

Campus and Community: The New Sustainable Inclusivity

Universities are not isolated ivory towers; they are attached to surrounding communities. So, one of the most important questions is how do on-campus sustainability efforts ripple out, well beyond the quadrangle, to the non-collegiate neighborhood at large?

The answer, in a word, starts with humility. From the very beginning, the university must openly acknowledge that it doesn't have all the answers on its own. This is critical for success when dealing with complex issues centering on sustainability and climate change. And so is the notion that there is no right path or direction.

Indeed, everything in the "green" world is iterative, and ongoing conversations between the university and community are critical. Both parties must come to the table and share best practices, pragmatic solutions, and a host of substantive alternatives. At the end of the day, we believe that a sense of discovery must pervade this sustainability dialogue.

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Carbon reduction is a good example. We're doing a good job on our campus, but we realized that one entity can't solve this problem alone, and so we opened up avenues for the community to get involved in much of what we do.

It's a very porous and productive relationship - a real partnership. On the one hand, we have the energy, enthusiasm and passion of our students, combined with a serious academic underpinning; and, on the other hand, we have the "real-world" experience and experiences of the community's developers, activists and public officials.

Transportation is another strong case study. The University of Washington's UPass program, which gives faculty, staff and students access to a complete package of low-cost transportation options - from buses and commuter train service to discounted vanpooling - is



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Charles Kennedy, Associate Vice President of Facilities Services, joined the University of Washington in 2006. He previously led facilities organizations at the University of California and Georgia Institute of Technology, as well as local government and the private sector. In his nearly two decades of higher education experience, Kennedy has had a transformative impact on organizations, leading process improvements using TQM, Six Sigma, Balanced Scorecard and Shingo Lean principles.

helping to reduce carbon emissions from automobiles. But the program wouldn't be nearly as effective without Seattle's robust transit systems.

There's no one leader when it comes to collaborative sustainability partnerships like this.

That said, the university, with its unique teaching and learning environment, can serve as a test bed or influencing agent for new "green" ideas that will ultimately benefit the surrounding community. Our on-campus research efforts also make us



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As Vice Provost of the Office of Planning & Budgeting, Paul Jenny is responsible for the development and management of resource allocation plans for the University of Washington and oversees the preparation of the University's operating and capital budgets. Prior to his appointment at the UW, Paul served as the Associate Vice Chancellor of Budget and Resource Planning at the University of California – Berkeley and as Associate Director, Budget and Institutional Research for the University of Alaska system.

a public laboratory that can help incubate crucial sustainability breakthroughs that will help clean the sky, land and air for future generations.

The University of Washington, for example, was selected as part of a team that is conducting a regional smart energy grid demonstration project. The \$178 million project, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy and managed by Battelle, includes a demonstration test site on our campus. The overall goal of the project is to reduce energy costs for consumers; make the

energy grid stronger and more reliable; and increase accessibility to clean-low-cost renewable energy sources for homes and businesses.

For their part, community members can help the university by supporting its overall educational mission in the realm of sustainability.

On a larger scale, community leaders can play a tremendously constructive role by taking university-tested “green” ideas and implementing them in a host of neighborhoods. Once they’ve been proven successful at the local level, these ideas can be embraced and adopted at the state, regional, national and even global levels with far greater confidence.

The UW is also committed to exploring its own neighborhood and partnering with the city and community to expand on a successful neighborhood to further shared ‘green’ interests.

Just west of the campus, the university district has long been an eclectic blend of local retailers, student housing, single family residences, and the increasing location of UW administrative and student support functions. It is also the largest Seattle urban core neighborhood that has not gone through significant redevelopment. Rather than everyone going their own way, the City of Seattle, the local community and the University of Washington joined forces to first develop a comprehensive strategic plan that focuses on ensuring that the neighborhood is economically and environmentally sustainable. Following the release of this report in early spring 2013, the University is coordinating and investing with the city in a neighborhood wide environmental impact statement to provide a framework to guide development consistent with our strategic planning goals.

Looking forward, in a perfect world, the end result of this all-important campus-community teamwork will be a cleaner and more sustainable planet for the 21st century - something we’re all hoping for and working toward each and every day.