

Sustainable Community Development Initiative Plan 2009-2010



Overview

Background

The guiding principles of Sustainability were first introduced to Grand Valley State University Administration and the Seidman College of Business in early 2004. Sustainable development activities began at GVSU during the summer of 2004 focusing on a collection of campus operational and administrative data relating to the triple bottom line (TBL) of environmental stewardship, economic prosperity, and social responsibility. Grand Valley's first TBL indicator report was issued in October 2005. GVSU also participated in the national Campus Day activities that year.

In the spring of 2006 the Sustainability Initiative was formally established within the College of Interdisciplinary Studies. Additionally in 2006 Grand Valley held Campus Sustainability Week in October which helped create an overall awareness among students, faculty, and staff regarding campus-wide and community sustainable development programs and activities.

Grand Valley is currently embedding Sustainability guiding principles on campus with a fully integrated system approach involving campus operations, student involvement, educating for sustainability, and community engagement. This model has been adapted from Tony Cortese at Second Nature.

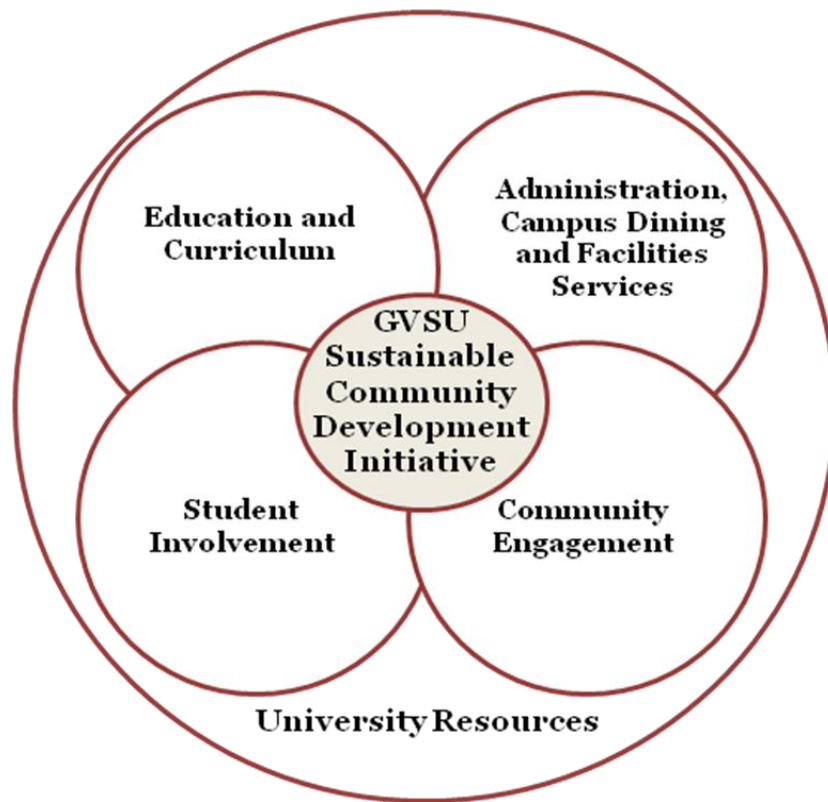
In 2009 the Sustainable Community Development Initiative was formed to assist community stakeholders in a number of sustainable development activities. Examples include the West Michigan Strategic Alliance with the development of their first West Michigan regional indicator report i.e. Vital Signs, as well as the City of Grand Rapids with the development of their first TBL indicator report. Additionally, GVSU is a founding member of the Community Sustainability Partnership (CSP) which has now grown to over 180 organizations within greater Grand Rapids that have embraced sustainability guiding principles in their planning and operations on a best efforts basis. In December 2006 the City of Grand Rapids and the CSP were designated the first U.S. Regional Center of Expertise (RCE) in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) by the UN University.

GVSU received national recognition for Sustainability Innovation in the 2008 Campus Report Card developed by the Sustainable Endowment Institute. In 2009 the Kaplan College Guide recognized GVSU as one of the top 25 most environmentally responsible and cutting edge green colleges in the U.S. In the 2010 Princeton Review Mega Guide of Colleges and Universities, GVSU received the highest Green Rating for all colleges and universities in Michigan.

