Meeting of The New York State Sustainability Education Working Group

Syracuse Center of Excellence In Environmental and Energy Systems
727 East Washington Street
Syracuse, New York

April 1, 2012

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

The Goal: Every graduate of a New York college or university will be literate about how to live sustainably and why it is essential to do so, individually and collectively. And, every New York school will "embrace sustainability as a normative goal, transforming their teaching, learning, operations, and community engagement practices in all disciplines and in all departments so that they contribute to creating a healthy, just, and sustainable society" in New York and beyond (Second Nature).

We recommend that the NYS Sustainability Education Working Group seek full engagement across all post-secondary educational campuses in New York State, with operations staff, administrators, faculty, and students represented in each setting. We recommend that faculty and students engage with administrators and staff in using the campus and community as a context for sustainability studies. Here are our recommended Action Steps to build a comprehensive, integrated network:

1. **Offer key information** to participants:
   a. The full range of sustainability benchmarking groups;
   b. The full range of other sustainability networks at all scales (local to international); including Cooperative Extension at every county.
   c. Range of all relevant student organizations (e.g., SEAL, Engineers Without Borders); and
   d. Calendar of sustainability-related events statewide.
   e. Links to professional organizations such as ACPA (student affairs professionals; APPA (physical plant professionals), NEEP, SCUP, NAKUBO, AASHE and others.

2. **Survey and identify key informal communication networks** of current SWG members. For example, Brenda Young at Daemen College is part of an informal network of her counterparts at small liberal arts colleges in the Buffalo region. The full range of networks embedded in our larger network will help spread information and participation.
3. **Design four-year pathways that community college students can use** to design their coursework in order to emerge ultimately with Bachelors degrees in sustainability-relevant areas. Consider core courses in sustainability for all first year students.

4. **Create meaningful participation of students in campus operations**, starting with some model programs. One candidate for this is student engagement in measurement of energy use at Cornell. Student competitions, such as the one created by RIT in collaboration with Clarkson, RPI, SUNY Buffalo and others through the Pollution Prevention Institute, is another.

5. **Design mechanisms to bridge the campus operations/faculty divide.** Ideas include:
   a. **Competitions**, such as buildings v. buildings for percentage reduction in energy use.
   b. **Create integrated task forces** that include faculty, facilities personnel, and students.
   c. **Create webinars** for regional faculty development and networking.

6. **Provide financial incentives** to improve infrastructure, create sustainability course components and courses, and conduct research on topics such as pollution prevention.
   a. **Sources of funding** might include:
      
      I. NYSERDA
      II. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's office
      III. NYS Pollution Prevention Institute
      IV. DEC
      V. U.S. Dept. of Labor
      VI. U.S. Dept. of Education
      VII. State Economic Regional Councils, which are required to produce state sustainability plans for ten NYS regions
      VIII. National Science Foundation
      IX. SUNY "Conversation In The Discipline" funds
      X. Foundations
7. **Sponsorship/Co-Sponsorship of a series of Sustainability Education Workshops in different regions of the State**

8. **Create both top-down and bottom-up calls for action on sustainability.**
   
   b. **Ask Chancellor Zimpher to send a letter to all the SUNY campuses (half of which have signed the ACUPCC) endorsing the work of the SWG in promoting sustainability in campus curriculums and campus operations, citing SUNY’s Vision Statement and Strategic Plan.**

   c. **Ask Governor Cuomo to call for a task force to recommend ways to promote sustainability in post secondary education and campus operations throughout New York State.**

   d. **Create a SWG white paper on how sustainability education and action on campus promote student leadership development and critical thinking skills.** Survey recent graduates of sustainability programs to assess student outcomes.

9. **Confront the unfortunate politicization of “sustainability” and “environment.”** Reframe the consideration of sustainability in terms of new economy success, such as increased energy efficiencies, or improved well-being, and contribute to a fuller information base for political discourse. Frame sustainability in terms of the business and health, improved outcomes, better risk management, and pollution abatement.

