

SY2-03

Integrating Health, Diversity, and Environment through Building Campus Cultures of Sustainability **Harold Glasser**

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In January of 2008, President John M. Dunn set out to make WMU an international campus sustainability leader by creating a “culture of sustainability”. President Dunn’s vision consists of integrating “Three Pillars”: Health and Wellness, Diversity and Inclusivity, and Sustainability into one over-arching approach to use higher education to help improve quality of life for all. Building on the tremendous, but under publicized campus greening efforts of our staff, the requirement of our university mission “To advance responsible environmental stewardship”, and a 2003 “Environmental Mission Statement” approved by the Faculty Senate and Western Student Association, President Dunn signed the Talloires Declaration. He also created a Universitywide Sustainability Committee (PUSC)—consisting of key administrators, operations staff, students, and faculty from across the campus—to help assess our progress on sustainability and to begin to chart a course for our future. As a first-step toward developing a full-scale sustainability strategic plan, he charged the Committee with the task of identifying a catalog of strategic sustainability initiatives. In an effort to develop a baseline for our campus greening efforts and to systematically identify opportunities for new initiatives, the President’s Universitywide Sustainability Committee reviewed each of the Talloires Declaration’s ten action plan items and assessed the status of WMU’s activities in relation to them. Our university’s activities mirror national campus sustainability trends as documented by the “National Report Card on Sustainability in Higher Education” and the “College Sustainability Report Card” in many ways. During a series of meetings and workshops from March through October 2008, the PUSC engaged in a process of brainstorming, prioritizing, and refining potential sustainability initiatives. Our criterion for culling and prioritizing the initiatives was our collective perception of their ability to fill key gaps and leverage significant, positive change over time. The initiatives fall into five general categories: (1) Governance and Administration, (2) Operations & In-reach, (3) Community Service & Outreach, (4) Curriculum, and (5) Research. Each initiative is also characterized by whether we considered it to be technical (T) or planned (P). Technical initiatives are generally amenable to relatively easy, straightforward implementation, which results in a positive payback or only demands a modest allocation of funds. The decision to move forward on technical initiatives typically involves a small number of campus decision-makers. Planned initiatives, on the other hand, often require an extended, ongoing conversation among several campus constituencies; complex, high-levels of coordination; long lead times; or significant allocation of resources. The majority of the recommended initiatives are technical and all of them can be started within the next three years. The Report was presented to the President’s

Senior Leadership Team in January, 2009 and made public on WMU’s Sustainability Website in February, 2009. An ambitious and achievable set of initiatives are already being built up incrementally as resources become available and as organizational capacity is developed. Because certain combinations of these initiatives dovetail synergistically, they can support an integrated planning process that considers WMU’s systems, mission, goals, and strengths and weaknesses in a systematic, anticipatory manner. Finally, because progress resulting from introducing these initiatives will be readily apparent and measurable, it can help facilitate capacity building and create a foundation for seamlessly integrating sustainability considerations into the university’s long-term strategic and master planning processes—thus fostering President Dunn’s vision of creating a campus culture of sustainability by modeling WMU’s sustainability commitments.

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Green University Initiatives for Promoting Health of Human Ecology in Taiwan

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As sustainability becomes the general consensus for the core idea of human society development, higher education institutes are inevitably playing the key role in promoting and implementing it. Since 1970s, universities in many countries in the world have shaped operation, maintenance, and development with the idea of sustainability. Conferences were held, declarations were signed, and organizations were established for linking colleges and universities in sustainability related issues. In Taiwan, the need for higher education institutes in taking sustainability into consideration in all aspects is also urgent, especially in recent years as citizens is becoming more and more environmentally literate.

In late 1990s, the Ministry of Education (MOE) of Taiwan conducted environmental systems management (EMS) projects on safety and health issues in university laboratories. This can be treated as the pioneer work in campus sustainability issues because in the past a major part of the hazardous waste produced in these laboratories was discharged into the environment without proper treatment. In 1998, the MOE initiated a “sustainable campus” program for elementary and high schools by promoting green building together with sustainability oriented curricula. However, campus sustainability issues in colleges and universities were not in the agenda at that time. Later in 2002, the term “Green University” was presented in the area of