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Incorporating Sustainability into New Student Week:
A Carleton Communication/Culture Project

"The best way to predict the future is to design it"
(Bucky Fuller)

Bob Berkebile quoted Bucky Fuller with these words at the end of his presentation at this year's conference on sustainability in higher education. As a prestigious liberal arts College, Carleton directs the future by educating the next generation of leaders. The people who leave this institution will reflect the Carleton values. In effect the question follows, what will these leaders do with the world once they leave this institution? What kind of education is a Carleton education? While Carleton's mission statement does not explicitly include sustainability language, when we talk of the future that graduates go off into we are imaging something that will last their lifetime and the lifetimes of their grandchildren. The board of trustees appreciated our responsibility towards a sustainable future in the "Carleton College Environmental Statement of Principles":

> Carleton College recognizes that it exists as part of interconnected communities that are affected by personal and institutional choices. We are dedicated, therefore, to investigating and promoting awareness of the current and future impact of our actions in order to foster responsibility for these human and natural communities. Carleton strives to be a model of environmental stewardship by incorporating ideals of sustainability into the operations of the College and the daily life of individuals.[1]

When students answer the question "what will I do with my education", they must be

[1] Approved by the Environmental Advisory Committee, 12 April 2001Endorsed by Board of Trustees, Buildings and Grounds Committee, 18 May 2001

knowledgeable about the contemporary environmental issues and understand the importance of sustainability, because the future partly depends on it. Their answer must be an ecologically literate decision.

The goal of the NSW project, as stated in the mission, is to foster an ecologically literate community of leaders with the skills and foresight to design a just, equitable and healthy future for our society. By reaching people through their first days as college students, Carleton will preface the college experience with real values.

Procedure Fall Term 2005:

The first task obviously was extracting my idea of the end product and coordinating it with others' visions. I attended SOPE meetings to discuss with the communications taskforce of that organization. Private meeting were also held with the ENTs intern, Chris Petit, the head of facilities, Richard Strong, members of the Environmental Ethics class, SOPE and the EAC and other interested people. From these different locations, a more official and spanning group of those interested formed. Over the following weeks, this group assembled their ideas into an ambitious, yet workable set of goals.

Next, I researched the feasibility of our vision and in the process bolstered support. A productive meeting with the head of the Arb office, Myles Bakke, established their commitment to the project and a reasonable role for them. Advice from Jim Farrell, a history professor at St. Olaf who facilitated this years "Week One" program with a theme of sustainability, gave our proposal more full, educated and substantial backing. After receiving official support for the proposal from SOPE, MPIRG and the EAC, I

began seeking approval from the official administers of NSW. The head of Campus Activities, Robin Hart Ruthenbeck, received a copy of the proposal and met with me to discuss her thoughts. Robin is positive about working with the proposal, but naturally asks for compromise. As a result of my work this term, I have a clear concept of what I and others would like to see happen, I have established connections with Richard Strong and Jim Farrell amongst others and I have a clear concept of the next steps necessary for the project's fruition.

Lessons:

When I took on this project in September I had almost no real experience in institutional change. The practicality component of Environmental Ethics took my zeal for envionrmentalism, asked me to define my principles and then challenged me construct a project that is reflective of my ideals. After that all I had to do was dive in. I gained most in the area of coordination, communication and relational skills. As the project demanded that I push for my ideas, I had to find the people I needed for the project and quickly learn how to get them on my side. I attempted to implement the soft skills Deborah Growe discussed at the Sustainability conference.

As the project developed, it stirred issues fundamental in changing New Student Week and fundamental in changing the current affairs at our school. These issues ranged from apathy on campus, which SOPE meetings addressed, to the uncertainness of the successes of such a project and the dubiousness of prioritizing sustainability over diversity and other values. (A full list of the major issues is included in the vision statement appendix 1). Many of these issues will be used in arguments against the project

as we proceed. The biggest issue will be addressing the question: how can we make sustainability a major component of NSW when other values, the biggest being diversity, are also not incorporated as much as they should be. At some point NSW should relect all of these core values, however, everyone can admit this is not a realistic goal for the next year. We need to explain that getting environmental sustainability promoted in NSW is just one step towards an environmentally and socially sustainable future, but it is a big step we can do now.

