern who supports and coordinates environmental organizations at Carleton and in Northfield and who evaluates and furthers environmental goals at Carleton, in Northfield, he is already greatly overworked and unable to accomplish the type of cultural changes necessary within the allotted year's time of the position. This results in the same problem of a lack of institutional memory. We also have an Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) made up of students, faculty, and staff who only have an advisory capacity. As important as this body is, a position is essential to undertake the implementation of resolutions that are approved by the EAC and the college. A sustainability coordinator would provide the necessary expertise, commitment, authority, and experience. This person would have the time and resources to undertake large-scale projects, such as implementing an environmentally responsible, cost-effective energy production system and restoring the water quality of Lyman Lakes and the surrounding watershed. Having a single person as a resource and director for all environmental happenings at Carleton is a crucial step.

As an institution of higher education, Carleton has an ethical obligation to promote sustainability in both its operations and academic mission. Our Environmental Statement of Principles, endorsed by the Board of Trustees, Building and Grounds Committee, states *"Carleton College recognizes that it exists as part of interconnected communities that are impacted by personal and institutional choices. We are dedicated to investigating and promoting awareness of the current and future impacts of our actions in order to foster responsibility for these human and natural communities. Carleton strives to be a model of stewardship for the environment by incorporating ideals of sustainability into the operations of the college and the daily life of individuals."* 18 May 2001. Hiring a sustainability coordinator and intern is in accordance with these principles. Additionally, we are an establishment dedicated to educating students; Carleton should provide students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge because they will better understand and retain this knowledge. A sustainability coordinator would facilitate in fulfilling this duty.

With rising energy prices and a tightening budget, sustainability is in Carleton's financial self-interest. While we may not be able to avoid high energy prices, we can diminish our demand for and our waste of energy. Through education and lifestyle changes on campus, a coordinator would achieve waste reduction. Other colleges and universities report saving millions of dollars by doing this in the first year alone. Being sustainable makes economic and ethical sense.

Carleton is and should be interested in maintaining its well deserved reputation of leadership in higher education as well. Carleton was named as a Higher Education Campus

Climate Leader. Carleton has been leading the way to lowering global warming pollution by building the wind turbine though more must be done in order to keep such an accolade. We have also been working on many other initiatives as well, as shown by the eco-house class and the green roof project on campus. Having a sustainable campus not only expands Carleton's standing as a national leader but also creates an atmosphere where graduates will become the future environmentally-literate leaders. While we should congratulate ourselves on our achievements thus far, Carleton is no longer a leader in the sustainability movement.

We originally thought hiring a sustainability coordinator was new and innovative; however, sixty-two colleges and universities along with many of the top Fortune 500 companies have already recognized the need for such a position and have implemented this institutional change. Carleton leads in many fields, but Carleton is falling behind in regards to sustainability, a fact which is quickly becoming more and more evident.

Having established the need for the position, we can look to other colleges and universities as examples. What have they done, what works, how do we begin, and where can we go? Middlebury College is at the forefront of campus sustainability. In 1993 they began composting their more than three-hundred tons of food per year and since that time have saved over \$200,000 in avoided landfill fees. Even more impressive, the University of British Columbia (UBC) has saved \$75,000 on electricity and \$414,872 on paper, and counting, since they opened their sustainability office. Their sustainability website (<http://www.sustain.ubc.ca/>) tracks the pages of paper, liters of water, kilowatts of electricity, and tons of greenhouse gas emissions reduced. The UBC's Sustainability Office is entirely funded on money that would otherwise have gone towards buying the electricity, paper and other resources that the office helped the college conserve. Their sustainability office more than pays for itself.

Having explored the options, we compiled a number of job descriptions and salary ranges for sustainability coordinators. The Education for Sustainability (EFS) Kester survey offers statistical information covering coordinator experience and salary. Internally, the Environmental Advisory Committee, Facilities, ACT, the Carleton Senate Association, the Carleton Democrats, Greenhouse, MPIRG, WHOA House, Benton House, ASIA, and Canada Club have offered their support for the proposal. Many organizations are glad that Carleton is interested in increasing its support for sustainability initiatives.

In researching sustainable campuses, we found some external sources very helpful and knowledgeable. EFS University-Restructuring Program Director, Julian Dautremont-Smith, has extensive empirical and experience derived information. The sustainability office at UBC is also very accessible and enthusiastic about efforts at Carleton to develop a sustainability office. In May of 2005, Cornell surveyed twenty eight peer institutions about efforts in campus sustainability. Both the results and recommendations of this survey can be applied to Carleton's situation.

We already have commitment to be a model of stewardship and sustainability as recognized in our Environmental Statement of Principles; what we are missing is implementation. Approving our recommendation to hire a sustainability coordinator and a sustainability intern is environmentally, ethically, and financially in the best interest of Carleton College. We look forward to collaborating with you as we pursue our common goal of making Carleton a leader in sustainability and higher education.

## Proposal for New Staff Positions

Sustainability Coordinator  
Sustainability Intern

Supported by:

| <u>Student Organizations:</u> | <u>Faculty &amp; Staff Organizations:</u> |
|-------------------------------|---|
| ASIA                          | ACT                                       |
| Benton House                  | Environmental Advisory Committee          |
| Canada Club                   | Facilities                                |
| Carleton Democrats            |   |
| CSA                           |   |
| Greenhouse                    |   |
| MPIRG                         |   |
| SOPE                          |   |
| WHOA                          |   |

Description of Positions:

Position Overview for Sustainability Coordinator: A full time position that helps coordinate sustainability efforts on campus and serves as a resource to direct and advise all areas of the College, including academics, facilities, dining services and college culture, in order to establish Carleton as a national figure in sustainability. (See attached complete description.)

Position Overview for intern: The sustainability intern works to assist the sustainability office, the ENTS department, and the Environmental Advisory Committee and to advise the College community on sustainability and other environmental projects. As a Carleton representative, the intern attends Northfield and St. Olaf events and maintains an awareness of the larger “green” community. (See attached complete description.)

Rationale:

- Ethics: As an institution of higher education, Carleton has an ethical obligation to promote sustainability in both its operations and academic mission as stated in the Environmental Statement of Principles endorsed by the Board of Trustees, Building and Grounds Committee:

“Carleton College recognizes that it exists as part of interconnected communities that are impacted by personal and institutional choices. We are dedicated to investigating and promoting awareness of the current and future impacts of our actions in order to foster responsibility for these human and natural communities. Carleton strives to be a model of stewardship for the environment by incorporating ideals of sustainability into the operations of the college and the daily life of individuals.”

As a *liberal arts* institution, Carleton has the responsibility to educate its students in a holistic and wide-ranging manner. A sustainability coordinator would emphasize and give students the opportunity to apply knowledge in a responsible, interdisciplinary, forward-thinking, and problem-solving fashion. In a broader sense, Carleton prides itself

on being a leader among colleges and universities and is responsible for maintaining this well-earned reputation. Being a sustainable campus not only expands the College's standing as a national leader in social and environmental responsibility but also creates an atmosphere where graduates will become future leaders and stewards of the Earth.

- Financial self-interest: In addition to its ethical obligation, Carleton will benefit financially by being a sustainable campus. Given dramatic increases in energy costs, failing to become an environmentally sustainable institution is fiscally irresponsible. Colleges and universities across the country reported in Cornell's peer survey on "Campus Sustainability in Higher Education" the impressive savings that result from a sustainable lifestyle.

Columbia: \$3.4 million adjusted for inflation

University of Colorado -Boulder: \$5 million annually

University of British Columbia: \$2,575,000 annually (Canadian)

University of Buffalo: \$50-\$100 million

University of Michigan: \$10 million dollars annually (\$9 million from energy reduction)

Though a much smaller institution, Carleton could easily save a proportional amount.

-The University of British Columbia breaks down their savings since the establishment of their Office of Sustainability as follows:

UBC savings:

As of April 1, 1999 to Nov 11, 2005:

-52,526,774 sheets of paper saved (at Carleton's rate of \$4 per ream of 500 sheets, this is \$420,214 in paper savings alone)

-65,219,431 kWh of electricity saved (at Carleton's rate of .053 cents per kWh, this is \$3,456,630 in electric use)

-31,178 tons of greenhouse gas emissions reduced (at the U.S. rate of \$10 per ton, this is \$311,780 in saving)

**\$10,073,005 (Canadian) saved in total**

Thus, the position could potentially pay for itself and then some over the years through energy, paper, and water conservation as well as through new waste disposal policies. The UBC Sustainability Office is, in fact, completely funded by money saved from its energy reduction programs. It consists of three full-time and two part-time staff members. Essentially, other than \$50,000 in seed funding to develop a business plan, the office has been self-funded right from the beginning. When the office was formed, they were given control of the existing operating budget for paying campus utility costs (electricity, steam, gas, water and sewage) and out of that existing funding they paid for all of the annual utility costs plus their salaries and office operating expenses. So in effect, all of their office funding, including the salaries, are paid from the savings they achieve through reductions in utility costs. This has been the way the office has been funded from the beginning and even now they still receive funding only for baseline utility costs and nothing for their salaries and operating expenses. However, the baseline utility costs are

adjusted each year for weather, utility rate changes, and changes in building area. For example, if the weather is colder than normal, they receive extra money; and if it is warmer than normal, they give some back. If rates increase, they receive more funding; and if rates decrease, they return funding. Also, they receive extra funding for new buildings but lose funding for demolitions.

