Appalachian Energy Summit  
Thursday, July 18, 2013  
Academic Integration  

Three questions:  

How do we legitimize the importance of integrating energy savings and sustainability into learning outcomes and research activities?  

Rather than a tacked-initiative, make it a real value on campus with faculty. Also bring to the table those who are missing.  

Who are stakeholders?  

Faculty:  
- a real understanding of how it's all connected to their discipline  
- What is the reward for their efforts?  
  - Tenure  
  - Needs to be more than committee work  
  - Service learning  
- Have administrators reward faculty, especially in the disciplines that we usually think of as NOT associated with sustainability (we all have a role in creating healthy, just, sustainable societies)  
- Barrier of thinking of sustainability as a separate discipline.  
  - So maybe all syllabi have pieces on this  
  - Faculty development on the topic  
  - Explicitly addressed in courses  
- Healthy defense of academic freedom can be part of this; infusing the value into the curriculum. Flip side to academic freedom is faculty’s ability to say no. Has to be rewarded.  
- “Sustainability is Everything!” Everyone has something to bring to the table  
- mentorship – starts at the administrative end.  
- Operations: Assist faculty in finding research support for sustainability-related research  
- Needs to come from provost; but it can't be added to faculty’s already full plates – incorporate into existing duties!  
- Many faculty simply don’t know “sustainability” so there’s a knowledge absence.  
- Time, $$, credit, knowledge  
- Faculty-to-faculty transmission is very important to “convert” many faculty. (acknowledging that the best journals in the world are NOT interdisciplinary and also that faculty are evaluated on a “bizarre” matrix
Administration

- Own outside commitments of university
- Engage career services – growing jobs for grads
- Alter criteria for tenure
  - Others argue that it needs to not be spelled out in this way, as that might create faculty resistance
- Industry dollars that come from sponsors who care can be used as a carrot
- Key to recruiting students & parents – use studies, research data to support this
- Research centers that foster collaboration between researchers
- Teaching – can be done, but many folks don’t know how
  - Mentoring from faculty who do know how!
  - Flipping the expression – do preach to the choir, they’ll sing louder.
- Sustainability course designation included in Gen Ed requirements
- Peer pressure for administrators – look at what other institutions are doing.
- Majority of parents also care about this, so it gets to the development administrators

Students

- Jobs – they want them!
- Need to see it on campus –
  - Saturation in curriculum, student opps, internships, extra-curriculars, etc.
  - Breaking down silos will help students, too. Holistic perspective and experience
- Message – not to “preserve” lifestyles, but to change their lifestyles . . . radicalization(?) of human values. What are the comforts that they are willing to forego?
  - Give students a way to live differently . . . in turn students can help us understand.
- Students need to feel empowered, because they are truly powerful as students.
- Students need to think: here’s what we DO. Have expectations that hold them to high standards.
- IF students already get it, then don’t we need to let students lead since they’re ahead of us?
  - Have to have faculty who are legitimate in their knowledge and skills, experiences, etc.
- Students need to know who they can work with to achieve their goals.
- Make this a part of orientation, for students, faculty, staff, etc.
- Summer readings – across the university system

STAFF

- Policies and enforcement of policies
  - Not all agree with this; some say this works against the goal
• Opportunities for learning/development and for having their ideas heard.
• Emphasize the social/human part of sustainability
• Provide the tools to make it easier for them to change
  o Give them time and resources to participate in learning
• Celebrate staff successes!
• Sustainability helps protect jobs

What are potential organizational structures that integrate energy savings and sustainability into the campus ecosystem, allowing knowledge and skills to flow between campus operations and faculty/student expertise.

• Dual reporting
  o Office of sustainability reports to academic office as well as business affairs- an opportunity to keep sustainability in the conversation. Also a liaison position between staff and faculty
• Faculty fellows: competitive for infusing sustainability
• Accountability and transparency in reporting – helps everyone see where strengths and opportunities are. A specific set of standards that’s all encompassing.
  o Provides the structure to make these sustainability practices obvious
• De-politicize
• Define learning outcomes for sustainability education
  o Emerging, cutting edge research is working toward this.
  o Is there a sustainability literacy we can measure, as part of our mission? Needs to be systemic.
  o Brings together administrative and academic choir
• Institutionally define what sustainability is, maybe a set of principles
• A transference of knowledge between campus educators/students and campus operations/administrators.
  o What are barriers?
    ▪ Operations in the past have attempted to do and they were burned in some way for their efforts to work with students.
    ▪ Maybe too much too early, in some attempts, with no oversight/responsibility/structure
    ▪ Needs assessment of facilities at Warren Wilson results in research for students on campus. Has helped moved the process along. Needs-based student learning & research.
    ▪ Expectations – need to define expectations for students, but also client needs to understand it’s a learning experience for students, too. Often students don’t quite get there, but then operations take it and do it. Then students learn they need to know the details, too.
• Adding a line item to budgets for sustainability, so that units could decide, such as low-flow toilets, etc.
Could we use post-docs to accomplish some of the gravitas of PhDs into the process, to avoid faculty not seeing the office as “legit” enough for them?

Co-teaching a class using campus as a living lab – pair a faculty member with a operations person.

Collaboration takes time – to get to know one another’s context and constraints. Need to spend this time early on, so that projects are truly jointly conceived and accomplished.

Create student projects that also result in a line on their resume.

Bring operations folks into classroom, and their projects/problems, for student learning opportunities

Staff release time to work on these types of projects

Academic experience vs. the curricular experience; different in how we infuse sustainability into these two.

Putting a rotating faculty member in office of sustainability

Internships

Given the conversation about the first two questions what should we do differently on our campus and as a general state-wide colleges and universities?

Rotating sustainability fellows (could be faculty, staff, students). They become cohorts.

In-State sabbaticals, between campuses
  - With faculty needs to be exchange of teaching, but not all campuses have that opp.

Training to address the gaps in faculty learning about sustainability.
  - Could be systems wide
  - Could include systems folks, too
  - Maybe it has an award attached

Students who’ve graduated but who want an internship with university/college to learn further

Electronic classrooms where we collaborate between 4-5 faculty at 4-5 campuses, etc.

Creating opportunities for those who are interested in this to create momentum for those around them. For instance, cafeteria staff, etc.

Share sustainability modules between campuses. Share the resources
  - MOOCs

Faculty time is still an issue:
  - So provide them with course materials
  - Have them create 25% of a class, such as the team taught

In-state competition between students.

TEDtalks on Sustainability = among state faculty, which would be shared among campuses

Structured work programs between these groups.
- Work by a student who is supervised by a operations person and overseen by a faculty member

Resources:

[Accelerating Campus Climate Initiative; Michael’s book, free download- on RMI website.]

[Portland State’s sustainability web site is a good model]

Sustainable cities, university of Oregon