

BUSINESS BRIEFS

SUSTAINABILITY

[EMAIL](#) | [PRINT](#)

PROGRAM HELPS SURMOUNT BARRIERS TO GREEN BUILDING

Minority-serving institutions, community and technical colleges, and some public universities and religiously affiliated colleges are among the higher education institutions that typically have fewer financial resources and a higher percentage of financially disadvantaged students. These resource-challenged colleges and universities often face an uphill battle in finding funds to renovate older, inefficient buildings or construct new buildings to serve growing student populations. In addition to limited funding for bricks-and-mortar projects, many of these institutions face expensive retrofits to mechanical systems on their historic campuses. In this context, incorporating elements of green design can seem like one more challenge to add to an already long list.

However, various studies show minimal increases (as little as 2 percent) in up-front construction costs for green building, which in turn can yield a life-cycle savings of more than 10 times the initial investment. And, some studies find no significant difference in the average design and construction costs for green buildings as compared to traditional construction. Sheri Tonn, vice president of finance and operations, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington, has not experienced financial drawbacks from building green. In fact, she notes that a focus on sustainability can benefit your project: "When you rely on donor-based funding, being green helps your case."

Building Capacity

Internal research conducted by Second Nature and the Kresge Foundation in fall 2008 showed that the primary barriers to eco-friendly building are not always financial. A lack of institutional capacity may pose as great an obstacle. Interviews with business officers and others at under-resourced institutions surveyed as part of the study indicate that there are six types of challenges with sustainable facilities:

- 1. Isolation.** Colleges and universities that are members of peer groups with few green building projects may not be aware of the resources available to assist them.
- 2. Decisions based on myths.** Some institutional decision makers still perceive environment-conscious building as too expensive and not of the same quality as traditional construction.
- 3. Expensive learning curve.** Some underresourced institutions - especially those in remote areas - may lack the in-house technical expertise or the ability to attract qualified staff for

Decreased Wealth, Increased Savings in 2008

\$11.5T

The amount of net worth American households and nonprofit organizations lost from the fourth quarter (Q4) of calendar year 2007 to Q4 2008, the biggest annual decline since the federal government began keeping quarterly records in 1952.

\$343.2B

The cumulative amount of Americans' personal savings (disposable personal income minus personal expenditures) in Q4 2008. In Q4 2007, Americans saved \$42.4 billion.

.4-3.2%

The personal savings rate (percentage of disposable personal income saved) of Americans from Q4 2007 to Q4 2008. The last time American consumers saved more than 3 percent of their disposable income was during Q3 2001.

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (www.bea.gov/briefm/saving.htm) and Bloomberg.com (go to www.bloomberg.com and enter "U.S. Household Net Worth" in the search box).

facilities planning and sustainability programs. Likewise, those in regions that lack green building projects may find that inexperienced consultants charge higher premiums for these projects.

4. Problems with leadership in energy and environmental design (LEED) requirements.

Some institutions that have moved forward with green building have experienced problems with the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED standards. LEED certification brings additional expenses, such as hiring a LEED-accredited professional, and may pose conflicts with local building codes.

5. Underperforming facilities. In some instances in which institutions have built green, students, staff, and faculty may not be using a building in ways that yield savings. Education and cooperation are critical to ensure that the building and its systems function as intended.

6. Lack of support for innovation. Some underresourced institutions may be less likely to showcase the latest in green design because of the higher initial costs and longer paybacks associated with newer technologies.

Advancing Green Building

Recognizing these challenges, the Kresge Foundation - one of the largest funders of bricks-and-mortar projects at colleges and universities - recently launched a \$1.2 million program to support activities that build the capacity of underresourced institutions to construct and renovate buildings using green design principles. Second Nature, in conjunction with several partner organizations, is developing these projects and other activities with a focus on the U.S. Department of Education's list of 582 Title III and Title V institutions - those eligible to receive institutional development funding because of their limited resources. Among the initiatives are the following:

- A Web portal providing free resources about campus green building to all higher education institutions.

- Regional summits of institutions of similar size or mission to share best practices.

- A fellowship program providing business officers and other key staff with opportunities for training and networking with regard to sustainable facilities.

- Discounted membership in the American Association for Sustainability in Higher Education, a network of more than 500 colleges and universities working to advance sustainability.

- In addition, the United Negro College Fund, with a planning grant from the Kresge Foundation, is investigating a strategy to provide direct technical assistance and workshops for minority-serving institutions to overcome barriers to building green.

Reasons for Optimism

Green buildings provide long-term operational savings and offer educational opportunities to students from diverse disciplines. They can also help colleges and universities stay competitive in a market increasingly measured by commitments to sustainability, as witnessed by the growing number of green rating systems, including one conducted by the Princeton Review.

A new study released from McGraw-Hill Construction, 2009 Green Outlook: Trends Driving Change, predicts that green building in the United States could triple in five years. While the outlook is good, the data show that the majority of the nation's colleges and universities have yet to embrace green design. When the study's projections were released in November 2008, building projects receiving some level of LEED certification stood on only 132 campuses. Only 10 of the 582 colleges and universities on the Department of Education's list of Title III and Title V institutions have a green building on their campuses.

Although the actual count may be low, the U.S. Green Building Council reports that the number of campus building projects registered for LEED certification has grown, on average, 82 percent each year, from 2002 to 2008. This growth has not been confined to the institutions

with greater resources. Butte College, Oroville, California; the College of the Menominee Nation, Keshena and Green Bay, Wisconsin; and Dillard University, New Orleans, are among those proving to their community college and minority-serving institution peers that green building is within reach.