All of their projects are funded in the same way. They take out a loan from their Treasury department and pay it back from the savings to the utility costs. That is how they funded their lighting upgrade projects as well as ecotrek, their \$38 million comprehensive energy and water upgrade project (<http://www.ecotrek.ubc.ca>). Other than a little bit of minor capital funding and some incentives and grants from BC Hydro and Natural Resources Canada, all of their funding has come from reductions in utility costs. Since 1999-2000, those reductions have totaled over \$10 million. This fiscal design produces a positive feedback cycle where the more successful the sustainability projects completed the better able the office to make large scale impacts to create a more sustainable, money-saving campus. This design also allows important projects that have a long-term payback to become economically feasible.

- Efficiency: Sustainability is not simply the jurisdiction of a single body like EAC, ACT, or the ENTS curriculum. Rather, it is a broad vision that needs college-wide buy-in from all stakeholders, including the academic/curricular areas of the college as well as the co-curricular and operations areas. Currently sustainability efforts are disparate, disconnected, and duplicative. With the support of a 5<sup>th</sup> year intern, a sustainability coordinator could create a coherent and effective strategy that integrates projects on the part of operations, curriculum, and campus life.
- Effectiveness: Colleges and universities that have become leaders in sustainability have recognized the need for full-time staff member with these responsibilities; the position of sustainability coordinator is quickly becoming standard at institutions across the country. A number of colleges and universities have created an Office of Sustainability within their upper administrations. [See attached list of institutions with Sustainability Coordinator positions and/or Offices of Sustainability.]
- Workload: The ENTS Intern is grossly overworked. Expecting one person to support ENTS as an academic program and coordinate sustainability efforts via the EAC is simply unreasonable. Richard Strong and other EAC members are doing double duty by adding these important efforts to already full workloads. A few faculty members are already making efforts to incorporate sustainability projects into their courses, but again in an at best disparate fashion. It would be unfair for the college to expect students to create sustainable institutional change on top of their academic studies without Carleton's support.

## **Sustainability Coordinator Job Description (Full Time)**

Job Title: Sustainability Coordinator

Reports to: President of the College (Robert Oden, Jr.)

Date Open: 2006-2007 School year

Revision Date: October 28, 2005

### **Position Overview:**

A full time position that serves as an expert and resource for all areas, including academics, facilities, dining services and college culture, in order to establish Carleton as a national figure in sustainability.

### **Essential Job Functions/Responsibilities:**

- Aid the already existing programs and encourage new initiatives and collaboration by students, faculty, and staff. Facilitate the development of sustainable projects and policy, provide up-to-date information about sustainability and help coordinate the process using campus connections, the current sustainability movement, and available grants. Be readily accessible and helpful to all bodies and organizations on campus and to the local community.
- Assess Carleton's sustainability principles and current performance in collaboration with the Vice President, Fred Rogers, the Facilities Director, Richard Strong, the Environmental Advisory Committee, Arboretum Director Myles Bakke, and the Head of Dining Services. Document and publicize the results.
- Officiate and advise the Environmental Advisory Committee.
- Be a spokesperson for Carleton's Sustainability on campus by developing and organizing seminars, speakers, presentations, the website and employing other creative methods of communication. Be a spokesperson for Carleton's Sustainability to the public, including the local community, by attending conferences, forming press releases, giving presentations and establishing and utilizing contacts with local organizations as well as St. Olaf and other colleges. Through conferences and contact with other resources, stay current on environmental issues, new trends, advanced technologies and the status of others schools.
- Collaborate with local and national organizations, St. Olaf and other colleges and Universities.
- Help optimize Carleton's potential for recycling, energy efficiency, waste reduction, local and organic food and other procurement, carbon emission reduction and sustainable design, construction, and deconstruction.
- Manage sustainability budget and, when appropriate, write grants.

Based on:

- Job description for Sustainability Coordinator Duke University
  - [http://www.efswest.org/resource\\_center/pdf/duke\\_desc.pdf](http://www.efswest.org/resource_center/pdf/duke_desc.pdf)
- Campus Sustainability Coordinator (Middlebury College)
  - <http://www.middlebury.edu/administration/enviro/coordinator.htm>
- Education for Sustainability – Western Network
  - [http://www.efswest.org/resource\\_center/sust\\_professionals.php](http://www.efswest.org/resource_center/sust_professionals.php)



## **Sustainability Intern Job Description (Full Time)**

Job Title: Sustainability Intern  
Reports to: Sustainability Coordinator  
Date Open: 2006-2007 School year  
Revision Date: October 28, 2005

### **Position Overview:**

The sustainability intern works to assist the sustainability office, the ENTS department, and the Environmental Advisory Committee and to advise the College community on sustainability and other environmental projects. As a Carleton representative, the intern attends Northfield and St. Olaf events and maintains an awareness of the larger “green” community.

### **Essential Job Functions/Responsibilities:**

- Schedule, organize, and publicize sustainability events
- Manage email list serves such as the Green Network
- Gather and disperse information about environmental events at Carleton, in Northfield, and other areas when appropriate. (This is the main function of the Green Network list serve.)
- Gather and disperse information about professional sustainability job, internship, and graduate study opportunities to students via email and other publicity
- Support and coordinate environmental organizations at Carleton, with St. Olaf, and in Northfield
  - SOPE
  - MPIRG
  - Green House
  - Farm/Parr House
  - WHOA House
  - CRIC
  - Northfield Environmental Quality Commission: attend meetings
  - Northfield Center for Sustainable Living
  - RENew Northfield
  - St. Olaf Environmental Coalition
  - Maltby Nature Preserve
- Support efforts to incorporate sustainability into the College curriculum

**Colleges and Universities with a Sustainability Coordinator, Office of Sustainability, or similar position**

American University  
Arizona State University  
Berea College  
Birmingham-Southern College  
Bowdoin College  
Brown University  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Clemson University  
Concordia University  
Connecticut College  
Cornell University  
Dartmouth College  
Dickinson College  
Duke University  
Emory University  
Grand Valley State University  
Hartford Community College  
Harvard University  
Lane Community College  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
McGill University  
Medical University of SC  
Michigan State University  
Middlebury College  
Northland College  
Pima Community College  
Portland Community College  
Portland State University  
Ramapo College  
Rice University  
Royal Roads University

Seattle University  
St. Francis Xavier University  
Sterling College  
Stetson University  
Tufts University  
Tulane University  
UC Office of the President  
UC San Diego  
UC Santa Barbara  
UNC Chapel Hill  
UNC Greensboro  
University of British Columbia  
University of Calgary  
University of Connecticut  
University of Florida  
University of Hawaii at Manoa  
University of Illinois  
University of Minnesota  
University of New Hampshire  
University of Oregon  
University of Saskatchewan  
University of South Carolina  
University of Southern Maine  
University of Texas at Austin  
University of Toronto  
University of Toronto at Mississauga  
University of Vermont  
University of Victoria  
University of Washington Seattle  
University of Wisconsin Madison  
Yale University

## **Need for Sustainability Programs on Campus**

*This document was written by Corinna Kester, Sustainability Coordinator within Environmental Health and Safety at the University of Texas at Austin (ckester@austin.utexas.edu). It provides reasoning for pursuing sustainability initiatives and one possible model for doing so. Anyone is welcome to use, duplicate, and disseminate this document.*

Sustainability, the balance of environmental, social, and economic needs, continues to grow as a major issue that large institutions must address. Most top universities and Fortune 500 companies have established entities to manage sustainability within their organizations.

At a university, this could take the shape of an Office of Sustainability, advised by a Campus Sustainability Committee. The Office's mission would be to collaboratively facilitate university sustainability activities in operations, planning, construction, research, education, and public service. It aims to integrate sustainability programs into existing campus operations and to make sustainability an integral part of each person's role at the University.

