

Canterbury Christ Church University

Sustainability Professional Award

Peter Rands



About the project

Summary

How do you take an HEI from zero to hero in 5 years? By working at multiple levels, with multiple facets and multiple impacts, involving all those that have the will or inclination. You build a leadership movement in which everyone is given permission to lead on a project, initiative, policy, strategy or activity they wish. You provide the framework for sustainability in which all can operate and flourish, with explicit support.

In five years, Peter and his university wide team has embedded sustainability into the strategic significance of the University; secured estates and operational improvements; embedded ESD as a key strand of activity through the *Futures Initiative*; significantly enhanced student engagement through the setup of a Student Green Office on a shoestring; enhanced biodiversity through the *Bioversity Initiative*, which has brought heritage, sense of place, food and curriculum together in a rich and diverse project; and brought the *Whole Earth?* exhibition to our campuses, our partners in South India and the City as a major provocation, which is being linked to all of the above

Project partners

- Estates and Infrastructure; Housekeeping; Grounds and Gardens; Catering and Hospitality; IT Services
- Schools of Human and Life Sciences; Law, Criminal Justice & Computing; Humanities; Psychology, Politics
- & Sociology; Business; Media, Art & Design; Childhood & Education Sciences; Allied Health Professions; Centre for Children, Families and Communities; etc.
- Student Green Office; Sustainability and Futures Initiative teams
- Facilities Administration team; Accounts Payable
- All members of the Sustainability Strategic Management Group and its Working Groups; the Senior Management Team
- Students' Union; Politics & Debating Society; Feminist Society; Environmental Society; etc
- EarthCraftuk; Artswork; Kent County Council; Kent Wildlife Trust; Manor House Nursery and Forest School

Profile

- HEI
- 18,000 full and part time students
- 1,426 staff
- Cathedral city location

Category supported by




Finalist's case study

The results

The problem

The need for a paradigm shift in an organisation that was in a nascent state with regard to sustainability

The approach

1. Build a ground up movement across the organisation using the individual motivation and leadership that exists throughout.
2. Influence and lead change in the organisational infrastructure to ensure alignment between the principles of sustainability and the values and mission of the University.
3. Celebrate individual and collective success, report widely and tell the story!

Our goals

Our vision is to develop environments in which people can explore more sustainable ways of living in the 21st Century. We recognise four components to sustainability; global citizenship, environmental stewardship; social justice, ethics and well-being and futures thinking. We aspire that these should be integrated across all operational areas, curriculum and research; and that they should be embedded in the culture, practices and physical environment of the University. We see this as a long-term process which is essential to the health of the University, its community and to wider society.

Obstacles and solutions

No dedicated resource	Employ a director for Sustainability and position in the centre reporting to the SMT
Changing HE environment	Work with the grain of the organisation; being opportunistic and entrepreneurial
People need permission	Create a structure in which people can operate and provide funding
Disparate activities	Connect the organisation around sustainability by embedding a coherent narrative

Performance and results

Significant progress on every front and sustainability embedded in the organisational and strategic infrastructure. A permissive culture and a well-developed supportive team, which spreads throughout the organisation.

The future

Lessons learned

1. Understand your organisation and be opportunistic!
2. Recognise that leadership exists all around you and make use of it!
3. Be tenacious, patient but also respectful of other peoples' priorities!

Sharing your project

Widespread dissemination across the sector of the *Futures Initiative*, Bioversity, our EMS implementation; along with the developing narrative around the role of leadership. Internal marketing, reporting annually, as well as special editions of external magazine (Inspire) and sections for the University Annual Report.

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

It's very important that our work is recognised within the sector; both for the team involved but also for its unique blend and approach to difficult questions and problems.

Further information

Peter.rands@canterbury.ac.uk

Sustainability@canterbury.ac.uk

<http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/about-us/sustainability/sustainability.aspx>

<https://cccu.canterbury.ac.uk/whole-earth-project/whole-earth.aspx>