

# EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

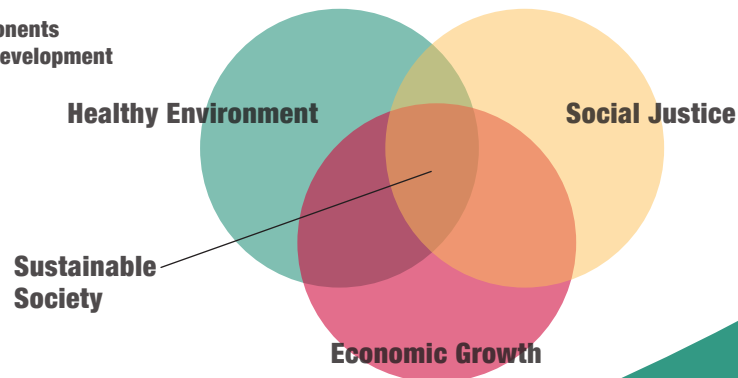
Educating college students to ensure a future with a healthy environment, social justice, and strong economies.

The United Nations declared a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) to promote the local and global acceptance of principles of "sustainable development." ACPA is taking a leading role in a national initiative to help create the U.S. higher education response to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. This document provides the background on education for sustainable development; the role of U.S. higher education; and what individuals, institutions, and ACPA can do to work towards a sustainable environment, an equitable society, and a strong economy.

## What is Sustainable Development?

From the 1987 Brundtland Commission, the most common definition of sustainable development is "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." In 2003, Dr. Rolf Jucker further illuminated the idea: "Sustainability is achieved when all people on Earth can live well without compromising the quality of life for future generations." (Rolf Jucker, 2003, UNESCO Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future: A Critical Evaluation, Trumpeter, Vol. 19 No. 2)

The vision of sustainable human society resides in the simultaneous and synergistic creation of economic growth and equity, conservation of natural resources and the natural environment, and sustainable social development and social justice. It is often visually represented as follows:



## U.S. Responsibility in Sustainable Development

There is an urgent need for US higher education to advocate for sustainable development. The extent to which we, the people of the United States, adopt and embrace the principles of sustainable development may determine the quality of life that our country and all humanity enjoys in the decades ahead. Around the world, billions of people seek what we have. As 5% of the world's population, we consume 25% of the world's resources. The Earth simply cannot tolerate billions of people following the path we chose. Now, as responsible leaders, we must demonstrate new paths to economic prosperity which do not compromise our future. Many U.S. citizens do not know that:

- We are exceeding the carrying capacity of the planet. ([www.myfootprint.org](http://www.myfootprint.org))
- The ecosystems are degrading (<http://www.worldwatch.org/topics/nature>)
- The U.S. has approximately 5% of the world's population and is consuming 25% of the world's resources.
- We can economically reduce human suffering, environmental degradation and social injustice now.

## The Role of U.S. Higher Education

There is enormous potential within U.S. Higher Education

- 4,096 colleges and universities
- 14.8 million students
- \$277 billion annual expenditures; 2.8% of the U. S. GDP
- U.S. higher education expenditures are greater than the GDP of all but 25 countries in the world

Higher education can change operational, curricular, and policy norms so all students can learn and practice how to be; environmentally responsible, socially responsible, economically responsible, and active citizens in a global economy. The goal is to engage students as effective change agents in our sustainability challenges. Students need to know that their daily decisions affect the quality of life of people around the globe.

HEASC, the Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium ([www.heasc.net](http://www.heasc.net)), has been formed to catalyze education for a sustainable future throughout higher education institutions. ACPA is leading the way among college and university professional associations on sustainability. Eighteen national higher education associations and thirteen national disciplinary associations are creating initiatives on education for sustainable development. The following are the acronyms and a brief description of some of the national higher education associations who have joined ACPA in programming, partnerships, publications and/or initiatives in education for sustainability:

- AACC - American Association of Community Colleges
- AACU - Association of American Colleges and Universities
- AASCU – American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- ACE - American Council on Education
- ACEED-I – Association of College Conferences and Events Directors
- ACPA – College Student Educators International
- ACUI – Association of College Unions International
- ACUHO-I – Association of College and University Housing Officers - International
- AGB – Association of Governing Boards
- APPA – Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers
- NACA – National Association of Campus Activities
- NACAS – National Association of College Auxiliary Services
- NACS – National Association of College Stores
- NACUBO – National Association of College and University Business Officers
- NACUFS – National Association of College and University Food Service
- NAEB – National Association of Educational Buyers
- NIRSA – National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association
- SCUP – Society for College and University Planning

## What is ACPA Doing?

ACPA, including each Commission, Standing Committee, and State and International Division, has a unique contribution to make to higher education's engagement in education for a sustainable future. The ACPA Presidential Task Force on Education for a Sustainable Future will plan, catalyze, facilitate, and assess the infusion of awareness and education for a sustainable future into all aspects of the association's activities. ACPA is also:

- Managing investments with a socially and environmentally responsible ethic;
- Leading the higher education community on sustainable development;
- Developing sustainable development road show for state and international division conferences;
- Developing learning outcomes to guide undergraduate student learning and integration into graduate preparation programs;
- Developing an E-Learning series on sustainable development; and
- Assessing organizational practices with sustainability in mind;
- Creating a toolkit for colleges and universities to infuse sustainability into all aspects of the curriculum and co-curriculum (e.g. first year experience, orientation, student life activities, sustainability pledges and sustainability living campaigns).