A Campus Sustainability Committee would be the main venue for sharing information, identifying opportunities, initiating cross-campus collaborations, and developing short and long-term goals. The Office of Sustainability, led by a full-time Sustainability Coordinator, would provide staff support to the Committee, collect data, put together publications, coordinate projects, fundraise, and serve as a supporting partner for other departments undertaking sustainability initiatives. Functions of the Office of Sustainability and Campus Sustainability Committee would include:

### ***Charting a Course Toward Sustainability***

The Committee and Office would develop a campus sustainability vision, committee mission statement, and short and long-term goals. To measure the value of the University's sustainability efforts, they would develop metrics and collect information on an ongoing basis. They would also identify program improvements and suggest new or modified policies that could yield economic, social, and environmental benefits to the University.

### ***Education and Public Relations***

The Office would track and publicize campus sustainability accomplishments through an annual report, a web site, and promotion of articles in local newspapers and magazines. It would serve as a resource for faculty on integrating sustainability into the undergraduate and graduate curriculum and would host educational programs, including conferences, lectures, town halls, informational fairs, and staff and student sustainability liaison programs. The Sustainability Committee would recognize sustainability-related accomplishments in scholarship, teaching, community outreach, and campus planning and operations through an awards program.

### ***Networking and Information Sharing***

The Committee would provide a forum for networking among the academic and physical facilities and operations activities on campus. Committee members and affiliates would share information on sustainable techniques and technologies and develop ideas for new sustainability initiatives. To supplement this, the Sustainability Coordinator would serve as an extra pair of hands to work with interested staff and faculty members on starting sustainability initiatives.

Another important function is outreach to and partnerships with the local sustainability community and the larger network of university sustainability offices.

### ***Bringing Sustainability Resources to the University***

To bring greater resources to the University, the Office would seek and publicize research opportunities on sustainability issues, apply for grants for campus projects, develop a network of alumni interested in the environment, and direct student energy into projects that help the campus and provide learning opportunities, through internships, coursework, and volunteerism.

**Potential Areas of Focus:** The Office and Committee would be collaborative, non-directive, and results-oriented. Focus areas may include curricula, research, environmental literacy, recycling, waste reduction and disposal, building design and upkeep, environmental management systems, purchasing, dining services, energy, water, air, transportation, and land use.

**Funding:** At other campuses, funding for an Office of Sustainability and Campus Sustainability Committee is a collaborative effort among various campus entities, with the Provost and Vice President of Facilities frequently taking the lead. This diversified funding recognizes the broad scope of sustainability and the large number of actors that are involved in its implementation on campus.

## **Advantages to Founding an Office of Sustainability and Campus Sustainability Committee**

### ***Saving Money***

With budgetary pressure, cheaper operations are essential. An Office would help start new money-saving programs by working with existing departments, and a Committee would facilitate collaboration across campus and would proactively identify opportunities for savings. Other schools' sustainability offices save from hundred of thousands to millions of dollars each year.

### ***Using the Campus as Classroom to Improve Student Education***

Students learn more when they can apply their knowledge to real world projects. A Committee and Office would help students work on campus projects in their courses and through internships and independent study. Students would gain valuable educational experience, work in interdisciplinary teams, and develop systemic thinking skills while working to improve the university's environmental performance. This would also aide student recruitment and retention. It is also a great source of labor, data, and analysis beyond the time available to paid staff.

### ***Serving as a Exemplar***

In universities' pursuit of excellence, they seek to expand their reputation as a leader in their state and nation, and they can do so by clearly stating a commitment to sustainability. A Sustainability Committee and Office enable universities to elucidate and promote a clear and compelling story of their social and environmental responsibility. It would provide universities a well-organized face to the public on sustainability issues.

### ***Improving Alumni Relations***

Universities can take advantage of increased global attention to sustainability issues by highlighting their activities to alumni, which generates goodwill and thereby increases giving. In

addition, an Office of Sustainability would increase student involvement in campus issues, which would result in more active alumni.

### ***Providing a Forum for the Initiation of Projects that would Benefit the Campus***

Initiating new projects is difficult for staff members, who are already stretched to take care of day-to-day operations. The extra pair of hands provided by the Sustainability Coordinator and the student support that the Coordinator leverages are both essential to the development of new initiatives.

### ***Matching and Exceeding the Performance of Peer Institutions***

Many top institutions, both public and private, have sustainability initiatives. Universities without such programs are increasingly seen as lagging behind their peers.

### ***Conserving Resources and Protecting the Environment***

The Sustainability Committee and Office would be ideal venues to facilitate the development and promotion of resource conservation initiatives, which have clear value in reducing costs and protecting the environment.

### ***Avoiding Proscriptive Action***

By proactively engaging with sustainability issues and documenting its initiatives, universities can avoid mandates from the legislature or other bodies.

### ***Drawing on the Experiences of Other Universities***

Without someone keeping up with the latest news and opportunities in the sustainability field, universities would not be able to effectively take advantage of the growing interest in sustainability or learn from the successes and failures of other institutions. A Sustainability Committee and Office would collect this information and enable the University to identify new opportunities and gain greater success in its sustainability projects.

### ***Serving the World Community***

Sustainability is a major social issue, and universities can address it concretely through action on campus and by educating students about its importance. The Committee and Office would help produce leaders equipped to succeed in a world where sustainability is increasingly important.

### ***Breaking Down Barriers Between Students, Faculty, and Staff***

Lack of communication and respect between these three entities is a commonly cited problem at universities. Good sustainability initiatives require the participation of all of these groups; the projects facilitated by the Office and Committee would foster collaboration and cooperation and would help break down barriers between the groups.

## EFS-West Salary Survey of Sustainability and Environmental Coordinators

The survey was completed in August 2005. Any survey respondents who did not have titles similar to “Sustainability or Environmental Coordinator” were not included. Thirty-six American coordinators were included in the final results. A larger salary survey was previously completed for Canadian Coordinators; for the results, please contact the Sierra Youth Coalition. If you did not take the survey, we invite you to do so at <http://www.efswest.org/salary.html> so we can release more complete information. For questions about the survey, please contact Corinna Kester, EFS Advisory Committee, at [ckester@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ckester@austin.utexas.edu).

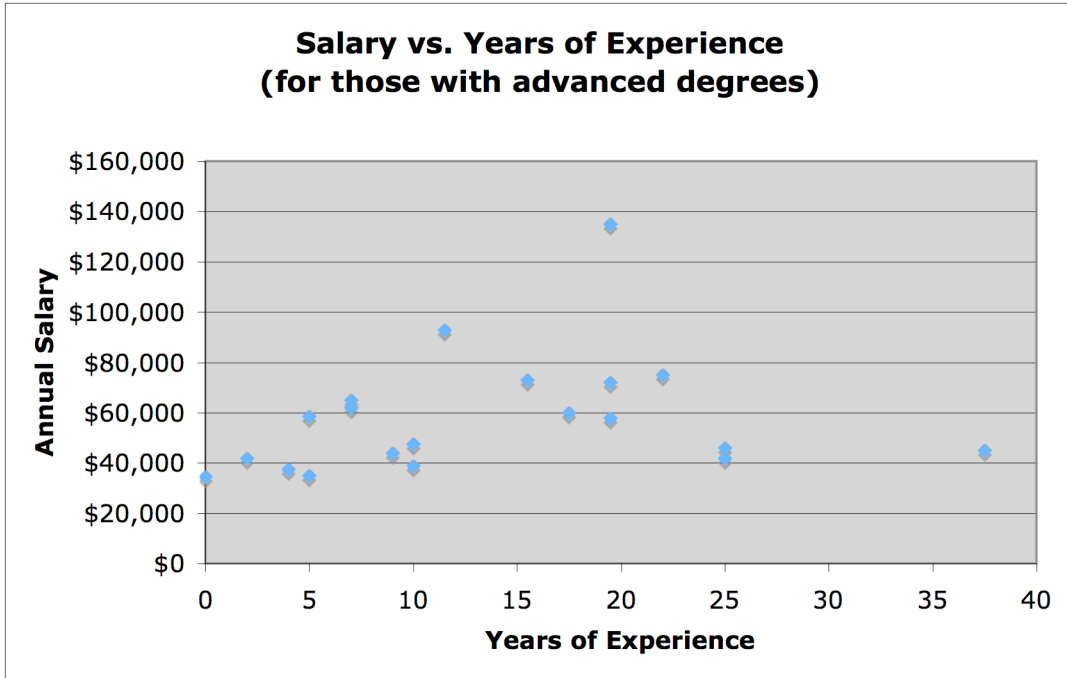
The data for all Coordinators is as follows.



This data was then broken down by degree and by years of experience.