An alliance with Olaf is important, practically and symbolically to show our recognition of our collective duty. As two excellent institutions of higher education. at our cores we strive towards the same goals. Jim Farrell positively calls the relationship between our institutions, “Friendly competition”. My project presented a great opportunity to expand this relationship. This year the freshman Orientation at St. Olaf successfully carried a theme of sustainability and as a result held many activities this project will try to mimic. Through their environmental spokesman, Jim, St. Olaf was an invaluable resource. The meeting with Jim brought many people invested in environmental progresses together and allowed us to talk freely about where our institutions are, the importance of pushing towards a more physically and mentally sustainable campus and what we can do about it, all under umbrella of our NSW projects.

Recommendations:

Next term, approval for some version of the project from the CSA and administrative powers can hopefully be acquired. A connection with those who will be running NSW and others expected to be involved like Myles must be established and/or

deepen. All the points in the proposal must be pushed, but obviously the document will continue to be revised as all parties work together.

Over the following term and summer month's coordination between volunteers like prefrosh trip leaders and available professors, the NSW leaders and others will continue. Something must be written for Oden's speech. The talking segments for those who we want to speak during a full class assembly must be arranged. The tours must be finalized. Money for all this must be secured and so on (All tasks can be found in the vision statement, appendix 1). The ultimate short-term goal is to successful install events about sustainability on campus in the NSW 2006.

The long-term goals include making sustainability a permanent part of NSW or creating a few other themes like diversity and having each rotate as the major theme of a year. These topics could theme the whole year, like this years "I'm a stranger here myself" initiative, by bringing in specialized speakers, holding discussion dinners and other kind of follow up throughout the year. The rotating theme is Robin's idea.

Appendixes:

Appendix 1. New Student Week Vision: This is the most current version of the proposal and the issues surrounding the acquisition an event. This was the document that I used to propose my ideas.

A Carleton Communications/Culture Project:
Incorporating Sustainability into New Student Week

Vision Statement:

By reaching students, through their first experience on campus, with the importance and practicality of local and global sustainability, Carleton will foster an ecologically literate community of leaders, prepared to create a just, equitable and healthy future for our society.

Carleton Principle: Carleton College recognizes that it exists as part of interconnected

communities that are affected by personal and institutional choices. We are dedicated, therefore, to investigating and promoting awareness of the current and future impact of our actions in order to foster responsibility for these human and natural communities. Carleton strives to be a model of environmental stewardship by incorporating ideals of sustainability into the operations of the College and the daily life of individuals."

Approved by the Environmental Advisory Committee, 12 April 2001
Endorsed by Board of Trustees, Buildings and Grounds Committee, 18 May 2001

Schedule:

- **Survey**- before school
    a. Analyzing how Carls feel about Sustainability before they enter school.
    b. Send a month before or make survey electronic.
    c. Give class same survey just before they graduate.
- **Short Essay**- before school
    a. Send material to prime and stimulate ideas for event and discussion
    b. Jim Farrell's *Nature of College* http://www.stolaf.edu/green/words/essays/index.html
    c. History of environmentalism at Carleton (see Gary Wagenbach, Julie Klassen)
    d. Include information about the sustainability portion of NSW
- **Public** - Day after student arrive in addition to Oden's talk
    a. Provide info and explain tour: Facilities, Arb
    b. Head of dinning Services
    c. Student organizations, student accomplishments, info about getting involved
    d. Guest speaker- St. Olaf, Carleton person, Coop, Renew Northfield, (The possibilities are endless)
- **Tour** – beginning second day during scheduled times
    a. Every student participates in of 3 campus tours and then discuss in their NSW groups after
    b. Arb- Myles Bakke, max 70 people at a time, willing to do a couple,
    c. Facilities – Richard Strong
    d. Windmill and other green locations on campus
    e. Reasoning:
- **Tote bag, CFL and/or Coffee mug give away**-
    a. Includes environmental info discounts at Snack Bar, Bookstore, Coop…
    b. Give away at the conclusion of tours/give a week later by tabling
- **Follow up event:** winter term

Issues:

- NSW is already jam packed with events. Can we shorten the events in comprise and is this even worthwhile? (Those event are not that popular, some of our events could be optional)
- Will this event seem like another waste of time like the other event? (How dare you)
- Who will run the events? (Volunteer like us, prefrosh trip leaders, prof volunteers…?)
- Is it possible to give 500 kids a tour of anything? How would that work?
- Where would we get the money for give always? (CSA, Alumni and Fred Rogers have the Benjamins)

Ethical Issues:

- Does Carleton have a responsibility to prepare students to understand and tackle environmental issue?
- We will be promoting sustainability as on of Carleton core principles, like we do for Safety and Diversity. Do we have a prerogative to do this?
- Will people feel attacked?

