

Finalist's case study

Ball State University Continuous Improvement From the Ground-up: A Whole Systems Approach to Institutional Change

Section 1 About the project

Summary

For some 30 years Ball State University has been engaged with embedding sustainability deeply within -- and completely across -- the social, economic and environmental landscape of the institution. We have succeeded in integrating active involvement of students, staff, faculty and administrators as well as representatives from the near-surround community.

Section 2 The results

The problem

We've taken a whole-systems approach to the challenge of bringing sustainability considerations into our academic and operational environment.

The approach

Not only are we offering courses, minors, and disciplinary-specific academic programs in sustainability for our students, but we have an appreciable percentage of our faculty engaged in sustainability-related research, have adopted campus-wide practices in effective landscape, building, transportation and other infrastructure services. Our Council on the Environment (COTE) which represents the many Vice-Presidents, Deanships, constituent interest groups, students, community members and K-12 education stakeholders in the university's laboratory school has been in existence for some 11 years and serves as a clearing-house for sustainability initiatives campus-wide.

Our goals

We advocate for engagement by the full-breadth of the institution in green, sustainable and generative understandings of the social, economic and environmental complexities of sustainability; we offer the forthright reporting of our performance metrics through AASHE STARS, ACUPCC and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) protocols.

Obstacles and solutions

- Funding Allocation and/or redistribution



Profile

- Ball State University
- 20,000 students (includes full and part time students)
- 3500 staff
- Urban

Finalist's case study

Performance and results

We have trained well over $\frac{3}{4}$ of our faculty in ways to bring sustainability-related education into their current and anticipated teaching, have supported numerous student clubs and interest groups in their promotion of sustainability activities on campus including residence-hall and academic-building energy conservation and water reduction competitions, and have supported well over 100 respective administrative units throughout the campus in the development of their individualized sustainability strategic plans. All these efforts are reported in full on our primary gateway website: www.bsu.edu/sustainability.

Section 3 The future

Lessons learned

We are preparing students for engaging the real-world through our **Immersive Learning** initiatives; we have been preparing our faculty to provide leadership as stewards of the future with the support made available for new course offerings, course preparation and training associated with the Green-for-Green Summer Workshops, and recognition from all manner of external agencies and organizations for the creative leadership provided through our programs.

<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/centersandinstitutes/cote/sustainability/stars>

We were approached by the Carbon Neutral Business Network (CNBN), Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF), and Chevrolet Carbon Reduction Initiative (CRI) to help pilot the creation of new methodology for universities to qualify their carbon reduction credits for transaction in the Carbon Market. We have helped to develop the pilot methodology by which carbon credits can be certified, meeting criteria established by Verified Carbon Standard (VCS), have developed templates of documentation and transaction through our work with Bonneville Environmental Foundation on behalf of Chevrolet, and have developed protocols for review and validation by working with Det Norske Veritas of Oslo, Norway, the third-party validation entity that establishes the validation of these protocols.

Sharing our project

The university's approach and whole systems thinking has opened the door for a new wave of enterprise in treating the campus as a living laboratory. With the installation of our district-scale geothermal project, we have been able, through the cooperation of our facilities management folks, to install monitoring wells around the perimeter of the bore-hole fields and our geology faculty and students are now conducting real-time monitoring and longitudinal research; publishing analytic papers on the performance of the system with observations of discoveries and recommendations for enhanced operation for efficiency and effective impact.

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

This has been an opportunity to share our work on the international stage.

Further information

Robert J. Koester, AIA LEED AP
Professor and Director
765.285.1135 (d) 765.749.1006 (c)

rkoester@bsu.edu

Twitter: @BallState

Facebook: Ball State University

LinkedIn: Ball State University

Jim Lowe, PE
Director of Engineering, Construction and Operations
765.285.2805 (d) 765.730.5086 (c)
jlowe@bsu.edu