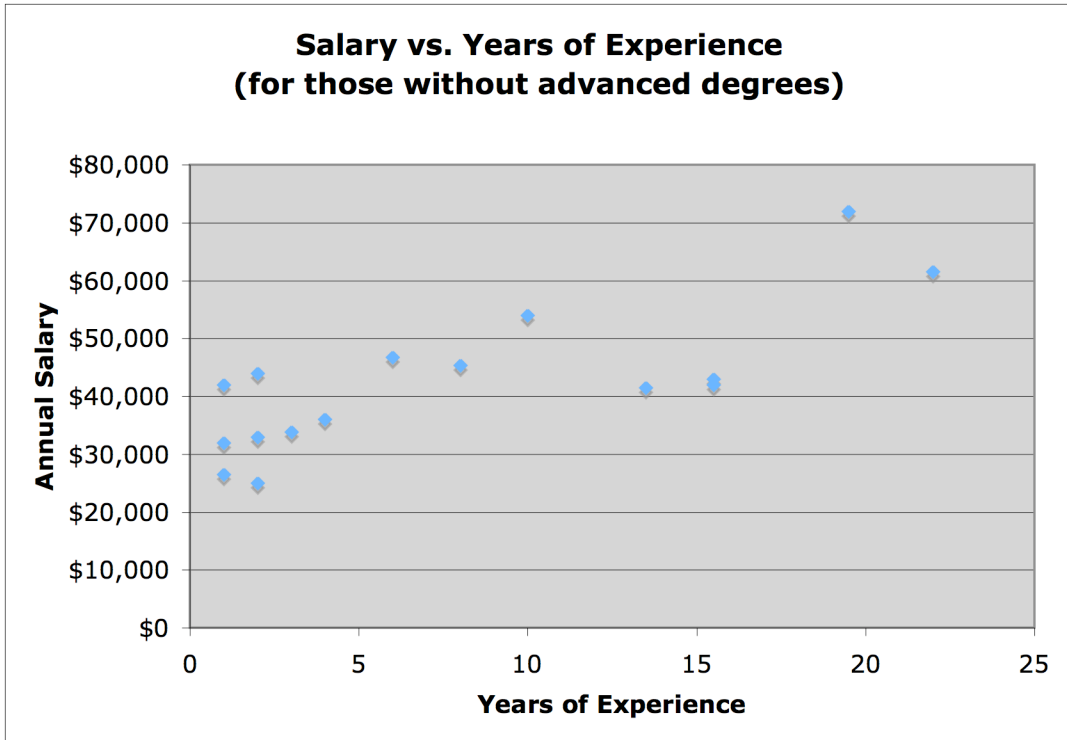
### With Advanced Degrees (MS, MBA, JD, PhD):

| Years of Experience | # Individuals | Average Salary | Standard Deviation |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 0-5                 | 5             | \$41,500       | \$8,900            |
| 6-10                | 5             | \$51,500       | \$10,200           |
| 11-20               | 6             | \$81,800       | \$26,400           |
| 20+                 | 4             | \$52,000       | \$13,400           |



**Without Advanced Degrees:**

| Years of Experience | # Individuals | Average Salary | Standard Deviation |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 0-5                 | 8             | \$34,000       | \$6,200            |
| 6-10                | 3             | \$48,700       | \$3,800            |
| 11+                 | 5             | \$52,000       | \$12,500           |



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## **Campus Sustainability in Higher Education:**

A survey of 28 leading institutions with recommendations for next steps at Cornell University

### ***Peer Campus Sustainability Survey Final Report May 2005***

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Campus Sustainability Intern  
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#### **Abstract**

This report summarizes a survey of campus sustainability progress at 28 peer institutions. The survey was conducted during the Summer of 2004 with three goals: 1) compare environmental sustainability programs; 2) recommend improvements at Cornell; 3) and establish connections between active individuals and institutions.

Results are presented in quantitative, qualitative, and case study formats. Campus sustainability progress at peer institutions is impressive, and there is a very active network of sustainability professionals. Many schools are clearly demonstrating their commitment to sustainability goals, with public policies, full-time staff, high level councils, substantial funding, and various best management practices. The case study institutions, Colorado University at Boulder, Duke University, Harvard University, University of Michigan, and University of Vermont, have emerged as strong leaders in the field, with very effective campus sustainability programs.

Cornell University has achieved many campus sustainability milestones and has implemented many of the common best practices. In order to emerge as a unique leader, however, Cornell should adopt more of the most innovative and serious commitments, particularly in terms of permanent staffing for sustainability.

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## Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the help of all the respondents who took the time to answer the survey. Additionally, Professor Steven Wolf assisted with analysis and presentation, and Masters Candidate Dean Koyanagi developed several different graphical analyses. Finally, many thanks to Vice President Hal Craft, who commissioned this study, and to Bert Bland, Director of Environmental Compliance at Cornell.

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## OVERVIEW

### Background and Goals

Campus sustainability is an important movement at local, national, and global scales. Recognizing their unique leadership roles, institutions of higher learning have implemented campus sustainability initiatives with varying success. As efforts to achieve a more sustainable campus at Cornell continue, it is an important time to examine what is and has been happening at peer institutions.

The goals of this survey were to:

- **Compare** environmental sustainability programs at peer institutions.
- **Recommend** improvements at Cornell.
- **Establish connections** between active individuals and institutions.

### Notes on methods

- 33 schools were surveyed, including Ivy League, Ivy Peers, and other institutions recognized as leaders in campus sustainability and environmental responsibility ([Appendix A](#)).
- I received 24 complete responses between June and August 2004.
- The survey was designed for campus sustainability professionals to complete in less than 30 minutes.
- The original survey included 40 questions ([Appendix B](#)).
- This was an initial, simplistic survey, and the methods could be improved to streamline survey format, eliminate redundancy, and clarify ambiguities.
- Responses were edited and re-numbered for summary and analysis.
- Although campus sustainability can be defined broadly as *institutions modeling the thinking, behaviors, and operations necessary for long-term survival*, most questions focused on environmental sustainability and campus operations.

### Results and discussion

Survey results and discussion are organized into three sections:

1. Sustainability milestones analysis (quantitative comparison presented in a table below).
2. Qualitative summary of questions related to priorities, strategies, results, and challenges.
3. Case study analysis of 5 leaders: CU-Boulder, Duke, Harvard, U-Michigan, U-Vermont.

### Conclusion

There is exciting progress at many institutions and a very active network of sustainability professionals. 24 out of 28 of respondents have hired or are in the process of hiring full-time coordinators. Energy conservation is the most widespread strategy, saving hundreds of millions of dollars annually nationwide. Despite the success of campus sustainability initiatives, many challenges remain. The most common challenges are raising campus awareness, cultural change, funding, and genuine institutional commitment.

During these times of dire sustainability challenges on a global scale, universities and colleges are uniquely positioned to lead society toward a more sustainable future. There are many programs that could be adapted to the Cornell campus, particularly in the case study analysis. Cornell has yet to adopt some of these serious commitments, and in so doing could establish itself as leader in campus and global sustainability.

## RESULTS 1: Sustainability Milestones Analysis (Figure 1)

This table was derived from a survey of full-time staff at 33 leading institutions. 28 responded to this section and are listed here.





For more information, contact: Garrett Meigs (gwm5@cornell.edu)

The table indicates the campus sustainability progress of each school, and it also shows Cornell's potential to be a unique leader.

Case study institutions are the first 5 displayed after Cornell, and the rest follow in alphabetical order.

|   | Cornell | Colorado U | Duke | Harvard | U-Michigan | U-Vermont | Bowdoin | Brown | Clarkson | Columbia | Dartmouth | Ithaca College | Michigan State | Middlebury | MIT | Princeton | Rutgers | Stanford | Tufts | U-British Columbia | U-Buffalo | U-Chicago | U-Connecticut | U-North Carolina | U-New Hampshire | U-Oregon | U-Pennsylvania | U-Wisconsin | Yale |
|---|---------|------------|------|---------|------------|-----------|---------|-------|----------|----------|-----------|----------------|----------------|------------|-----|-----------|---------|----------|-------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|----------|----------------|-------------|------|
| 1. Office of Sustainability                 |         |            |      |         |            |           |         |       |          |          |           |                |                |            |     |           |         |          |       |                    |           |           |               |                  |                 |          |                |             |      |
| 2. Professional coordinator(s)              |         |            |      |         |            |           |         |       |          |          |           |                |                |            |     |           |         |          |       |                    |           |           |               |                  |                 |          |                |             |      |
| 3. Institutional Authority                  |         |            |      |         |            |           |         | ?     |          |          | ?         |                |                |            |     | ?         |         | ?        |       |                    | ?         |           |               |                  | ?               |          |                | ?           | ?    |
| 4. Environmental Advisory Council           |         |            |      |         |            |           |         |       |          |          |           |                |                |            |     |           |         |          |       |                    |           |           |               |                  |                 |          |                |             |      |
| 5. Sustainability faculty hiring initiative |         |            |      |         |            | ?         |         |       |          |          | ?         |                |                |            |     |           |         |          |       |                    |           |           |               | ?                |                 |          |                |             |      |
| 6. Environmental degree/certificate         |         |            |      |         |            |           |         |       |          |          |           |                |                |            |     |           |         |          |       |                    |           |           |               |                  |                 |          |                |             |      |
| 7. Sustainable business center              |         |            |      |         |            |           |         |       |          |          |           |                |                |            |     |           |         |          |       |                    | ?         |           |               |                  |                 |          |                |             | ?    |
| 8. LEED building(s)                         |         |            |      |         |            |           |         |       | ?        |          | ?         |                | ?              |            |     |           |         |          |       | ?                  | ?         | ?         |               |                  |                 |          |                |             |      |
| 9. Green purchasing                         |         |            |      |         |            |           |         |       |          |          |           |                |                |            |     |           |         |          |       |                    |           |           |               |                  |                 |          |                |             |      |
| 10. Energy conservation initiative          |         |            |      |         |            |           |         |       |          |          |           |                |                |            |     |           |         |          |       |                    |           |           |               |                  |                 |          |                |             |      |
| 11. Green dining initiative (food service)  |         |            |      |         |            |           |         |       |          |          |           |                |                |            |     |           |         |          |       |                    |           |           |               |                  |                 |          |                |             |      |
| 12. Composting                              |         |            |      |         |            |           |         |       |          |          |           |                |                |            |     |           |         |          |       |                    |           |           |               |                  |                 |          |                |             |      |
| 13. Successful Recycling                    |         |            |      |         |            |           |         |       |          |          |           |                |                |            |     |           |         |          |       |                    |           |           |               |                  |                 |          |                |             |      |