SUBMITTED BY [Anthony Cortese](#), president, and [Amy Seif Hattan](#), director of strategic initiatives, Second Nature, Boston.

RESEARCH

Women Outperform Men in Higher Education Achievement The American Council on Education's most recent *Minorities in Higher Education 2008: 23rd Status Report* finds that women now outperform men in U.S. higher education enrollment and achievement. Among all racial/ethnic groups except American Indians, a higher percentage of women age 30 or older have earned some type of postsecondary degree. High school completion rates and postsecondary degree attainment are two significant factors that have contributed to the wide discrepancy in performance.

Over the past decade, total enrollment in U.S. postsecondary institutions grew substantially, rising from 14.2 million in 1995 to 17.5 million in 2005. According to the American Council of Education (ACE) report, nearly two thirds of this increase can be attributed to women. That is, as of 2005, women accounted for 57 percent of total college enrollment. Among nonwhite students, women's share of total enrollment was slightly higher (61 percent compared to 39 percent for men).

The Divide Begins Early

Widening gender gaps in high school completion rates account for the larger growth in women's higher education enrollments. High school completion rates overall for young men lagged behind those for young women by 6 percentage points in 2006 (79 percent versus 85 percent). Among racial/ethnic groups, the largest gender gap (10 percentage points) in high school completion rates occurs between Hispanic women and men. Due to their declining high school graduation rates, men in their late 20s have lower educational attainment rates than men age 30 and older across all demographic groups except Asian/Pacific Islanders.

Sticking With the Program

Among those students who enter college, women outperform men in degree completion at all levels. From 1995 to 2005, the number of associate and bachelor's degrees awarded grew by 35 percent, with increases for all racial/ethnic groups. Women accounted for 64 percent of the growth in associate degrees and 65 percent of the increase in bachelor's degrees. The number of master's degrees and doctoral degrees conferred between 1995 and 2005 increased by 47 percent and 26 percent respectively - with women accounting for 68 percent and 84 percent of the respective increases.

In the area of professional degrees awarded, the 10-year increase was 14 percent - and entirely attributable to women. Overall, women and minorities account for the majority of the growth in awarded degrees of all types.

Professional Implications

The report also finds that women's increased attainment of bachelor's and advanced degrees has led to gains in college faculty and administrative positions, including college and university presidencies. The total number of female faculty rose by 36.3 percent over the past decade compared to a growth rate of 5 percent for men. During that same period, the percentage of female administrators at higher education institutions rose from 44 percent of the total to 51

percent. In 2006, women accounted for 23 percent of presidential posts (compared with 10 percent 20 years earlier).

RESOURCE LINK To read more about or to purchase the report, go to www.acenet.edu/bookstore and click on "Diversity, Equity, and Gender."

SPOTLIGHT: RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

SIMPLE REPORT CARD PLAYS EXPANDED ROLE

Many people "of a certain age" - often including the trustees of your institution - have powerful memories of bringing home report cards for their parents to review and sign. Many of us remember the sweaty palms as we handed over the tan manila sleeve. Out came the card that showed whether our grades had improved, if we had behaved ourselves, if we had made progress toward our educational goals - or not.

In 2001, Clemson University's new president, Jim Barker, adopted this tried-and-true-format for his "President's Report Card to the Board of Trustees" and has been using it effectively ever since.

A Tool for Tracking

It's a deceptively simple little document that lists 27 specific goals in 5 categories, printed for the trustees and presented in that familiar manila sleeve at each quarterly board meeting. The goals track with Clemson's strategic plan, and the Report Card is also available on the Internet for any and all to view or download from the president's home page (www.clemson.edu/president).

This one tool has done wonders to increase awareness, transparency, and accountability about Clemson's ambitious 10-year vision to become a "Top 20" public university in the U.S. News & World Report rankings.

A Management Must

The Report Card is also our most important management tool. Clemson's goal-setting, planning, action, resource-allocation, and budget decisions and assessments are inextricably linked; and it is this one tool that pulls all that together in many ways.

Strategic overview. The Report Card tells the world what we want to do, when we want to accomplish it, who is responsible for doing it, and - by extension - whether we have budgeted to our plan. One column on the Report Card lists 27 "University 2011 Goals." Beside each individual goal are two more columns. One shows progress in the current year; the other notes progress toward "Top 20."

Detailed documentation. As goals are met, they are checked off on the list. For example: Exceed \$100 million in external research funding - check. Win a Phi Beta Kappa chapter - done.

Progress - or the lack of it - is indicated by up, down, or sideways arrows. Examples here include "manage enrollment to ensure the highest quality classroom experience." Results show large classes (more than 50 students) remained constant at 11 percent, but small classes (fewer than 20 students) rose from 43 percent to 48 percent of the total. Therefore, the Report Card notes one sideways arrow and one up arrow.

Not surprisingly, because the goals were based on solid planning, there are more up arrows than down arrows on Clemson's recent Report Card. Also up significantly since 2001 are freshmen retention rates, graduation rates, and the number of new freshmen from the top 10 percent of their high school classes.

By setting public, measurable goals tied to its vision, by making it clear who owns each goal, and by sharing its Report Card internally and externally, Clemson has brought a familiar, old-school reporting format into the 21st century and used it to help manage its progress to become, at No. 22, one of America's top public universities.

SUBMITTED BY [Brett Dalton](#), chief financial officer, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina

Copyright © National Association of College and University Business Officers. All rights reserved.