

Grand Rapids Community College

Sustainability Plan

Revised 2009

**Submitted By Dr. Gary W. Burbridge,
Director of Sustainability**

**Approved by the Grand Rapids Community College
Sustainability Council***

(See appendix 1 for membership)

Preface

This sustainability plan was requested by the President and Provost of Grand Rapids Community College. It was produced by many members of the GRCC faculty and staff, as well as input from students and several community supporters.

This is a report to the public, both internal and external. If you have questions about this report, or about the GRCC Sustainability Council please contact:

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A letter from President Ender:

One of the reasons I wanted to come to Grand Rapids Community College was the strong clear values that people held. But even more importantly, they acted on those values. Innovation is deliberately pursued; diversity has been a standard; responsiveness, civic engagement and community service are woven throughout our educational programs. And because of the foresight of many employees past and present, we have already been acting on our commitment to maintaining the well-being of our physical environment for over a decade.

So it is no surprise that this sustainability plan sets forth goals and actions in three important areas: Education, Operations and Community. Education is a powerful change agent; daily operations allow us to put what we have learned into practice and to provide leadership to others; community is at the heart of everything we do.

It is with personal pride that I endorse this plan and the people who are working to carry it out. I will be working to help achieve the goals of the GRCC Sustainability Council, and I hope you will too.

Introduction

Former President Juan Olivarez called together a team of GRCC faculty and staff on January 31, 2002 to begin planning a strategy “for taking a leadership position in introducing sustainability principles into its academic, operational and community work.”

(see GRCC Greening the Campus Team booklet)

Since that time the team has met regularly and taken the lead in the three areas listed in the statement of purpose above. Evidence of this can be found in the Greening Team reports to the Provost submitted over the last two years.

(Report to the Provost, 2003, 2004, 2005)

After nearly 51/2 years of work the Greening Team believes that it is time to institutionalize sustainability at Grand Rapids Community College, making sustainability one of the principal components of “how we do business” at the institution. The College’s commitment to this is illustrated by the signing of the Talloires Declaration (University Leaders for a Sustainable Future) in 2004.

(Report to the Associate Provost, January, 2006)

This revised version of the GRCC Sustainability Plan was developed during the summer of 2009. It is the product of the work of the Sustainability Council and reflects the accomplishments of the past three years as well as the changes in focus that are deemed necessary for the college to move ahead in its commitment to developing a sustainable college in a sustainable community.

(Sustainability Director’s Report, September, 2009)

Grand Rapids Community College Sustainability Plan

“Academic Excellence – Operational Efficiency – Environmental Responsibility”

Statement of Purpose: The Sustainability Council will lead Grand Rapids Community College’s efforts to implement sustainability in all academic, operational and community work using the foundation of the Triple Bottom Line philosophy.

Vision: GRCC will be a leader in our community in making sustainable practices the norm through education and example.

Goals:

- A. Education:** We will provide education to members of the college and the community about the ethics, alternative resources, and best practices needed to create a sustainable world.

Objectives

- 1. Design courses/programs/certificates that teach sustainability practices and principles**

Action Plan

- Benchmark and assess demand
- Identify potential coursework
- Present proposal to the appropriate college committees
- Design and obtain approval for a sustainability certificate
- Market certificate

Outcomes

- Offer coursework
- Approval of certificate
- Enroll and graduate students
- Begin to offer certificate

2. Incorporate sustainability principles and practices into existing programs and coursework.

Action Plan:

- Review existing courses to identify sustainability principles and practices in place
- Familiarize faculty with concepts related to sustainability
- Train faculty in sustainability principles/practices
- Support introduction of appropriate material into GRCC courses Increase awareness of connections in existing classes

Outcomes

- Complete review of GRCC courses **Done**
- Complete training plan
- Complete training
- Appropriate material integrated into course

3. Incorporate sustainability principles and practices into GRCC General Learner Outcomes

Action Plan

- Identify and clarify sustainability in the context of General Learner Outcomes
- Meet with Assessment Coordinator
- Obtain appropriate approval
- Create faculty team to develop learning objectives specific to sustainability

Outcomes

- Complete proposal for presentation to Assessment Coordinator and General Education Team **Done**
- Sustainability principles integrated into GLO's

4. Hold seminars and workshops on sustainability for community and for GRCC staff

Action Plan

- Identify community needs, working with area organizations
- Develop schedule of tentative workshops and /or seminars each year
- Begin offering workshops and seminars

Outcomes

- Identification of potential offerings **Done yearly**
- Coordination with interested community organizations **Done yearly**
- Offer workshops and seminars **Begun in 2008**

5. Support use of non-toxic resources (such as chemicals) in classrooms

Action Plan

- Identify toxic substances in use
- Work with faculty and staff to identify ways of replacing toxics where possible
- Establish procedure for making decisions about use of toxics

Outcomes

- Reduction in toxic materials use – established targets for reduction in place

6. Develop Sustainability Service Learning opportunities for students

Action Plan

- Create a list of sustainability related opportunities in coordination with Service Learning program
- Promote opportunities for students
- Implement service learning for students – integrated into **Sus 201** course