Resources:

- Richard Strong
- Jim Ferrell (St Olaf): (507) 646-3143 Ferrellj@StOlaf.edu
- Robin Hart Ruthenbeck
- Myles Bakke
- Fred Rogers
- CSA, MPIRG, SOPE and other student organizations
- This years NSW leaders
- http://apps.carleton.edu/student/nsw/glance/
- Gary Wagenbach (Bio department) gwagenc@carleton.edu (507) 646 4390
- Julie Klassen (German department) jklassen@carleton.edu Off winter

Process:

1. Establish a group Enviro. Ethics, EAC, SOPE, Staff, profs and others to work on the project
2. Create plan together and divide up duties
3. Contact staff, other schools ect. for suggestions
4. Contact those in charge for approval (goal for this term)
5. Work out long term details and make this permanent part of NSW

Appendix 2. St. Olaf College Week One Ecological Survey 2009: The class of 2009 at St. Olaf were asked to take an ecological survey and quiz before they arrived on campus. About 1/3 of the student completed it and Olaf considers this a success and the data will be used in some courses. The class will take the same survey and quiz again before they graduate.

Environmental Values

As part of St. Olaf's commitment to Campus Ecology, we're trying to assess the environmental values of our students. Please answer the following questions as truthfully as possible.

1) Male/female (circle one)

2) Year in college: 1 2 3 4 5

3) Age: 16-17 18-19 20-21 22 or older

4) Home: urban suburban small town rural other

5) Political preference:
Republican Democrat Green Independent Other Not political

6) Religious identification: Lutheran—Catholic—Presbyterian—Methodist—Baptist—Episcopalian—Jewish—Hindu—Buddhist—Muslim—Other—No affiliation

7) Major(s) or likely major(s): _____

For each of the questions below, please use the following scale:

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

8) I consider myself an environmentalist.
SA A D SD

9) I think that developing a meaningful philosophy of life is an important part of a college education.
SA A D SD

10) I would pay extra to have organic food options in the cafeteria.
SA A D SD

11) I think that ecological literacy is an important part of a college education.
SA A D SD

12) One of the things I expect to learn at college is how to live an environmentally responsible life.
SA A D SD

13) I'm in favor of a new general education requirement for environmental literacy.
SA A D SD

14) I enjoy camping and/or backpacking in natural areas.
SA A D SD

15) Because God created the natural world, it is wrong to abuse it.
SA A D SD

16) Species of plants and animals have intrinsic value, even if they are not of any apparent use to humans.
SA A D SD

17) Humans have the right to alter nature to satisfy their wants and desires.
SA A D SD

18) I believe nature is a gift from God, and He will take care of any environmental problems that need to be solved.
SA A D SD

19) A change in basic American values and attitudes is necessary in order to solve environmental problems.
SA A D SD

20) I feel renewed when I have a chance to get back to nature.
SA A D SD

21) Humans have moral obligations not just to each other, but to plants and animals in the natural world.
SA A D SD

22) We don't have the right to manipulate nature with biotechnology.
SA A D SD

23) I think environmental stewardship is a religious responsibility.
SA A D SD

24) We are trustees on the earth, and should bestow on the next generation an environment as healthy or healthier than the one we inherited.
SA A D SD

25) I think my lifestyle is sustainable.
SA A D SD

26) I eat and drink what I want when I want it, and don't worry at all about environmental consequences.
SA A D SD

27) I don’t pay a lot of attention to environmental issues, because I trust the experts to make good decisions.
SA A D SD

28) I generally research the environmental impacts of many products before I buy them.
SA A D SD