Purpose

The purpose of the Sustainable Community Development Initiative (SCDI) is to provide students with the necessary skills, analytical tools, and resources to address global, national, regional, and local sustainability issues. The SCDI offers courses, programs, internships, and project activities that promote awareness about sustainable development issues and how sustainability best practices can be applied and used to gain progress against these concerns.

Modeling Sustainability on Campus



Adapted from Tony Cortese, Second Nature

Grand Valley's Mission: *Educating students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies.*

Liberal Education Focus: The University's liberal education focus emphasizes critical thinking, creative problem-solving and cultural understanding, and preparing students for life in a fast-changing world. It fosters a commitment to economic, social, and environmental sustainability and an inclusive campus that values diversity. Through this forward thinking education, students are empowered to positively affect the global community now and in the future.

The Mission of the Sustainable Community Development Initiative is to provide our students with the required skills and capabilities to become better stewards and responsible global citizens as they enter the workforce, their communities, and family life.

The Vision for the Sustainable Community Development Initiative is that sustainability becomes accepted and valued as having an integral role in fulfilling the mission of GVSU. This integration of sustainability helps students realize and develop the necessary capacity to improve upon global sustainability issues across complex and interrelated—financial, natural, human, social, manufactured, cultural, and community—capital frameworks.

Goals

A. Student Involvement

1. Create greater campus awareness among students regarding sustainability values, guiding principles, and concepts.
2. Enhance student understanding of sustainability and its application to personal life, professional careers, and community engagement so that students can become better global citizens.

B. Education, Curriculum Development, and Faculty

1. Develop additional education for sustainable development curriculum, courses, themes certificates, minors, etc.

C. Administration, Campus Dining, and Facilities Services

1. With administration, campus dining, and facilities services, continue to help create additional value and benefits, improve eco-efficiencies, and increase eco-effectiveness of “greening” campus wide sustainability activities and programs.

D. Community Engagement

1. Connect Grand Valley faculty, staff, students, and alumni, with the Grand Rapids and the West Michigan community regarding sustainable development programs and activities.
2. Provide support to the City of Grand Rapids and region regarding sustainable development programs and activities.

A. Student Involvement Goals

Goal 1: We will create greater campus awareness among students regarding sustainable development values, guiding principles, and concepts.

Objective: Make visible and known the principles of sustainability on campus through teaching, guest lecturers, activities and programs.

Action Plan:

- Bring well known authors and speakers on campus addressing key sustainable development issues.
- Maintain a student focused and led Sustainable Community Development Initiative website (www.gvsu.edu/sustainability).
- Hold ongoing “Sustainability Conversations” and dialogue with faculty and student classroom discussions.
- Hold annual Campus Sustainability Week (CSW) activities and programs in October and annual Environmental Awareness activities and programs in April.
- Incorporate a Student Sustainability Guide within the freshman planner and distribute annually to the freshman class.
- Create various sustainability certificates for students focused on social responsibility, economic prosperity and environmental stewardship within the colleges.
- Maintain and grow a sustainability scholarship and endowment for students through the Nichols Sustainability Scholarship, as well as other development programs.
- Assist student led campus wide sustainability programs and activities such as with the Student Senate, e.g. “Focus the Nation” and PowerShift national climate change programs, “RecycleMania” waste and recycling national competition activities, Campus health and wellness programs
- Create additional student documentaries on campus sustainable development project activities

Measurements:

- Number of students who apply, qualify, and obtain the various Sustainability Certificates, themes, minors, and sustainability emphasis.
- Student feedback to campus surveys on Sustainability activities.
- Number of “hits and visitors” on the Sustainable Community Development Initiative website www.gvsu.edu/sustainability, including social media resources.
- Number of authors and lecturers speaking on sustainable topics of interest including student participation and attendance.
- Number of “sustainability conversations” held in class with faculty and student attendance.
- Number of freshmen introduced to sustainability guiding principles during orientation week.
- Number of students engaged with Campus Sustainability Week and Environmental Awareness Week Activities.
- Number of students engaged in student led sustainability programs such as climate change, recycling, energy conservation, health and wellness, etc.

A. Student Involvement Goals (cont.)

Goal 2: We will enhance student understanding of sustainability and its applicability to personal life, professional careers, and community engagement so that students can become better global citizens.