Outcomes

- Sustainability learning opportunities identified
- Coordination plan with Service Learning in place
- Students beginning to take advantage of the opportunities
- Create faculty team to develop learning objectives specific to sustainability

7. Benchmark our work against other colleges

Action Plan

- Use AASHE STARS report to gather information
- Look at programs at colleges and universities known for their sustainability work

Outcomes

- Identified best practices reviewed
- Best practices adopted

B. Operations: We will integrate sustainable practices into our campus operations

Objectives:

1. Establish methods and time lines for reduction of solid waste

Action Plan

- Develop and use effective measures of types and quantities of waste
- Identify methods of waste reduction
- Establish starting point and implement
- Monitor outcomes

Outcomes

- Types and quantities of waste identified - **Done**
- Methods of waste reduction identified - **Done**
- Begin to implement the plan - **Done**
- Outcomes Monitored on a yearly basis - **Ongoing**

2. Reduce energy use on campus

Action Plan

- Develop measures of energy usage
- Establish a base line for energy reduction
- Identify energy saving methods
- Implement savings plan

Outcomes

- Energy usage measurements identified and adopted - **Done**
- Energy saving methods identified and implemented – **In process**

3. Use renewable energy sources

Action Plan

- Identify types of renewable energy available and appropriate for GRCC
- Explore green energy purchase options
- Establish a percentage of energy to be derived from renewable resources
- Implement a plan to achieve established goals
- Develop partnerships for purchase of green energy

Outcomes

- Alternative energy types and sources identified -**Done**
- Plan implemented and percentage goals achieved – **In process (20% green energy purchased from Consumers Energy annually)**

4. Expand recycling efforts on campus

Action Plan

- Identify opportunities for improvement
- Locate resources for increased recycling
- Educate the college community about values of recycling
- Implement the plan

Outcomes

- Opportunities identified and resources secured – **In process**
- Education plan implemented - **Ongoing**
- Recycling on campus increases by 5% per year - **Done**

5. Adopt environmentally friendly vehicles for the campus fleet

Action Plan

- Identify fleet vehicles and ages
- Examine environmentally friendly alternatives
- Create a plan for adoption of vehicles

Outcomes

- Plan in place - **Ongoing**

6. Adopt a “Green” purchasing plan

Action Plan

- Research existing plans
- Identify possible plan
- Adopt a plan
- Secure appropriate approvals
- Implement the plan

Outcomes

- Evidence of purchasing identified – **Cleaning products, cleaning paper, toilet paper is green**

- Use recycled printing paper – **100% post consumer paper used, covers and boxes all recycled paper with soy based printing**

7. LEED Standards into all our building and remodeling

Action Plan

- Understand and adopt LEED practices
- Develop a plan of application of these practices

Outcomes

- Practices applied - **Used in remodel of 1st floor of Cook Hall and in building of Wealthy and West Side Street Corner centers**

8. American College and University President’s Climate Commitment adopted and in place

Action Plan

- Sign the commitment
- Complete GHG (Greenhouse Gas) inventory
- Complete and adopt a college carbon neutrality plan

Outcomes

- Commitment signed – **done**
- GHG Inventory complete – **in process**
- Carbon neutrality plan adopted and in place

C. Community: GRCC will be a leader, a partner and a resource for sustainability efforts in Western Michigan.

Objectives

1. Leader

Action Plan

- Participate in or lead training workshops and seminars in collaboration with local sustainable businesses
- Develop fiscal relationships with local sustainable businesses and organizations where appropriate
- Innovate and model appropriate behavior

Outcomes

- Opportunities established and maintained – two per year
- Develop an energy use inventory – 2009/2010

- Begin a plan for carbon neutrality – 2009/2010
- Continue energy use reduction initiative through the work of Energy Education - 2009

2. Partner

Action Plan

- Establish and maintain partnerships with community neighborhood associations
- Identify resources that GRCC has to offer (ongoing)
- Link our resources to community needs
- Engage in planning sustainable efforts in Western Michigan

Outcomes

- Two partnerships established per year (ongoing)
- GRCC physical and staff resources identified and offered to community partners as needed (ongoing)
- Work with Community Sustainability Partners to revise and implement a new plan
- Partner with area colleges and universities to collaborate on developing transferable curriculum

3. Resource

Action Plan

- Assist other institutions/businesses develop sustainability plans
- Establish a defined relationship with the Grand Rapids Public Schools around sustainable education
- Seek grants and other support for community collaborative projects
- Act as a clearinghouse for area businesses and organizations providing information and opportunities in sustainable practices

Outcomes

- Partnership with GRPS established and functioning – 2009/2010
- Grants secured for partnering – ongoing
- Establish system for connecting community institutions with the resources they need – ongoing
- Identify and work with two businesses or organizations to help them develop sustainability plans

2009-2010 Sustainability Council Roster

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