

AMERICAN STUDIES

Sustainability Project



Final Report of The Sustainability Project 2012-2013

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The Sustainability Project

The 2012-2013 school year marked the final iteration of Sustainability Project programming. We aimed to continue the discourse that began in 2011: to heighten the atmosphere of environmental awareness on Vanderbilt's campus. The ultimate goal for these two years of programming was to create a campus-wide conversation that would embolden Vanderbilt's efforts toward sustainability while deepening our understanding of what we are working toward.

Overview

While the bulk of Sustainability Project programming occurred during the 2011-2012 school year, this year consisted of a robust schedule that consisted of tangible ways for students to engage with sustainability and for faculty to develop their pedagogies around this issue; a conversation on climate change with experts in the field; and a vision for Vanderbilt as a sustainable campus.

Speakers

Chuck Redman, the founding director of Arizona State University's School of Sustainability, discussed his current work at ASU's Global Institute of Sustainability and teaching in the School of Sustainability in a keynote talk entitled "**Transforming the Silos: Creating a School of Sustainability.**" This program is educating a new generation of leaders through collaborative learning, trans-disciplinary approaches, and problem-oriented training to address the environmental, economic, and social challenges of the 21st century. Mr. Redman also served as a consultant to campus leaders on the issue of sustainability in order to help direct Vanderbilt's "next steps" in developing sustainability on the campus. During his visit, he met with Carolyn Dever, Dean of the College of Arts and Science, David Hess, Director of the minor in Environment and Sustainability Studies, George Hornberger, Director of VIEE, Teresa Goddu, Director of American Studies, and Joe Bandy, Co-Director of the Cumberland Project.

Billy Parish, the founder of Energy Action Coalition and the solar company Solar Mosaic, and co-author of *Making Good: Finding Meaning, Money & Community in a Changing World*, visited campus as part of a two-day sustainability leader-in-residence event. Mr. Parish gave a keynote talk entitled "**Making Money, Doing Good: How the Millennial Generation Can Get Jobs that Change the World.**" Additionally, Mr. Parish spent time with different faculty and student groups, including a lunch presentation and discussion with faculty and students from the Climate Change Research Network and the Cumberland Project and an evening dinner with first year students at the Dean of the Commons residence. Student entrepreneurs also had a chance to meet with Mr. Parish. After an initial vetting of their respective projects, ten students were chosen to meet with Mr. Parish for discussion and feedback on their individual ventures. Finally, Mr. Parish visited ENGL 287, a course on investigative writing that focused specifically on climate change.

Spring Conference. On February 8th, the Sustainability Program organized a conference entitled “**Climate Change, Anti-Environmentalism, and American Politics,**” bringing in professors specializing in climate change from all over the country:

- **Bill Ruddiman**, University of Virginia, “**Climate Science and Climate Skeptics.**”
- **Anthony Leiserowitz**, Yale University, “**Climate Change Skepticism, Climategate, and Public Opinion.**”
- **Aaron M. McCright**, Michigan State University, “**The Conservative Movement and Climate Politics.**”
- **Timmons Roberts**, Brown University, “**No Talk but Some Walk: Obama Administration Rhetoric on Climate Change and International Climate Spending.**”

Additional visiting speakers co-sponsored by the Sustainability Project included:

- **Scott Frickel**, Washington State, “**Do Disasters Change Scientific Fields? Wetlands Ecology Before and After Katrina.**”
- **Beth Conklin**, Vanderbilt University, “**Constricting the ‘Lungs of the World’: Water, Energy and Climate Change in the Amazon.**”
- **Brent Millikan**, Director of the Amazonia Program for the International Rivers organization, on **water, energy, forest and climate change issues in Brazil.**

Cumberland Project

The Sustainability Project ended the 2012-2013 year with a one-day version of the Cumberland Project, our third iteration of this sustainability workshop. This version invited faculty from the first two years back to deepen and extend their sustainability pedagogies and to share their insights from their courses. It also allowed for the two cohorts to meet each other and to build faculty community around this issue. The Cumberland Project seeks to incorporate sustainability issues into Vanderbilt courses by fostering discussion between members of different disciplines and by introducing faculty to pedagogical techniques and campus resources related to sustainability. The day’s events were held at the Center for Teaching on Vanderbilt’s campus. Discussions centered on incorporating problem-based and project-based learning into courses on sustainability. Through small-group breakout sessions, participants discussed these topics and brainstormed practical ideas for course development. Faculty participants received a \$250 stipend to assist with the development of one or more of their courses to incorporate a sustainability or environmental theme. The three-year Cumberland Project has supported the development of over thirty new and expanded Vanderbilt courses.