### LEGEND

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
|  | = Yes                             |
|  | = Pending or limited in scope     |
|  | = No                              |
|  | = Respondent unsure, or no answer |

### DEFINITIONS

1. Formal office
2. Full-time staff
- 3-6. Respondent defined
7. Academic center for sustainable business/enterprise
8. Certified US Green Building Council LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)
- 9-13. Respondent defined

## **RESULTS 2: Qualitative summary of questions related to priorities, strategies, results, and challenges**

For each question, common trends and unique initiatives are listed.

- Trends: 5 or more respondents
- Unique: 2 or fewer respondents, and innovative

Complete list of responses is available from author.

Although 28 institutions responded to the survey, respondents did not answer all questions. The number responding to each question is listed in parentheses.

### **1. What are the environmental priorities at your institution? (n = 19)**

*Trends:*

-Energy conservation (15), recycling (11), green purchasing (8), green building (7), water conservation (5).  
-Note: Although energy conservation was listed explicitly in 15/19 responses, it was a universal theme for all respondents (19/19).

*Unique:*

-Research and research reputation, sustainable transportation, changing campus culture/awareness, sustainability indicators, certified wood, water quality, economic viability, open decision-making, alternative fuels, stewardship of local ecosystems.

### **2. What environmental strategies/tools/resources have been the most successful on your campus? (n = 19)**

*Trends:*

-Full-time staff position(s) (10), environmental advisory council (5), student leadership (5).

*Unique:*

-Cost savings, alumni, conferences/networking, top-down leadership, campus initiative, master plan, combining diverse efforts, public recognition, staff training.

### **3. What are your institution's most significant environmental results/biggest successes? (n = 24)**

*Trends:*

-Energy conservation/greenhouse gas reduction (18), recycling (11), green building (7), green purchasing (7), water conservation (6), transportation (5).

*Unique:*

-Dorm eco-rep program, local ecosystems, new faculty, campus engagement/awareness, green-certified wood products, sustainability report, new courses, active alumni, environmental consulting, composting, green chemistry.

#### **4. What are your institution's most significant environmental challenges? (n = 18)**

*Trends:*

-Awareness/behavior change (9), no top-down support/clout (7), organizational learning (7), financial (5).

*Unique:*

-Student unreliability, urban location, scale and pace of campus growth, creating lasting changes, achieving genuine sustainability.

#### **5. How is environmental sustainability coordinated at your institution? (n = 12)**

*Trends:*

-Sustainability office (9), environmental advisory council (5).

Note: Institutions with **both** a sustainability office and environmental advisory council (4).

*Unique:*

-Academic center (2).

#### **6. How much money have environmental sustainability programs saved at your institution? (n = 11)**

*Columbia:* \$3.4 million adjusted for inflation.

*CU-Boulder:* \$5 million annually.

*Harvard:* Over \$1 million annually.

*Michigan State:* Between \$750,000 - \$1,000,000.

*Tufts:* Easily \$1 million and most likely greater.

*U-British Columbia:* ~ \$2,575,000 annually (Canadian).

*U-Buffalo:* Energy conservation alone: \$50-100 million.

*U-Michigan:* \$10 million dollars annually (\$9 million dollars annually from energy reduction).

*U-Oregon:* Over \$1 million.

*U-Pennsylvania:* Millions of dollars in energy.

*U-Wisconsin:* \$1.5 million revenue generated by recycling.

**7. Are you familiar with Cornell University as an environmental leader? (n = 23)**

*Yes: 8*

*No: 10*

*Limited: 5*

**8. If so, which Cornell initiatives/programs are you familiar with? (n = 13)**

*Trends:*

-Composting (5).

*Unique:*

-Academics (2), transportation (2), recycling (2), green dining (2).

**9. Why should Cornell (or any institution) have an Office of Sustainability? (n = 12)**

*Bowdoin:* The initiatives and programs need someone to launch and coordinate them. The coordinator also acts as a go between for the student activists and the facilities staff and administration.

*Dartmouth:* Sustainability is one of the most important challenges facing higher education—creating sustainable institutions and educating students and the public about issues of sustainability.

*Harvard:* It's essential for providing the human resources needed to do anything effective.

*Middlebury:* Marketing environmental leadership.

*MIT:* These initiatives go beyond compliance but are vitally important to an institution's character, commitment, and the example they make to the students they teach.

*Michigan State:* Breaks down the silos between disciplines and colleges, between academic and operations, between students, and all of the above.

*U-British Columbia:* To coordinate departments' efforts and push ahead more innovative sustainability initiatives.

*U-Connecticut:* In order to educate the campus about the benefits of conserving for a better future and the advantages of living sustainable lifestyle.

*U-Michigan:* Having at least one full-time employee coordinating environmental activities is important.

*U-North Carolina:* Save money, reduce environmental impact, improve the health and productivity of the campus community, model best practices for tomorrow's leaders, reduce potential future liability.

*U-Pennsylvania:* Coordinate efforts across campus, save money, improve local and global environment.

*U-Vermont:* To spearhead sound environmental practices to help sustain the institution over time.

## 10. What role should universities play in the current global environmental crisis, and why? (n = 22)

*Trends:*

-Leadership/demonstration (15), education (11).

*Unique:*

-See responses below.

*Bowdoin:* They should play a big role – if we’re not educating the future business/government/non-profit/education leaders of the future about the importance of sustainable development – who will??

*Clarkson:* Education, providing a role model for our students (and future leaders) that sustainability is indeed both important and doable, even providing cost savings. Significant impacts are possible.

*Columbia:* Provide leadership.

*CU-Boulder:* from Blueprint for a Green Campus: “It is not enough to comply with environmental regulations...a forward-looking commitment to dramatically reducing environmental impacts in a range of areas will payoff in the long-run, both for the individual institution and for society as a whole...we propose a vision of a growing, dynamic campus which steps lightly upon the earth and satisfies additional demands for energy, transportation, and resources through increased efficiency rather than increased consumption.”

*Dartmouth:* Modeling sustainable behavior, conducting sustainability research, educating students and the public about sustainability issues.

*Harvard:* They have a profound responsibility to be leaders in the development and implementation of viable and environmentally-sustainable institutional practices.

*Ithaca:* Graduating ecologically literate leaders for today and tomorrow. The survival of future generations of humans depends on it.

*MIT:* Universities are places of high ideals and leadership. They should lead to the extent they can by example.

*Michigan State:* They should be modeling and doing demonstration projects that attempt to lower our impacts and showing how environmental sustainability is deeply linked to the social and economic spheres.

*Princeton:* Get accurate information about their environmental research out to the general public in a way that can be understood. Prepare the next generation of leaders so that they have a solid foundation in environmental science and policy.

*Stanford:* A beacon of hope. Universities are institutions of learning, and have the human, financial and natural resources to develop new resource management systems as a model to commercial and industrial society.

*Tufts:* Leading role, no question. We educate tomorrow’s leaders and as such we have a responsibility to make sure they are prepared for the role they will play.

*U-British Columbia:* Universities have always existed to nurture healthy communities and economies through education. But today, more than ever before, universities are realizing that they also need to set positive social, environmental, and economic examples for their societies to follow.