Objective: Provide students with practical sustainability applications, by creating service learning opportunities.

Action Plan:

- Help maintain a student senate sustainability roundtable with leaders of key student groups interested in sustainability including: Student Environmental Coalition; Geology Club; Students Against Sweatshops; Biology Club, Students for Advanced Marketing, College Entrepreneurial Organization (CEO), as well as other organizations.
- Develop student independent study in sustainability subject matter.
- Identify company and organization internships and service learning opportunities sustainability within the community.
- Establish key sustainable development platform projects for students among companies and organizations within the community.

Measurements:

- Number of students involved in sustainability service learning projects and internships in community profit and non-profit organizations.
- Number of sustainability business cases taught.
- Number of students participating in Recyclemania competition on campus.
- Number of students participating in energy conservation competition in residential living spaces on campus as well as increase recycling rates and waste minimization.
- Feedback from the Student Senate regarding sustainable development focus areas on campus.
- Feedback from students and community partners regarding quality of internship and service learning experiences.

B. Education, Curriculum Development, and Faculty Goals

Goal 1: We will support development of additional Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) curriculum, courses, and themes.

Objective: Encourage faculty to develop and teach curriculum and courses dealing with sustainability subject matter.

Action Plan:

- Expand and encourage faculty ESD coalition and list serve to develop new Sustainability courses and subject matter.
- Conduct a faculty workshop focused on “sense of place.”
- Maintain a faculty list serve for ESD communications and discussions.
- Develop and benchmark background information on ESD curriculum at other colleges, e.g. renewable and alternative energies, green chemistry.
- Continue the development of sustainability themes among the various colleges.
- Encourage further enrollment in the Environmental Studies Minor.
- Make available seed grants for faculty and students interested in sustainable development project activities including Request for Proposals (RFP’s) through a campus sustainability Reinvestment Fund.
- Develop independent study and practicum on ESD subject matter.
- Inventory existing courses in ESD subject matter.
- Establish FTLC Teaching Circle to examine Sustainability teaching methods.
- Participate and support the Michigan Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability (MIHEPS) among faculty, staff, and students.
- Develop a web based sustainability guide for faculty, staff and others within the community.
- Establish a body of knowledge among faculty regarding climate change and global warming.

Measurements:

- Number of new and enhanced ESD courses developed and taught with student attendance.
- Number of faculty teaching ESD courses and subject matter.
- Number of students taking Earth and Environment Theme and Environmental Studies minor.
- Number of sustainable development grants awarded.
- Number of faculty interested in ESD curriculum, programs, and activities.

C. Administration, Campus Dining, and Facilities Services Goals

Goal 1: In conjunction with Facilities Services, Administration and Campus Dining, continue to help create additional value and benefits, improve efficiencies, and increase eco-effectiveness of “greening” campus wide sustainability programs and activities.

Objective: Continue to develop the Grand Valley Campuses as a “learning laboratory” for sustainable development programs and activities.

- Successfully implement the signed American College and University President’s Climate Agreement.
- Successfully implement the signed Talloires Declaration.

Action Plan:

- Help develop the second campus sustainability report that is web-based.
- Develop working relationships with other leading universities and colleges, as well as local institutions regarding major sustainability programs of mutual interest.
- Pursue appropriate RFQ’s, RFP’s, and grants for sustainable development and programs of interest.
- Help develop LEED certified Grand Valley Allendale Campus location as well as LEED certified buildings using LEED EB, NC and other LEED rating systems.
- Focus on key sustainable development student assisted campus activities including: increased recycling; energy conservation; food composting; evaluation of renewable energies; reduction of GHG/CO2 emissions; preservation of the natural habitats; increased student bus ridership, the development of a community garden; LEED building performance, etc.
- Continue implementation of green purchasing guidelines that help build local economy and conserve overall resources.
- Conduct post-occupancy survey of LEED Silver Certified Lake Ontario Hall (LOH) and begin development of LOH building performance measurements.
- Participate and benchmark GVSU in AASHE STAR Campus Sustainability Rating System Pilot Project.
- Continue the development of an overall action plan to successfully implement the Talloires Declaration and monitor progress.
- Develop an overall action plan to successfully implement the AC and U President’s Climate Agreement and monitor progress. Submit a GVSU Climate Action Plan by January 2010 acknowledging steps toward climate neutrality.
- Continue the development of sustainability programs and activities into an applied center of sustainability for overall community development.
- Help establish a sustainability reinvestment fund on campus
- Continue development of the GVSU GROWS plan including expansion as the Community Garden activities.