29) I know that my lifestyle isn’t environmentally sustainable, but changing my habits won’t make a difference.
SA A D SD

30) The guilt-trip fostered by environmentalists discourages me from getting involved.
SA A D SD

31) The most effective way to solve environmental problems is for individuals to stop buying environmentally damaging products.
SA A D SD

32) Americans should become vegetarians to reduce our environmental impact.
SA A D SD

33) We don’t have to reduce our standard of living to solve global climate change or other environmental problems.
SA A D SD

34) Predictions of impending ecological disaster are invariably wrong or overstated.
SA A D SD

35) We shouldn’t be too worried about environmental damage. Technology is developing so fast that, in the future, people will be able to repair most of the damage that has been done.
SA A D SD

36) In the United States we consume far too many resources, and we soon must change our ways.
SA A D SD

37) American politicians need to debate environmental policies in election campaigns.
SA A D SD

38) To consume as many luxuries as we do, and to throw away so much waste, is morally wrong given the amount of unmet human need in the world.
SA A D SD

39) Americans are too spoiled to change their lifestyle, even for the environment.
SA A D SD

40) Meaning in life comes from nonmaterial things.
SA A D SD

41) Capitalism may be a productive economic system, but a fundamental problem with it is that it doesn't give any value to things you can't buy and sell, like the environment.
SA A D SD

42) A healthy environment is necessary for a healthy economy.
SA A D SD

43) A healthy economy is necessary for a healthy environment.
SA A D SD

44) People should pay for the environmental impacts of the things they buy; these costs should be figured into the prices we pay.
SA A D SD

45) Products should be taxed according to their effect on the environment.
SA A D SD

46) Maintaining economic growth is more important than protecting the natural environment.
SA A D SD

47) There are too many environmental regulations right now.
SA A D SD

48) Private enterprise is more likely than government to find solutions to environmental problems.
SA A D SD

49) I think that corporate interests control American environmental politics more than environmental policies control the corporations.
SA A D SD

50) One of the fundamental rights in this country is the use of one's property without outside interference.
SA A D SD

51) The primary benefit of the natural world is:
__Wilderness areas for human recreation
__Habitat for biodiversity
__Natural resources
__Spiritual renewal
__Scenic beauty
__Scientific laboratory
__To show how the world should work

52) My student ID number is:

Ecological literacy quiz

As part of St. Olaf's assessment of its environmental programs, we're trying to find out what people know. Please answer the following questions as best you can. Don't worry at if you don't know the answer to some of them. That's perfectly normal.

1) The main greenhouse gases are:
--oxygen, nitrogen and carbon dioxide
--nitrogen, methane and helium
--carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide
--chlorofluorocarbons, sulfur dioxide, and carbon monoxide

2) Carrying capacity is a measure of:
--how far emissions travel from a factory or power plant
--how much pollution a lake or river can carry before it dies
--the number of different plants and animals a habitat can support indefinitely
--how many cars can fit on a freeway
--the cubic feet of water in a lake

3) Aldo Leopold is best known for:
--his work as Secretary of the Interior under President Theodore Roosevelt
--the land ethic
--breakthrough inventions in solar power
--writing *Silent Spring*
--ecological design in architecture

4) One good example of bioaccumulation is:
--too many species in a limited area
--mercury in the environment
--carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired power plants
--people buying too much stuff and not recycling
--the proliferation of invasive species in the Great Lakes

5) Which of the following is not a cause of the greenhouse effect?
--nuclear power
--driving a car on the highway
--using electrical appliances
--deforestation
--forest fires

6) The most effective way to save a species of endangered animal is to:
--stop hunting or eating the animal
--provide enough food for the animal to eat
--maintain or extend its habitat
--use zoos and nature parks to help increase its rates of reproduction
--raise taxes on imported animal skins

7) Photosynthesis is
--a process used by wildlife photographers to create panoramas
--what keeps the leaves of plants green
--the critical part of the nitrogen cycle
--a process invented by Dupont to clean smokestack emissions from factories and power plants
--how plants make biomass from solar energy

8) In economics, the social and environmental costs that are not included in the price of an item are called:
--freebies
--ecosystem services
--opportunity costs
--the federal reserve
--externalities