*U-Buffalo:* Leaders in seeking solutions. Leaders in setting an example. Because no campus should be in business without a comprehensive commitment to environmental sustainability and the future of this threatened planet.

*U-Chicago:* Universities have two major roles to play in our current environmental crisis. First, we need to educate our students about the environment and about what they can do to help deal with environmental problems. Second, every University should have environmental concern as a core value and serve as a role model for sustainable policies and behavior. Universities are uniquely positioned to be models for such behavior, both for their own students and for the entire world. Environmentalism should be a core value for all important institutions.

*U-Connecticut:* Education of sustainability and conservation for the long-term. Realizing the value of an informed citizenship as an integral part of a successful life-cycle, universities should act to provide their students with the knowledge and ability to recognize sustainable practices and conservation methods.

*U-Michigan:* They should be leaders, setting examples and initiating paradigms for others to follow.

*U-North Carolina:* Leadership role.

*U-Oregon:* Serve as consultants and hands on projects to help alleviate world environmental issues. Institutes of Higher Learning exist to teach students how to be good citizens. Environmental Stewardship is an essential component of higher education's mission.

*U-Pennsylvania:* Leadership role.

*U-Vermont:* Education.

*U-Wisconsin:* Credible and authentic institutions of higher learning must demonstrate a commitment to sane environmental operations (not to mention teaching and research). We have a responsibility to prepare students for their roles as ecologically literate citizens—teaching and research are not enough. Students need to see that the principles taught at the lectern are modeled in the every day operation of the campus.



## 11. What institutions do you look to as leaders in the environmental field? (n = 15)

Important factors for leading institutions:

- strength of program
- whether the program is coordinated by full-time staff
- reputation of institution
- marketing/publicity

\* Indicates number of times mentioned greater than 1

\*\*\*\*\*Harvard University  
\*\*\*\*\*University of Vermont  
\*\*\*\*\*Middlebury College  
\*\*\*\*\*Tufts University  
\*\*\*\*University of British Columbia  
\*\*\*\*Brown University  
\*\*\*Michigan State University  
\*\*\*Oberlin College  
\*\*\*Penn State University  
\*\*\*University of New Hampshire  
\*\*\*University of North Carolina  
\*\*Colorado University-Boulder  
\*\*Duke University  
\*Dartmouth College  
\*Emory  
\*University of California System  
\*University of Florida  
\*University of Michigan  
\*University of Oregon  
\*Yale University  
Bates College  
Bowdoin College  
University of Buffalo  
Carnegie Mellon University  
University of Cincinnati  
Colby College  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
University of Maine  
Northland College  
Princeton University  
Rutgers University  
University of South Carolina System  
Stanford University

## RESULTS 3: Case Study Analysis

### Introduction

To benchmark Cornell's progress with other leading institutions, I analyzed five peers that have demonstrated remarkable success in their respective campus sustainability programs. After reviewing the achievements and responses of all 28 survey respondents, I chose Colorado University at Boulder, Duke University, Harvard University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Vermont. Each of these institutions presents an excellent comparison to Cornell. Each is relatively large, with at least 10,000 students and a large research program. Three are public; two private. Each has demonstrated innovative strategies in addressing their unique campus settings, and all five are widely recognized for their sustainability leadership.

### Format of this section

I present a brief summary of each program before highlighting best practices applicable to the Cornell Sustainable Campus Initiative. The brief summaries include:

- *Respondent Contact Information*
- *Unique Factor*
- *Origin and Description of Program*
- *Best Strategies and Achievements*
- *Application to Cornell Sustainable Campus Initiative*
- *Supplemental Resources*

Institutions are presented in alphabetical order. A table of Campus Sustainability Milestones follows.

### Emergent Themes

Although each campus sustainability program is a product of its unique campus setting, there are important common themes. Each has full-time, permanent coordinating staff, an environmental advisory council, some degree of institutional clout, and performs very well in the Sustainability Milestones Analysis ([Figure 2](#), p. 16).

Each campus program has been empowered by substantial institutional support. Four out of five are funded directly by the upper administration (either the Office of the President, the Provost, the Vice President of Finance/Administration, or some combination of the above).

Each program is well-known and respected on campus, and each has achieved much campus awareness of sustainability issues and goals. Each program works effectively with diverse partners and stakeholders, despite the challenge of decentralization. Each program has achieved substantial cost savings well beyond the cost of establishing and funding the program.

### Recommendations

Each case study includes concise recommendations based on the strategies most applicable to Cornell. In addition to innovative strategies unique to each campus, some strategies are successful at multiple institutions:

- ***Multiple, permanent staff*** dedicated to sustainability located in all major operational departments (CU-Boulder and Michigan).
- Upper level Advisory ***Council with co-chairs*** (academic and facilities) and full-time coordinating staff (Harvard and UVM).
- ***Initial funding*** provided by a combination of facilities and academics (Duke, Harvard, UVM).
- ***Strong public policy statements*** of sustainability goals (CU-Boulder, Duke, Harvard).

It is clear that Cornell should continue to benchmark campus progress with these and other leading institutions.

## Colorado University at Boulder (Abbreviated “Boulder”)

### *Respondent Contact Information*

Will Toor

Former Director, University of Colorado Environmental Center

Former Mayor of Boulder

303-492-8308

[ecenter@colorado.edu](mailto:ecenter@colorado.edu)

### *Unique Factor*

Boulder’s most successful initiatives have been student-driven, funded largely by student fees and widely supported by the student body. In the most recent (2003) student survey, 86% of respondents (n = 300) stated that it is very or somewhat important that Boulder be a leader in campus environmental causes.

(more survey results available online: [http://ecenter.colorado.edu/publications/env\\_survey/index.html](http://ecenter.colorado.edu/publications/env_survey/index.html))

### *Origin and Description of Program*

The Environmental Center coordinates the Blueprint for a Green Campus program, where Boulder’s most proactive initiatives have originated. The Environmental Center was established in 1970 by students who organized the first Earth Day at Boulder and has grown to be the largest student run environmental center in the country. A permanent staff of five is funded primarily by student fees, and they support the work of the student board, volunteers, employees, and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. There are also 50 part-time student employees. The base operating budget is \$370,000.

The Center assists the educational mission of the University, gives students applied experience in interdisciplinary problem solving, assesses the environmental performance of the university, works with other parts of campus to improve environmental performance, and provides direct services to the University community, including the Boulder Recycling program, the student bus pass program, and the management of the Windsource purchase. The Center staff interacts with many stakeholders across campus, including academic programs in environmental studies, business, and engineering.

There is also a campus environmental council which reports to the vice chancellors and serves as a formal coordination structure. A formal Environmental Policy was adopted in 2003.

### *Best Strategies and Achievements*

- Approximately \$5 million annual **savings**.
- Over the past 8 years, every major operational department (Facilities Management, Housing, Parking and Transit Services) has created **new staff positions** dedicated to “greening” their operations.
- Boulder students were the first in the country to vote in a fee increase for **green energy**—100% for all student facilities.
- A **green building policy** for academic construction funded by student fees, requiring that each new building be certified as meeting the LEED Silver standard, be designed to meet LEED Gold, and that 100 percent of the electricity used in these buildings come from renewable sources.
- After 20 years of increasing energy use, Boulder has turned the corner, with three years in a row of **declining energy use**.
- The **transportation** system has made cars the alternative: only about 1 in 10 students drives to campus.

### *Application to Cornell Sustainable Campus Initiative*

According to the respondent, Boulder’s two most successful approaches have been: 1) Student leadership and fees to push the envelope on new programs and policies and 2) Careful documentation of cost savings to gain top-down support. Many of Cornell’s initiatives have been student driven but have not yielded the same far-

reaching results as Boulder. By focusing on student fees and cost-savings, Cornell could better institutionalize current and proposed initiatives.

In addition, Cornell should consider creating new staff positions dedicated to “greening” within all operational units, as Boulder has done in the past eight years in every major operational department.

#### *Supplemental Resources*

Environmental Center: <http://www.colorado.edu/ecenter/>

Environmental Council: <http://ehs.colorado.edu/ems/EnvirCouncil.htm>

Environmental Council Charge: <http://ehs.colorado.edu/ems/files/charge.pdf>

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## **Duke University**

### *Respondent Contact Information*

Sam Hummel

Environmental Sustainability Coordinator

Office of the Executive Vice-President

[sdh2@duke.edu](mailto:sdh2@duke.edu)

919-475-8136

### *Unique Factor*

Duke University land holdings include 8,000 acres of forest, which are used for research in the Nicholas School of the Environment and are certified for sustainable management.

### *Origin and Description of Program*

Campus sustainability efforts at Duke have been institutionalized for several years with the Environmental Management Advisory Committee and Duke University Greening Initiative, a primarily graduate student organization. The Greening Initiative has offered internships for several years, and one of the interns began developing a campus-wide sustainability program. This intern position evolved into a full-time environmental sustainability coordinator, located in the office of the Executive Vice President.

