Green Gown Awards 2012

Highly commended case study

Dissemination supported by: HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND hefce

The University of Nottingham

Learning and Skills

Nottingham Advantage Award: Sustainability Grand Challenge

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Profile

- Russell Group HEI
- 43,000 students (includes campuses in the UK, China and Malaysia)

Section 1 About the project

Summary

We wanted to extend our sustainability strategy beyond our estates and research into our core business of teaching and learning. We set up a 'Sustainability Grand Challenge' to engage staff and students with the issues and to develop resources about sustainability and in sustainable formats that would support the University community globally (including our campuses in China and Malaysia) to increase our sustainability literacy.

We conducted a module audit, organised focus groups, seminars and conferences, produced films and web pages and developed ten modules on sustainability as part of The Nottingham Advantage Award (our student employability and skills award). These modules include Sustainability in the Arts and Humanities, in Geography, Engineering and Business, but also aspects of 'social' sustainability such as Global Citizenship and Peer Mentoring. These have now been published as Open Educational Resources and as ibooks, freely available to all.

Project partners

JISC funded our module developments and the Higher Education Academy's pilot Green Academy: Curricula for Tomorrow, provided us with inspiration and critical friends.

Section 2 The results

The problem

How to engage the university community with sustainability in a way that was meaningful to all and broader than a personal commitment to recycling and environmental protection.

The approach

We focused upon engagement with staff and students, exploring what sustainability meant to different groups. We sought to establish shared values rather than produce a definition that everyone was expected to sign up to.

Our goals

To gather views, invite contributions, and develop quality materials that staff and students could use in their own learning – to make it easy to think about sustainability in a range of contexts and through different lenses:

1. Using Sustainable learning technology
2. Developing discipline-related content about Sustainability
3. Developing and supporting Sustainable methods of teaching and learning

Challenges and solutions

Student engagement	Make it fun – we are in the 2nd year of a film project that has brought together students from different disciplines to make films about aspects of sustainability
Staff engagement	Locate sustainability 'champions' from different disciplines who can bridge the divide between arts and sciences.
Avoiding polemic	Working towards shared values rather than a definition
Management support	Linking sustainability to existing university strategies for employability, internationalisation, global citizenship, community engagement

Performance and results

Phase 1 of the Grand Challenge is complete now. We have evaluated the modules with students and staff and are now launching them as credit-bearing modules within the Nottingham Advantage Award.

Section 3 The future

Lessons learned

The chief lesson has been finding ways to make sustainability relevant to different groups. The project has brought together academics, learning technologists, estates staff, and students in an effective partnership. We don't all mean the same thing when we talk about sustainability, but we can all understand why and how it means different things to different people and in different contexts.

Sharing your project

The project has been disseminated via a one-day conference, 'Sustainability in Practice' attended by delegates from 20 different higher education institutions. We have shared the resources with our Green Academy partners and have presented them at various internal events. The resources are also being promoted via various OER repositories.

What has it meant to your institution to be highly commended at the Green Gown Awards?

Nottingham believes that sustainability must be at the heart of the student experience, central to teaching and learning, and integral to graduate employability. Being 'Highly Commended' at the Green Gown awards in the category 'Learning and Skills' provides authoritative external validation of this.

Further information

Our modules can be accessed via U-Now: **http://unow.nottingham.ac.uk/indexcms.aspx**
Or as ibooks from the itunes store:
Engineering Part 1: https://itunes.apple.com/gb/book/sustainability-engineering/id572912964?mt=11
Engineering Part 2: https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/sustainability-engineering/id573166431?mt=11
Arts and Humanities Part 1: https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/sustainability-in-arts-humanities/id570700324?mt=11
Arts and Humanities Part 2: https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/sustainability-in-arts-humanities/id570941412?mt=11
Search also for Sustainability: the Geography Perspective and Sustainability: the Engineering Perspective

For further information, contact: sarah.speight@nottingham.ac.uk