

ProSPER.Net News Survey Results

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Late last year we sent out a survey about the ProSPER.Net Newsletter. Your responses showed us that this publication is indeed a useful resource but that you are keen to see some elements of it revised.

This latest edition reflects some of the feedback you gave us. You told us that you would like to see more Network Activities and Upcoming Event information, and read less about past events. As such, we have decided to enlarge the Network Activities section and remove the Past Events section for now.

You also told us that you were keen to read more feature articles written by your colleagues in other member universities. We are grateful therefore to be including two fascinating feature articles in this edition, written by Paul Rowland, the Executive Director of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, and Fawzia Tarannum from TERI University in New Delhi.

We would like to thank all of you for taking the time to share your feedback on the usefulness of this newsletter. We hope that you will continue to share your thoughts, ideas and articles in the future.

With much appreciation,

The ProSPER.Net Secretariat

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Feature Article: Sustainability in Higher Education in the USA

During the past decade, the role of higher education in leading the sustainability transformation has grown tremendously. The emergence of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and the American Colleges and Universities President's Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) are evidence of that trend. Started in 2005, AASHE now has more than 1100 institutional members of which more than 850 are colleges and universities. The ACUPCC was launched in 2007 and now has more than 650 colleges' and universities' leadership that have signed a commitment to attain climate neutrality on their campuses and to ensure that all students graduate with an understanding of climate change and sustainability.

What have drawn higher education institutions to join AASHE are both the invaluable resources available in the online resources center and the professional development opportunities both through workshops and the annual conference. The Sustainability Across the Curriculum Leadership Workshops have prepared more than 400 faculty members to return to their campuses to create local workshops for faculty members. At the local campus these workshops become enduring professional development programs that help professors integrate sustainability into the courses they teach.



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The conference attracts more than 2000 delegates and offers more than 250 different presentations during its four days. Another important service is the AASHE Bulletin which has more than 11,000 subscribers who are provided with dozens of campus sustainability stories each week.

Part of the growth of the campus sustainability movement in the United States can be seen through an examination of sustainability positions that have been created in higher education institutions. In 2010 AASHE conducted a sustainability staffing survey for campus staff engaged in sustainability as a significant part of their job. Of the 421 whose positions were established before 2010, 260 were created in the preceding two years (2008, 2009) while only 61 had been created before 2005. The increase in sustainability staff, especially during years when institutional budgets were becoming tight is a good indicator of the growing importance of sustainability among higher education leaders.

One area of sustainability of significant importance to campuses has been energy conservation and renewable energy production. A critical part of reducing greenhouse gas emissions has been to reduce energy use and to shift to renewable energy sources. Some institutions have seen an advantage in becoming energy producers using solar and wind energy as well as geothermal energy. AASHE's Campus Solar Photovoltaic Installations Database currently lists 450 solar photovoltaic installations on 290 campuses in 43 states and provinces. The total capacity is 126,751 kilowatts and the average capacity is 283 kilowatts.

In recent years we have also witnessed and supported the growth of sustainability in the curriculum. In 2010, 146 new sustainability programs were reported in the AASHE Bulletin, up from 113 in 2009, 66 in 2008 and 27 in 2007. Of these, the largest percentage (45 percent) included new certificates, degree programs or training opportunities in the renewable energy and green job sector. The United States Department of Education brought together more than 300 educators for a Sustainability Education Summit for higher education. The report from that meeting emphasized the need for sustainability literate graduates from higher education institutions as an economic imperative.

One of the most interesting developments in the United States in the past few years has been the launch of the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS®), a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance. STARS® was developed by AASHE with broad participation from the higher education community and now has more than 300 colleges and universities participating including a number of institutions in its international pilot. In early 2012, Princeton Review, Sierra Magazine, and Sustainability Endowments Institute announced that they would be using STARS information in their rating and ranking systems thus reducing the need for responding to multiple data requests.

Perhaps most interesting is what we are learning about campuses as they submit their data via STARS. For example, when we looked at the submissions by the first 100 institutions we found that more than 80 percent had undergraduate sustainability programs and more than half of them offer incentives for their faculty to develop sustainability classes. 78 institutions reduced their GHG from 2005 by 690K metric tonnes (t) CO₂ Equiv. despite increases in campus populations, buildings, etc. Overall 90 reporting institutions reduced their water use by a total of 1.7 billion gallons per year (9%) since 2005.

Despite the important sustainability advances being made by U.S. Higher education institutions, we still face many challenges. Although we have more than 1000 institutions engaged in sustainability in various ways, we also know that there are 3000 more institutions in the U.S. that are apparently not engaged in sustainability activities. We need to continue to grow the number of individuals as well as the number of institutions that will lead the sustainability transformation as well as our connections to our global partners.



Photo of the AASHE Awards courtesy of AASHE

Feature Article:

Higher Education in Sustainable Development A developing nations' perspective

Explosive population growth and iniquitous economic development has resulted in almost three-fourths of the global populace living in less-developed countries and almost one-fifth languishing below the poverty line. In 1972, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, emphasized, at the United Nations Conference on Human Environment at Stockholm, that the removal of poverty is an integral part of the goal of the global environmental strategy. Implicit in her statement was the quest for development as a universal goal. The world has come a long way since then, and there is a growing realization that reckless and mindless exploitation of the Earth's resources in the name of development has created existential challenges for the living world. Overcoming this ecological and social crisis requires a new ideology and a modern innovative approach especially in the field of education.