## How Can Your Commission, Standing Committee, State or International Division Contribute?

- Implement a program to encourage colleges and universities to infuse sustainability principles and practices into the subjects addressed by your entity;
- Include sustainability as a focus of your next conference, meeting, or workshop. Conference/Workshop shells are available designed around the four domains of campus sustainability; teaching/ learning, research, outreach, and stewardship Resources provided include template PowerPoint, educational displays, speaker list, bibliography, case studies, and best practices; [LINK](#)
- Collect examples of education for sustainable development already occurring in your area by sending out requests for examples and summarizing these examples into templates;
- Contribute examples and templates to the toolkit described above;
- Design and implement a variety of projects to encourage utilization of the materials in education for sustainable development and to produce more implementation of education for sustainable development on campuses nationally.

### **What You Can Do:**

Educate yourself: Take opportunities to learn about sustainability and become literate in sustainable development;

Consume less by using durable goods such as coffee mugs instead of disposables or throwaways;

Conserve water by using water efficient products, repairing leaks, and consuming less;

Save energy by turning off lights and computers, and setting heating and cooling temperatures correctly, walk and bike more, don't stand in front of an open refrigerator, clean the coils, etc.

Change to energy efficient light bulbs and caulk your house;

Stay healthy by exercising more and eating fresh vegetables and organic foods;

Manage investments with a socially and environmentally responsible ethic;

Help the local economy by buying locally and regionally manufactured goods and services;

Save resources by using reusable materials such as 100% recycled paper;

Reduce waste through campus and community recycling programs;

Reduce pollution and save fuel by car pooling and using public transportation;

Assess your own habits and make a commitment to become a consumer advocate for sustainable (green and fair trade) goods and services.

Go to [www.coopamerica.org](http://www.coopamerica.org) and join their boycotts and campaigns;

Catalyze fair trade, social justice, and environmental groups on campus;

Ask many store managers to contact their corporate office with a request for fair trade & green products;

Use energy conservation and renewable energies instead of fossil fuels whenever possible;

Be informed and vote and get involved in the political process;

Share what you have learned with others and incorporate this knowledge into policies and practices;

Assess organizational practices with sustainability in mind.

### **What Your Institution Can Do:**

Create a position on campus dedicated to issues of sustainability;

Having a comprehensive recycling and sustainable consumption program, including residence halls, classrooms, and offices – report reductions in unsustainable consumption;

Make sure anti-sweatshop, fair trade, and green products are available with well labeled signage in campus dining halls, convenience stores, and bookstores;

Make sure institutional purchasing makes buying anti-sweatshop, fair trade, and green products a priority;

Purchase duplex printers that use both sides of paper;

Having a plan to integrate energy conservation and renewable resources;

Commitment for future and renovated buildings to be LEED or equivalent;

Develop sustainable living programs for students and staff;

Offer domestic partner benefits;

Imbed principles of sustainable development into training models and manuals;

Engage students and community in creating the solutions;

Offer annual sustainability programming series (e.g. films, speakers, poetry slams, festivals);

Infuse sustainability concepts infused into First Year Experience and New Student Orientation, perhaps by instituting a First-Year Pledge on sustainable development;

Manage endowment investments and working capital investments in an environmentally and socially responsible manner;

Support local businesses to limit waste in transportation costs.

### **What We All Need to Do to Align the System - Essential Changes**

- Make sustainability an integral part of planning, operations, facility design, purchasing, investments, and student life, and tie all of these efforts to the formal and informal curriculum;
- Imbed sustainability into the mission, vision, values, strategic plan, and assessment plans of all units;
- Review all policies and procedures through the lenses of sustainability and cultural competence;

## How Can Sustainable Development be Integrated into Student Learning?

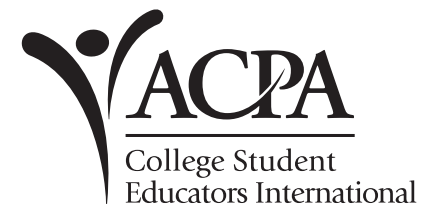
Include sustainable development as part of learning outcomes in the curriculum and co-curriculum. (Notice how these learning outcomes relate to citizenship, diversity, and social well being.) Help faculty and staff as they strive to accomplish these learning outcomes with students. See the attached document for the list of learning outcomes and ways to accomplish them. ACPA has developed sample learning outcomes related to sustainability including competencies and strategies for each outcome.

## How Can I Get More Information?

For background information, visit the following sites:

- Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education ([www.aashe.org](http://www.aashe.org))
- United States Partnership for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development [[www.uspartnership.org](http://www.uspartnership.org) (click on Partner Resources – Higher Ed)]
- We Can Afford to Solve the World's Problems - The World Game Institute - 18 strategies for confronting the major systemic problems confronting humanity ([www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/TLSF/theme\\_a/mod02/www.worldgame.org/wwwproject/index.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/TLSF/theme_a/mod02/www.worldgame.org/wwwproject/index.shtml))
- Campus Climate Challenge ([www.climatechallenge.org](http://www.climatechallenge.org))
- Campus Ecology ([www.nwf.org/campusecology](http://www.nwf.org/campusecology))
- U.S. Fair Trade ([www.transfairusa.org](http://www.transfairusa.org))
- Higher Education for Sustainable Development Resource Project ([www.hesdrp.org/index.php](http://www.hesdrp.org/index.php))

For specific assistance with your ACPA efforts, contact Presidential Sustainability Taskforce Co-chairs Boyd Yarbrough ([boyd.yarbrough@furman.edu](mailto:boyd.yarbrough@furman.edu)) and Kathleen Gardner ([kagardn@siue.edu](mailto:kagardn@siue.edu)) or Debra Rowe ([dgrowe@oaklandcc.edu](mailto:dgrowe@oaklandcc.edu)), co-coordinator of the Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium.



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