C. Administration, Campus Dining, and Facilities Services Goals (cont.)

Measurements:

- Help maintain an up-to-date campus sustainability report with benchmarked sustainability performance indicators and sustainable development best practices.
- Number of key campus wide sustainability programs and activities.
- Number of students, faculty, and staff participating in sustainability programs and activities.
- Number of LEED certified and registered buildings on campus.
- Monitor key environmental, social, and economic data for campus operations and facilities management.
- Amount of departmental funds reinvested in sustainability.
- Maintain membership in good standing of ACUPCC Agreement and monitor overall progress towards achieving carbon neutrality and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.
- Number of GVSU sustainability awards and recognition.
- Amount of local and organic food consumed by campus.
- Amount of energy conserved, waste minimized, and carbon footprint reduced on campus.
- Value created through public transportation.
- GVSU economic development contribution to the local economy.
- Number of speaking engagements and participation in sustainability conferences, meetings, and workshops.

D. Community Engagement Goals

Goal 1: Help connect Grand Valley faculty, staff, students, and alumni with Grand Rapids and West Michigan sustainable development programs and activities.

Objectives: To embrace and embed sustainability “best practices” within Grand Rapids and West Michigan and help engage GVSU students, faculty, staff, and alumni with these sustainable development programs and activities.

Action Plan:

- Develop working relationships with key stakeholders within the West Michigan and greater Grand Rapids community, e.g. Community Sustainability Partnership (CSP) www.grpartners.org
- Help achieve CSP annual plan goals and objectives and provide CSP administrative support.
- Assist with the development of a database of resources and hidden assets for the greater Grand Rapids and West Michigan community.
- Assist in the development of triple bottom line (TBL) indicator reports and sustainability plans for neighborhoods and communities.
- Establish sustainable development platform projects with Grand Valley college faculty and students and key community stakeholders.
- Hold local, regional, and statewide sustainable development conferences at GVSU such as with the Renewable Energy Summit, GreenTown, etc.
- Provide sustainable development “best practices” to businesses, schools, faith based community, NGO’s etc.
- Develop partnership with public schools interested in education for sustainable development, e.g. City Middle High School and Dickinson School

Measurements:

- Number of companies and non-profits endorsing the CSP and developing baseline indicator reports.
- Community stakeholder satisfaction regarding platform projects.
- Number of sustainable development user groups within the community.
- Number of conferences held at GVSU with attendees including feedback regarding sustainability development.
- Number of articles written and presentations made regarding the City of Grand Rapids and the greater Community regarding sustainable development programs.

D. Community Engagement Goals (cont)

Goal 2: Provide support and assistance to the Mayor's Office and Sustainability Office within the City of Grand Rapids regarding sustainable development programs and activities.

Objectives: To ensure successful implementation of triple bottom line city sustainability programs and activities.

Action Plan:

- Benchmark other communities and cities regarding sustainability “best practices”, planning and performance measurements.
- Help grow the Community Sustainability Partnership (CSP) which now has ~180 member organizations including Grand Valley as a founding partner.
- Help successfully implement the UNU Regional Center of Expertise (RCE) in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) designation received by the City of Grand Rapids.
- Help assist with City of Grand Rapids sustainability projects (as directed).
- Help develop and maintain a city website dedicated to sustainable development activities, e.g. www.sustainablegr.com
- Maintain an ongoing annual contract with the City of Grand Rapids for sustainable development programs and activities.
- Help develop grassroots “Base of the Pyramid” inner city sustainable neighborhood development such as with Hands of Hope Initiative.
- Assist in the development of West Michigan Regional Sustainability Leadership Initiative.

Measurements:

- Number of successfully implemented and completed city sustainability projects.
- Establish a Place Based Protocol for use in the development of sustainable neighborhoods and communities.
- Number of people attending CSP and other conferences and summit meetings relating to community sustainable development, e.g. GreenTown
- Number of assisted city, municipality, regional, and community stakeholder TBL Indicator reports for the West Michigan community.
- Development of sustainable neighborhood indicators for the Hands of Hope Initiative.