On March 1, 2005, the Duke President and other senior officials signed the Duke University Environmental Policy, which commits the university to leadership in three areas:

- environmental research and education.
- environmentally responsible operations.
- environmental stewardship in the community.

### *Best Strategies and Achievements*

- **All new construction** and renovations will be **LEED certified**, and every reasonable effort will be made to achieve silver or higher ratings. This commitment is particularly important because Duke just finished a \$2.6 billion capital campaign.
- Duke University **Environmental Policy** (described above).
- Reduction of energy use by 9 percent during a period in which floor space increased 25 percent.
- **Renewable energy** investment and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- New Environmental Sustainability **Website** (below).
- Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative **certification of Duke Forest**.
- Developed and implemented comprehensive **environmentally preferable purchasing guidelines**.
- High profile initiatives and high level of interdisciplinary interaction regarding sustainability.

### *Application to Cornell Sustainable Campus Initiative*

Like Cornell's current situation, campus sustainability efforts at Duke were largely decentralized and low profile until the Executive Vice President established the full-time environmental sustainability coordinator position.

In addition to replicating Duke's staffing solution, Cornell should consider making formal policy commitments to campus sustainability goals, including green building standards (LEED).

Finally, Duke's Master Plan should benefit Cornell planners as they begin their own effort, and Cornell's research forest should consider sustainable management certification.

### *Supplemental Resources*

Environmental Sustainability at Duke: <http://www.duke.edu/sustainability/>

Duke University Greening Initiative: <http://www.duke.edu/greening/>

Duke University Master Plan: <http://www.architect.duke.edu/masterplan/>

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## **Harvard University**

### *Respondent Contact Information*

Leith Sharp

Director, Harvard Green Campus Initiative

[leith\\_sharp@harvard.edu](mailto:leith_sharp@harvard.edu)

617-496-0922

### *Unique Factor*

Harvard University is very influential, so sustainability efforts on campus yield far-reaching results. In addition, Harvard has a very competitive culture, which can be harnessed as a motivating force for engaging people in sustainability programs across the highly decentralized campus.

### *Origin and Description of Program*

The Harvard Green Campus Initiative (HGCI) and HGCI Director's position were established in the Spring of 2000 with a 12 month grant from the Office of the Provost. The core mission of the HGCI is to:

- Institutionalize a commitment to cost effective, environmental impact reduction in association with Harvard's campus operations.
- Utilize the campus as a living laboratory for teaching and research in support of environmental sustainability.
- Establish a learning organization capacity to support continuous improvement in the economic, social and environmental well being of the campus.

The organization includes co-chairs (Senior Associate Vice President of Administration and a tenured faculty member), the HGCI Director, the HGCI Executive Committee, and the Harvard Green Campus Interfaculty Advisory committee. There are also 12 staff (8 full-time and 4 half-time) and 20 part-time student employees associated with the HGCI. The HGCI operating budget is approximately \$710,000. The HGCI generates approximately 80 percent of its budget with "fee for service partnerships" and grants (less than 3 percent), and the rest comes from the Office of the President and Provost.

### *Best Strategies and Achievements*

- New **campus sustainability principles** approved by President.
- Over \$1 million annual **savings**.
- Green Campus Loan Fund, Renewable Energy Fund, Green Building Loan Fund, REP Fund

- High levels of **engagement**, interaction, and learning across Harvard.
- **Campus surveys**: According to a recent student survey, over 90 percent want Harvard to address campus sustainability, and over 70 percent would be willing to pay extra for renewable energy.
- Spring 2005 **sustainability course** on institutional change.
- **Resource Efficiency Program (REP)** in residence halls, saving over \$200,000 annually and raising awareness across campus.
- Campus wide **Greenhouse Gas Inventory** and substantial purchase of renewable energy (7%).
- **Green buildings** (multiple LEED projects) and high performance building service
- **Biodiesel** bus fleet
- Student summer **internship program**
- **Best Practices Exchange**, highlighting environmental procurement, renewable energy, energy and water conservation, recycling and green building design, transportation, and behavioral change.

#### *Application to Cornell Sustainable Campus Initiative*

The HGCI demonstrates the necessity of a full-time, permanent staff for fostering campus-wide engagement and success at a decentralized, prestigious institution of higher learning. The Harvard model is one possible structure of collaboration that could be implemented at Cornell, both in terms of the staffing and advisory board and initial funding from the Office of the Provost. The various green loan funds, best practices exchange, and campus sustainability principles would also be effective at Cornell.

#### *Supplemental Resources*

Harvard Green Campus Initiative: [www.greencampus.harvard.edu](http://www.greencampus.harvard.edu)

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## **University of Michigan**

#### *Respondent Contact Information*

Andrew Berki  
 Environmental Stewardship Coordinator  
 Department of Occupational Safety and Environmental Health  
 734-647-3120  
[aberki@umich.edu](mailto:aberki@umich.edu)

#### *Unique Factor*

The University of Michigan is the largest institution surveyed, with an enrollment of 37,000, a staff of over 31,000, over 27,000 million square feet of building infrastructure, and the largest annual research expenditure of any university in the country.

#### *Origin and Description of Program*

Consistent with national trends and high-level support at Michigan, a pollution prevention specialist position was created in 1995, which eventually evolved into the Environmental Stewardship Coordinator position in 2001. The coordinator is located in and funded through the Department of Occupational Safety and Environmental Health under the Vice President for Facilities and Operations. The coordinator has some authority, but most authoritative decisions are made by the Vice President of Facilities and Operations, who reports directly to the Chief Financial Officer. There is also an environmental advisory committee to the President. In terms of the academic program, the coordinator works closely with graduate students and affiliated academic centers.

Though there are only two full-time staff members *coordinating* environmental stewardship, there are many other environmentally-driven staff positions strategically located throughout the university, such as a full-time

Recycling Coordinator, a full-time Energy Reduction Coordinator, and a full-time Housing Sustainability Coordinator. All of these positions also have staff reporting to them.

#### *Best Strategies and Achievements*

- \$10 million annual **savings** (\$9 million annual savings from energy reduction).
- Largest **alternative fuel** fleet in the State of Michigan (400 vehicles running on **ethanol**, all diesel busses and small vehicles running on ultra-low sulfur **biodiesel** fuel, six pure **electric** vehicles).
- Extremely successful recycling, pollution prevention, and waste minimization programs.
- Campus-wide recycling, composting, green building design, green purchasing initiatives.
- Many **national awards** for environmental accomplishments.
- Very interactive and well-known on and off campus.

#### *Application to Cornell Sustainable Campus Initiative*

There are many parallels between the Cornell and Michigan campus settings, particularly in terms of size, breadth, and decentralization. The Michigan program has been very successful in utilizing a decentralized structure, with full-time “sustainability coordinator” positions throughout the institution. Cornell has several staff in similar roles, such as energy management and recycling, but other positions should be created to champion specific initiatives in green purchasing, campus life sustainability, and community outreach. In addition, the Michigan program shows the vital importance of establishing a full-time position to support and coordinate ongoing efforts.

#### *Supplemental Resources*

Environmental Stewardship Homepage: <http://www.umich.edu/~urel/stewardship>

Center for Sustainable Systems Academic Program: <http://css.snre.umich.edu/>

Erb Institute for Global Sustainable Enterprise: <http://www.erb.umich.edu/>

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## **University of Vermont** (Abbreviated “UVM”)

#### *Respondent Contact Information*

Ralph Stuart

Environmental Council Co-chair

Environmental Safety Manager

[rstuart@uvm.edu](mailto:rstuart@uvm.edu)

802-656-5403

#### *Unique Factor*

In its strategic plan, the University of Vermont aspires to become the leading “environmental university.” According to the respondent, the primary driver of this environmental aspiration and awareness is UVM’s physical and cultural setting in Vermont.

#### *Origin and Description of Program*

Environmental interest within the UVM community has been driven historically by grassroots efforts, and this interest was institutionalized within the UVM Environmental Council in 1996. The Environmental Council has a faculty co-chair, staff co-chair, and full-time coordinator, reports to the Vice President for Finance and Administration, and is the primary tool for developing operational opportunities around sustainability. Academic opportunities are developed through a variety of colleges and departments.

The Environmental Council Coordinator position began as a graduate student research position, and was initially co-funded by the Office of the Provost and the Vice President for Finance and Administration. After



three years, the position became full-time and was entirely funded through Finance and Administration. The coordinator also oversees part-time staff support and graduate and work study student employees.

