

Envisioning a Student Affairs Division that Supports Sustainability

Modified From Second Nature

http://www.secondnature.org/efs/efs_part_one.htm

Adapted by ACPA President's Taskforce on Sustainability

<http://www.myacpa.org/task-force/sustainability/>

Imagine working for a division of student life that has as its mission educating students so they can contribute to the development of a sustainable society. Programs, initiatives, and budgetary expenditures are driven by one clearly articulated educational goal: Educate students who will become the leaders of our world so as many people as possible on the planet are healthy and can meet their basic needs; have fair and equitable access to Earth's resources; have a decent quality of life; celebrate cultural diversity; are realizing their highest aspirations; and restore and preserve the biologically diverse ecosystems on which we all depend.

Imagine a student life division that functions as an integrated community that models social and biological sustainability itself and role models interdependence with the campus, local, regional and global communities. Imagine that all student life staff members understand their connections to the natural world and to other humans, know as much as possible about where products and services purchased by the division come from and where wastes go, and know how to measure and minimize their ecological footprint. Sustainability is an integral part of operations, purchasing and investments.

Imagine that we are helping to stabilize the population at a level that is within the carrying capacity of the Earth's ecosystems because we have increased the education of college students on issues of class, oppression, discrimination, resource management, and reproductive rights, to name only a few key issues. These students are striving to assure that all current and future generations are able to pursue meaningful work and have the opportunity to realize their full human potential both personally and socially.

Imagine that through our "dreaming" and "doing," we have dramatically reduced resource consumption in our offices and in our residence halls so that there is greater opportunity for the world to be healthy and for all humans to have a decent quality of life. Imagine a campus where the residence halls are a bold experimentation in sustainable living.

Imagine that our campus communities are strong and vibrant because they celebrate cultural diversity, are designed to encourage collaboration and participation in governance and emphasize the quality of life over the consumption of stuff. Think what it could be like if globalization is humanized to support democracy, human rights and economic opportunity for everyone.

Imagine that we, as a division of student life, recognize timely and accurate economic and ecological signals: micro-economic signals for price that reflect the true social and environmental cost to society; macro-economic indicators that reflect the true well-being of society and the Earth; and ecological signals that we receive in time to prevent or remedy damage to humans or the environment. Imagine that we and our students, in

response to these signals, adjust our behavior and work to educate the university community.

Imagine educating future consumers, scientists, engineers, and business people to design and/or choose technologies and economic activities that sustain, rather than degrade, the natural environment, that enhance human health and well-being, and that mimic and live within the limits of natural systems. Imagine that the division of student life is providing essential opportunities for those future consumers, scientists, engineers, and business people to learn more than just knowledge – but how to make change, understand systems, be leaders, challenge the status quo, collaborate, address complex issues, and transform not only themselves, but their futures.

Student affairs, in collaboration with academic affairs, provides a campus setting where active, experiential and collaborative learning and real-world problem solving on the campus and in the larger community is the norm. When these students graduate, they have the knowledge, skills and values of sustainability to apply to their future employment, consumption decisions, lifestyle choices, and to the improvement of communities in which they live.

Now, imagine how you can make that a reality on your campus.