10. **Create Website to facilitate sharing of best practices, sample curriculums, service learning opportunities, other sustainability-related learning materials**

11. **Encourage New York Campus Compact and other organizations** to include sustainability professionals on their boards and committees, and likewise, recommend that sustainability organizations such as The Working Group, the New York Coalition For Sustainability In Higher Education, and the Hudson Valley Environmental Consortium include service learning professionals on boards and committees to facilitate cross-pollination of ideas, and to promote collaboration.
Sustainability Working Group April 1, 2012 Meeting Attendees:

Sherburne B. Abbott, University Professor of Sustainability Science and Policy, Vice President For Sustainability Initiatives, Syracuse University

Katherine Aubrecht, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, Stony Brook University

Richard C. Back, Ph.D., Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Oswego, SUNY

Ed Bogucz, Executive Director, Syracuse Center of Excellence For Environmental and Energy Systems, Syracuse University

Peter S. Brouwer, Ph.D., Dean, School of Education and Professional Studies, SUNY Potsdam

Hillary Brown, FAIA, M Arch., Program Coordinator, Sustainability In The Urban Environment, City College of New York, CUNY

Marian Brown, Special Assistant To The Provost For Sustainability, Sustainability Initiatives, Ithaca College

Enid Cardinal, Senior Sustainability Advisor, Office of The President, Rochester Institute of Technology

Brian Chabot, Ph.D. Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Faculty Fellow–Atkinson Center For A Sustainable Future, Cornell University

John Clinton, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Director, Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management, The New School

Steve Cohen, Ph.D., Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Earth Institute, Columbia University

Laurie E. Drinkwater, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Horticulture, Cornell University

John F. Elter, Ph.D., Empire Innovation Professor of Nanotechnology, and Executive Director, The Center For Sustainable Ecosystem Nanotechnologies, SUNY Albany (Ret.), Currently, President Sustainable Systems, LLC

Kim Fortun, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Science and Technology Studies, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

John Gowdy, Ph.D., Professor and Chair, Department of Economics, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Frederick L. Hildebrand, Ph.D., Assistant Provost, Academic Programs and Assessment, SUNY System Administration

Michael P. Hoffmann, Ph.D., Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Director, Cornell Experiment Station, Cornell

Thomas Horvath, Ph.D., Director, Environmental Sciences Program, Associate Professor of Biology, SUNY Oneonta

John Kijinski, Ph.D., Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, SUNY Fredonia

Beth Shiner Klein, Ph.D., Chair, Childhood/Early Childhood Education Department, Professor of Science Education, SUNY Cortland

G. Peter Lederer, Ed.D., New York State Sustainability Working Group Co-Founder and Co-Leader and Sustainability Education Advocate and Activist

Leslie W. Lewis, Dean and Professor, School of Humanities and Sciences, Ithaca College

Jose Maliekal, Dean, School of Science and Mathematics, SUNY Brockport

Rachel May, Ph.D., Coordinator of Sustainability Education, Syracuse U.

Nabil Z. Nasr, Ph.D., Assistant Provost For Academic Affairs and Director, Golisano Institute For Sustainability, Rochester Institute of Technology

Mary Pearl, Ph.D., Associate Dean and Chief Academic Officer, Macaulay Honors College, CUNY

Susan E. Powers, Ph.D., PE, Spence Professor in Sustainable Environmental Systems, Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Clarkson University

Jim Quigley, Ph.D., Director, Environmental Design, Policy, and Planning, Stony Brook

Lori Quigley, Ph.D., Dean, School of Education, Sage Colleges

R. Lawrence Swanson, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Marine Sciences Research Center, and Director, Waste Reduction and Management Institute, Stony Brook

Sean Vormwald, Director of Sustainability, Onondaga Community College

Randy K. Yerrick, Ph.D., Professor, Science Education, University at Buffalo, SUNY

Brenda L. Young, Ph.D., Professor of Natural Sciences and Program Director, Global and Local Sustainability, Daemen College
Sustainability Working Group Supporters, Absent From April 1, 2012 Meeting:

Janina Brutt-Griffier, Ph.D., Professor and Associate Dean For Curriculum and Global Initiatives, Graduate School of Education, University at Buffalo SUNY

Benjamin C. Christy, Ph.D., Dean, School of Arts and Humanities, Buffalo State University

Robert. D Greenberg, Ph.D., Senior Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, CUNY Hunter

Jason Hamilton, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Environmental Studies and Sciences, Ithaca College

Deborah Howard, Director of Sustainability, SUNY System Administration

Michael Jabot, Ph.D., Working Group Co-Founder, Professor, Science Education, SUNY Fredonia

Abby Kinchy, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Science and Technology Studies, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Gary S. Kleppel, Ph.D., Professor and Director, Biodiversity Conservation and Policy Program, University at Albany SUNY

Andrea Lachance, Ph.D., Interim Dean and Professor, School of Education, SUNY Cortland

Mitch Leventhal, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor For Global Affairs, SUNY System Administration

Mary Ellen Mallia, Ph.D., Director of Environmental Sustainability, University at Albany, SUNY

Mary Simoni, Ph.D., Dean, School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Edelgard Wulfert, Ph.D., Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, University at Albany SUNY

Mary Ellen Zuckerman, Ph.D., Dean, School of Business, Ithaca College

GPL

July 17, 2012