*Best Strategies and Achievements*

- National leader in **Sustainability Indicators** for Higher Education.
- Excellent environmental sustainability indicators report: **Tracking UVM**.
- Successful **small grants program** awarding grants up to \$1,500, totaling \$10,000, for campus greening projects involving faculty and students.
- Green and local **purchasing**.
- Committed informally to **LEED certification** for all new buildings.
- Significant recycling and energy conservation success.
- Campus community effectively engaged and coordinated through the Environmental Council.

*Application to Cornell Sustainable Campus Initiative*

The Environmental Council model, with faculty and staff co-chairs and a full-time coordinator, is a successful program that could work effectively at Cornell. Specifically, a similar Cornell program could be initially co-funded by the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Administration and CFO.

Additionally, UVM is the only other land grant institution selected for case study analysis. Effective outreach is a key component of UVM’s sustainability success, and there are important opportunities for the two institutions to share strategies for successful land grant programs in sustainability.

*Supplemental Resources*

UVM Environmental Council Homepage: <http://www.uvm.edu/greening>

UVM Environmental Report Card: <http://www.uvm.edu/greening/trackinguvm.html>

**Figure 2: Sustainability Milestones Analysis for Case Studies**

|   | Cornell | Colorado U | Duke | Harvard | U-Michigan | U-Vermont |
|---|---------|------------|------|---------|------------|-----------|
| 1. Office of Sustainability                 |         |            |      |         |            |           |
| 2. Professional coordinator(s)              |         |            |      |         |            |           |
| 3. Institutional Authority                  |         |            |      |         |            |           |
| 4. Environmental Advisory Council           |         |            |      |         |            |           |
| 5. Sustainability faculty hiring initiative |         |            |      |         |            | ?         |
| 6. Environmental degree/certificate         |         |            |      |         |            |           |
| 7. Sustainable business center              |         |            |      |         |            |           |
| 8. LEED building(s)                         |         |            |      |         |            |           |
| 9. Green purchasing                         |         |            |      |         |            |           |
| 10. Energy conservation initiative          |         |            |      |         |            |           |
| 11. Green dining initiative (food service)  |         |            |      |         |            |           |
| 12. Composting                              |         |            |      |         |            |           |
| 13. Successful Recycling                    |         |            |      |         |            |           |

**LEGEND**

■ = Yes

■ = Pending or limited in scope

□ = No

□ = Respondent unsure, or no answer

**DEFINITIONS**

1. Formal office

2. Full-time staff

3-6. Respondent defined

7. Academic center for sustainable business/enterprise

8. Certified US Green Building Council LEED

9-13. Respondent defined



## **APPENDIX A: CU Peer Survey List**

Institutions surveyed for environmental sustainability programs. Surveys conducted by email with full-time staff. (n = 33)

Bowdoin College  
Brown University  
Clarkson University  
Colorado University-Boulder  
Columbia University  
Connecticut College  
Dartmouth College  
Duke University  
Harvard University  
Ithaca College  
Michigan State University  
Middlebury College  
MIT  
Oberlin College  
Pennsylvania State University  
Princeton University  
Rutgers University  
Stanford University  
Tufts University  
Tulane University  
U-British Columbia  
U-Buffalo (SUNY)  
U-Chicago  
U-Connecticut  
U-Georgia  
U-Michigan  
U-North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
U-New Hampshire  
U-Oregon  
U-Pennsylvania  
U-Vermont  
U-Wisconsin-Madison  
Yale University

## APPENDIX B: The Survey

Below is the survey sent to peer institutions via email during Summer 2004. I used two slightly different surveys, so the *(-or-)* indicates questions that differed between the two surveys. Finally, this is a revised version of the original surveys, streamlined for formatting in this report.

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### Survey for peer institution green programs

Summer 2004

#### **Introduction**

*Recognizing their unique role as environmental leaders, universities and colleges have implemented environmental initiatives with varying degrees of success. As Cornell considers environmental priorities and initiatives for the next academic year, it is an important time to examine what is and has been happening at peer institutions.*

*This survey aims to compare environmental programs at other institutions, to recommend improvements at Cornell, and to establish a connection between institutions and individuals working for positive change. I've shortened it by eliminating several questions from the previous survey. It consists of six short sections:*

- A. General campus environmental information*
- B. Policy, priorities, and resources*
- C. Green results*
- D. Environmental/Sustainability office/initiative structure*
- E. Program relationship with administration*
- F. Cornell going green*

*It is my hope that you will receive this survey and have time to run through the questions. The questions are pretty straight forward and should only take about 20 minutes if you plow through it. The list of schools surveyed is included as an appendix. I'll gladly share the results of this survey upon request.*

*Thanks for your time,  
Garrett Meigs  
Campus Sustainability Intern, Cornell University*

---

#### **A. General information about your campus environment**

- 1a. How many students attend your institution?
- 1b. What proportion are environmentally aware? (*what proportion (%)*, or using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is apathetic/inactive, 3 is moderately aware, 5 is very aware/active)
  
- 2a. How many faculty work at your institution?
- 2b. What proportion are environmentally aware? (*what proportion (%)*, or using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is apathetic/inactive, 3 is moderately aware, 5 is very aware/active)
  
- 3a. How many staff work at your institution?
- 3b. What proportion are environmentally aware? (*what proportion (%)*, or using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is apathetic/inactive, 3 is moderately aware, 5 is very aware/active)
  
- 4. What are (up to three) unique factors to keep in mind when considering your institution?

## ***B. Policy, priorities, and resources***

1. What is your institution's official environmental policy? (*internet link is ideal here*)
  2. Is the environment (campus sustainability, environmental research, environmental outreach, teaching) a priority at your school? What kind of priority? (*low, medium, or high*)
  3. Is your institution currently realizing its environmental priorities? Which ones?  
**-or-**
  - 3a. What are the environmental priorities at your institution?
  - 3b. Is your institution currently realizing its environmental priorities?
  4. What environmental strategies/tools/resources have been the most successful on your campus?
  5. What tools/resources are essential to your office/program/initiative? (*institution AND outside support*)
- 

### ***Milestones Analysis (see Results 2)***

*Please answer yes or no for the following:*

- 5 **-or-** 6. Does your institution have a(n):
- office of sustainability?
  - environmental coordinator(s)?
  - environmental advisory council to the upper administration? to the president?
  - energy conservation initiative?
  - successful recycling initiative?
  - green (environmentally-friendly) purchasing initiative?
  - environmentally-friendly food service/dining?
  - campus composting initiative?
  - academic biological conservation initiative?
  - center for sustainable business/enterprise?
  - initiative to increase the number or emphasis on sustainability-oriented faculty?
  - academic environmental program(s)? *If so, please list.*
- LEED or other green buildings? (*please specify if LEED, what rating*)
- “Ecorep” type residential/dorm program?
- other prominent environmental program? *Please list.*
- 

7. How are environmental programs coordinated at your institution?

**C. Green Results:**

1. What are your institution's most significant environmental results?
  2. Is your office/program well-known on campus?
  3. How much direct interaction do you have with students?  
with faculty?  
staff?  
administration?  
alumni?
  4. How much money have your office/program, position, and projects saved?
  5. In addition to the above-mentioned results, what have been the biggest successes of your program/office?  
failures? major challenges?
- or-**
5. What have been the biggest challenges to your office/program?
- 

*Cornell University is interested in establishing an office of sustainability. The following two sections were designed for this type of program, but any environmental initiative is applicable, so please answer to your best ability.*

**D. Office of Sustainability/Environmental Initiative Questions:**

1. What is the title of your office/program/initiative?
2. How many employees?
3. What is the current website?
4. What are your mission and goals? (*internet link is ideal here*)
5. Where is your office/program/job positioned in the institution/organization?
6. When was your office/program established?                      When was your position established?
7. How was your position established?
8. How do you describe your job? (purpose, goals, strategies, etc.)
9. What is your academic and work background?

***E. Relationship with administration:***

1. To whom do you report?
  2. How is your office/program funded? Is your funding sufficient?
  3. What is your annual operating budget?
  4. How much of your time is used for development?  
grants?  
alumni?
  5. Do you have institutional authority? How much authority does your office/program/position have?
- 

***F. Cornell going greener:***

1. Are you familiar with Cornell University as an environmental leader?
2. If so, which initiatives/programs are you familiar with?
3. Why should Cornell (or any institution) have an Office of Sustainability or Environmental Initiative?
4. What role should universities play in the current global environmental crisis?
5. What institutions do you look to as leaders in the environmental field?

## Sources

Cornell University's "Campus Sustainability in Higher Education: A survey of 28 leading institutions with recommendations for next steps at Cornell University" May 2005  
([http://www.sustainablecampus.cornell.edu/docs/CU\\_Peer\\_Campus\\_Sustainability\\_Survey\\_5-05.pdf](http://www.sustainablecampus.cornell.edu/docs/CU_Peer_Campus_Sustainability_Survey_5-05.pdf))

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