American Studies Senior Project

American Studies majors focused on sustainability as the theme for their senior project. This interdisciplinary project resulted in a collaboratively-created website called “Vanderbilt the Possible: Imagining a Sustainable Campus.” In this project, students researched sustainability on other campuses to create a pragmatic vision of where Vanderbilt currently stands on issues of sustainability and how it could improve. By examining such topics as energy, transportation, food, and housing, the students created an engaging and detailed vision for how Vanderbilt could become a sustainable campus by their 25th reunion. The seniors presented this website to a large gathering of professors and students and have posted it on both the American Studies website and the Environmental and Sustainability Studies website. The URL for the website is: <http://lukechristiano.wix.com/visionofvandy>.

Environmental and Sustainability Studies Minor

The newly-created minor in Environmental and Sustainability Studies, an outcome of the 2011-2012 Sustainability Programming, began this fall. The course offerings coordinated by the Sustainability Project and developed within the Cumberland Project served as the core curriculum for this new minor and are listed below. At the end of this inaugural year, there are 13 students enrolled in this minor. By developing the Sustainability Project into an academic minor (and in time a major or program), we see the project as having a long-term institutional impact. The 2012-2013 courses counting for the minor include the ones listed below:

Minor in Environmental and Sustainability Studies

AMER 115F Food For Thought

AMER 297 Senior Seminar

AMER 298 Senior Honors Research

ANTH 207 Environmental Anthropology

ANTH 280 Intro to Geographical Information Systems

BSCI 239 Behavioral Ecology

BSCI 298 Ecology

ECON 228 Environmental Economics

EES 101 Dynamic Earth

EES 103 Oceanography

EES 107 Volcanoes: Impacts on Earth and Society

EES 1115F Science and Democracy

EES 115F Climate Change and Human History.

EES 201 Global Climate Change.

EES 205 Science, Risk, and Policy

EES 275 Sustainable Systems

ENGL 288 Writing for an Endangered World: Representative US Writers Tackle Sustainability

ENV 278 Seminar in Environmental and Sustainability Studies.

ENVE 254 Energy and Water Resources
ENVE 264. Environmental Assessments
ES 101 Engineering Freshman Seminar: Energy Choices and the Environment
HART 260W Ancient Landscapes
HIST 148 The Darwinian Revolution
PHIL 115F Green Cities.
PHIL 273 Environmental Philosophy
PHIL 274 Ethics and Animals.
SOC 102 Social Issues: Environment and Society.
SOC 206 Sociology of Health and Environmental Science
SOC 294 Climate Change and Society.
WGS 268 Gender, Race, Justice, and the Environment

In addition to building the curriculum, the Environmental and Sustainability Studies minor also held a speaker series for students. This speaker series focused on career pathways related to the minor. Speakers included:

- **Chris Ann Lunghino**, Founder of Community Sustainability USA, “**Careers in Environmental and Sustainability Studies: Law, Government, and Nonprofit Work.**”
- **Billy Parish**, co-founder of Solar Mosaic, “**Careers in Environmental and Sustainability Studies: Business and Social Entrepreneurship.**”
- **David Hess**, Vanderbilt University, “**Green Jobs, the Developmentalist State, and American Politics,**” based on his newly published book *Good Green Jobs in a Global Economy*.

AASHE Conference

This fall, Teresa Goddu, Director of the Sustainability Project, Joe Bandy, Assistant Director of the Center for Teaching and Co-Director of the Cumberland Project, and David Hess, Director of the Environmental and Sustainability Studies minor will present their findings about creating institutional change at Vanderbilt around the issue of sustainability at the 2013 Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education conference. Their panel, entitled “**Teaching Sustainability & Fostering Change: Vanderbilt University’s Sustainability Project,**” will discuss the Sustainability Project, the Cumberland Project and the development on the minor in Environmental and Sustainability Studies.