

CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENTS

We measure what we value and we value what we measure. As campuses strive to transform the content, process and context of what it shares with students, assessment becomes critical for understanding how far along in the process each has gone and how much further they need to go in their actions. A thorough assessment highlights problem areas as well as opportunities for improvement, and should raise awareness of current activities that are moving the campus in the right direction toward sustainability. Below are just a few of the assessment tools that education stakeholders have developed to guide this transformation, looking at indicators from solid waste to curriculum to community outreach.

Online Resources

Campus Sustainability Assessment Framework

<http://syc-cjs.org/gitp/en/framework.htm>

The Greening the Ivory Towers Project uses Canada's first Campus Sustainability Assessment Framework (*CSAF*) to identify the performances of the campuses activities and practices. The CSAF was developed through the academic research of Lindsay Cole, M.Sc. and a co-research team consisting of university faculties, students and administrators, and government representatives from all over Canada.

Campus Sustainability Assessment Project

http://csap.envs.wmich.edu/pages/res_csa.html

Whether you're looking for actual assessment tools or simply researching literature on the subject, the Campus Sustainability Assessment Project is an excellent resource. It provides an extensive, searchable record of assessment projects throughout the United States, and beyond, identified through literature searches, web searches, and interviews and correspondence with campus leaders. The database notes the documentation of over 1,100 assessment projects, and select projects from 11 other countries. The database documents project and institution characteristics and attempts to provide current contact information and web links, where available.

Campus Sustainability Snapshot

<http://www.njheps.org/assessment/guide.htm>

The New Jersey Higher Education Partnerships (NJHEPS) Campus Sustainability Snapshot accepts the widely-held view that "sustainability" is the fulfillment of present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. With this in mind, developers have selected ten areas to assess that have large potential impacts on sustainability, depending on an institution's choices. Indicators include solid waste, energy, water/sewage, food service, new structures, procurement and curriculum.

Ecological Footprint

<http://www.redefiningprogress.org/footprint/>

Redefining Progress's Ecological Footprint Analysis measures the amount of renewable and non-renewable ecologically productive land area required to support the resource demands and absorb the wastes of a given population or specific activities.

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Greenhouse Gas Inventory Guide

<http://www.lclark.edu/~seed/ghginventoryguide.pdf>

As the creator Julian Dautremont-Smith notes in the guide's introduction, a serious effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions requires establishing baselines from which to measure progress and to provide a foundation for meeting and setting targets. This guide presents an invaluable resource for those interested in greenhouse gas reductions.

Sustainability Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ)

http://www.ulsf.org/programs_saq.html

The SAQ is a qualitative questionnaire designed to help you assess the extent to which your college or university is sustainable. It aims to: raise consciousness and encourage debate about what sustainability means for higher education practically and philosophically; give a snapshot of the state of sustainability on your campus; and promote discussion on next steps for your institution. The SAQ is used in a 3-4 hour exercise with a group of approximately ten representatives including staff, students, faculty and administrators.

Sustainability Pathways Toolkit

<http://www.goodcompany.com/campus/assessmentinfo.htm>

Good Company offers comprehensive campus assessments that provide a clear view to the road to sustainability. Independent assessments provide meaningful snapshots of campus performance that include stakeholders, reduce costs, increase effectiveness of planning and communication, and align values with actions. Good Company's Sustainability Pathways Toolkit can be customized to meet each campus' specific needs. Contact: Joshua Skov: joshua.skov@goodcompany.com or 541-341- 4663 ext.11

Organizations

EFS West

<http://www.efswest.org>

The Education for Sustainability Western Network ("EFS West") is a professional association of individuals and institutions working to make sustainability a central focus of higher education in the western U.S. and Canada. The network was founded in 2001 as a partnership with Second Nature. Using existing indicators and assessment tools, EFS West will work with member institutions to develop a regional assessment framework to be used in creating a Campus Sustainability Report Card for the western region. The report card will include both comparable and campus-specific data. While the report card is one goal, another is to foster a participatory process on each campus to develop meaningful sustainability indicators. The process itself will stimulate learning and understanding of what sustainability is all about, something that is hard to get across without hands-on experience.

Good Company

<http://www.goodcompany.com/about/index.htm>

Good Company is a research and consulting firm that helps clients measure, manage, and market their social and environmental performance. We help clients identify risks and opportunities that address both short-term challenges as well as long-term value creation.

New Jersey Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability

<http://www.njheps.org/assessment.htm>

The New Jersey Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability (NJHEPS) is a consortium of 37 New Jersey higher education institutions. Its mission is to transform the higher education community to consistently practice sustainability and to more effectively contribute to the world's emerging understanding of sustainability, through teaching, research, outreach, operations, and community life.

Redefining Progress

<http://www.rprogress.org/newabout/index.shtml>

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Redefining Progress (RP) works with a broad array of partners to shift the economy and public policy towards sustainability. The Sustainability Indicators Program – which includes the Ecological Footprint – documents where people really stand with respect to natural and social limits, and helps businesses and communities and governments analyze their progress toward sustainability.

Second Nature

<http://www.secondnature.org>

Since 1993, Second Nature has been dedicated to accelerating a process of transformation in higher education. We assist colleges and universities in their quest to integrate sustainability as a core component of all education and practice in order to make human society healthy, fair, economically secure and ecologically thriving for all current and future humans and other species. Anthony Cortese, President of Second Nature, visits campuses across the U.S. empowering and consulting with higher education stakeholders to move from good intentions to concrete actions.

University Leaders for a Sustainable Future

<http://www.ulsf.org>

The mission of the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF) is to make sustainability a major focus of teaching, research, operations and outreach at colleges and universities worldwide. ULSF pursues this mission through advocacy, education, research, assessment, membership support, and international partnerships to advance education for sustainability.