9) The Kyoto Protocol is
--a trade agreement requiring environmental protections in the World Trade Organization
--an international treaty to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases
--a Japanese government policy prohibiting the importation of American beef
--an international accord restricting Japanese whaling catches
--the provision of the Japanese constitution prohibiting nuclear weapons

10) Overshoot describes
--the secondary shoots of prairie grasses and flowers that give them their height
--the surpluses produced by a productive American agriculture
--the situation when a species destroys its own habitat
--the situation when hunters deplete the population of game animals in a bioregion
--the shots fired over the heads of buffalo herds to get them to change course

11) Which of the following is *not* a contemporary American nature writer?
--Paul Gruchow
--Annie Dillard
--Terry Tempest Williams
--Rick Bass
--Larry McMurtry

12) Which President signed the Environmental Protection Act and the Clean Water Act into law?
--John Kennedy
--Richard Nixon
--Jimmy Carter
--Ronald Reagan
--Bill Clinton

13) Which of the following is not an environmental impact of American agriculture?
--soil erosion
--greenhouse gas emissions
--eutrophication of waterways
--acid rain
--herbicide and pesticide residues on food

14) The primary benefit of wetland areas is
--swimming and boating
--habitat for amphibians and reptiles
--filtering water as part of the water cycle
--duck hunting
--parks and recreation

15) The most common cause of species extinction is
--asteroids
--pollution
--habitat loss
--global warming
--overhunting

16) In 1987, a United Nations World Commission (chaired by Norwegian stateswoman Gro Harlem Brundtland) argued that people needed to learn how to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This is a good definition of:
--feedback mechanisms
--ecosystem services
--sustainable development
--biogeochemical cycles
--the Oslo Accords

17) Most human decisions involve an element of environmental risk. Which of the following does *not* describe an environmentalist approach to risk?
--precautionary principle
--technological utopianism
--cost-benefit analysis
--full-cost accounting
--life-cycle costs

18) Which of the following is not an element of sustainable farming?
--integrated pest management
--crop rotation and intercropping
--Roundup-ready hybrids
--conservation tillage
--biogeochemical cycles

19) Which of the following is *not* an example of embodied energy?
--your body
--your computer
--the electricity that runs your computer
--the food on your plate
--your underwear

20) Which of the following is *not* generally included in the concept of stewardship?
--a commitment to intergenerational justice
--a global perspective
--a sense of responsibility for both individual and institutional actions
--the economic profitability of a business strategy
--a long-term perspective on life

21) Water in lakes and oceans evaporates and forms clouds which bring rain or snow that falls on the earth. Some of it filters into aquifers; some of it nourishes plants; and some returns to lakes and oceans. This process is an example of:
--biogeochemical cycles
--feedback mechanisms
--deep ecology
--lifeboat ethics
--ecological succession

22) The extinction of species is an example of what environmental economists call
--tragedy
--trade-offs
--opportunity costs
--irreversibility
--progress

23) In environmental economics, discounting refers to
--shopping at Wal-Mart and other low-price retailers
--not counting the environmental effects of an economic policy
--the reduced value of polluted land
--how much future costs and benefits affect the present value of commodities or natural resources
--the way American politicians treat the science of global climate change

24) Which of the following issues is *least* important to environmental ethics?
--intergenerational equity
--environmental justice
--the rights of plants and animals and their ecosystems
--sweatshop labor
--biotechnology

25) Driving a car involves all but one of the following:
--the conversion of embodied energy to mechanical power
--biogeochemical cycles
--entropy
--synergy
--greenhouse gases

26) Age: 16-17 18-19 20-21 22 or older

27) Year in college: 1 2 3 4 5

28) Major(s) or likely major(s): _____

29) Gender: Male/female

30) Home: urban suburban small town rural other

31) Political preference:
Republican Democrat Independent Green Other Not political

32) Religious affiliation: Lutheran-Catholic-Presbyterian-Methodist-Baptist-Episcopalian-Jewish-Hindu-Buddhist-Muslim-no affiliation

33) My student ID number:

Appendix 3. The Nature of College by Jim Farrell link: This is the essay sent to the class of 2009 before their arrival and then later discussed. It is an example of the type of material we might use.
http://www.stolaf.edu/green/words/essays/index.html