The importance of a strong educational component for global development was stressed at the 1992 World Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 states that, "Education, including formal education, public awareness and training should be reorganized as a process by which human beings and societies can reach their fullest potential. Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues". Higher education prepares professionals, who lead, decide, develop and manage institutions and are in positions to influence the society. Thus, it is important to reorganize it to promote awareness, attitudes, concerns and skills that will change the behaviour of the next generation towards the environment and lead to sustainable development. Therefore, the effective management of this domain merits top priority. The milieu of learning will have to change to make human-environment interdependence, values and ethics, a seamless part of teaching. The process of education will have to emphasize proactive, empirical, enquiry based learning and real-time problem solving in the campus and in the community.

However, the economic dynamics of developing nations demand adequate recompense, in terms of return to the community, for the investment made in institutions of higher learning. It is imperative for the government to ensure that institutions of higher learning emerge not only as a primary medium of scientific development, but also as a fountainhead for downstream channelling of socially responsible values. It is heartening to notice that lately some schools and institutions have become conscious of this fact and have started incorporating sustainable development values and practices into their core activities of teaching, research, institutional management and operational systems.



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Network Activities: **ProSPER.Net Board Meeting**



The 8th ProSPER.Net Board Meeting was hosted by RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, on 12 and 13 December 2011. As usual, members reported on their joint projects and the Board followed-up governance issues, including fundraising efforts and also approved the Special Board Meetings procedure, by which special meetings will be convened as the need arises in between board meetings.

For the first time since the ProSPER.Net Membership Policy & Procedure document was approved, the Board reviewed membership applications from Viet Nam National University in Ho Chi Minh City and Prince of Songkla University in Thailand.

In addition, the Secretariat presented about international and regional networks with which ProSPER.Net might establish linkages for further collaboration, what is dependent on establishment of priorities and strategies.

Network Activities: **New ProSPER.Net Publication “Developing a New Generation of Leaders”**

The ProSPER.Net Secretariat is delighted to announce the publication of a new booklet entitled “ProSPER.Net: Developing a New Generation of Leaders”. The publication showcases successful research projects and initiatives that have been launched by ProSPER.Net members.

While the limits of time and space unfortunately prevented all activities from being showcased, the publication still stands as an excellent representation of the work being done by the network as a whole.

To download a PDF of the booklet, visit the Resources and Publication page of the ESD Programme at www.ias.unu.edu/efsd or contact prospernet@ias.unu.edu to see about obtaining printed copies.



Network Activities: **Rio+20 UNU-IAS participation**

In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), known as the Earth Summit, was held in Rio de Janeiro, bringing together international policymakers and experts to deliberate on the impacts of human activity on the environment, as well as on broader socio-economic challenges. The 1992 Earth Summit and its outcome document, Agenda 21, underlined education as an essential tool for achieving sustainable development.

Twenty years later, government leaders, participants from the private sector, NGOs and other stakeholders are once again assembling in Rio to reconfirm their commitment to sustainable development and education for sustainable development. The Education for Sustainable Development programme at UNU-IAS is taking part in the conference in a variety of ways, hosting events and sharing recent publications, such as the newly released “ProSPER.Net: Developing a New Generation of Leaders” booklet.

On June 18, UNU-IAS co-hosted an event entitled “Aiming Higher, Unlocking Tertiary Education’s Potential to Accelerate Sustainable Development and the Transition to a Fair and Green Economy”.

The event, which was co-organised in collaboration with more than 15 partner organizations and government ministries, discussed the critical role tertiary education plays in shaping the future. Since the leaders of today

and tomorrow tend to be university graduates, higher education institutions have a strong hand in preparing the skilled workforce needed for a green economy. There are many examples from around the world that have shown the importance of tertiary education in sustainable development efforts and the critical need for continued support for these types of initiatives.

Participants at the event discussed a variety of key questions, such as how governments, NGOs, businesses and tertiary education could instigate the necessary shift towards sustainable development and the transition to a Green Economy and how stakeholders could unlock the potential of tertiary education sector to transform society.

At Rio+20 the leaders of the international academic community were also called upon to commit to the development of sustainable practices for Higher Education Institutions and were invited to sign on to a Higher Education Declaration. The Board of ProSPER.Net fully endorsed the Declaration, as did AIT, Tongji, RMIT, TERI, Miyagi University of Education, Okayama University and Yonsei University. EcoLeaD, through its collaboration with ProSPER.Net, also endorsed the Declaration.

For more information on the participation of UNU-IAS in the Rio+20 Conference, visit http://www.ias.unu.edu/sub_page.aspx?catID=2028&ddlID=2017

Network Activities:

Editors' Note: The 2012 Young Researchers' School will be hosted by Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from 17 to 28 September 2012. With the theme "Building a Resilient Society in Asia" participants will have the opportunity to delve into issues involving climate change, disaster risk reduction, and other important development initiatives. Fieldtrips have been chosen to correspond to specific community development projects being undertaken by Universitas Gadjah Mada, focusing on how research can be practically applied and promote sustainable livelihoods. Along with a series of lectures by resource persons, participants will be introduced to sustainability challenges faced by local communities and the innovative approaches that can be used to address them. Based on these lessons, students will then develop ideas on how to look at problems from their own perspectives and possibly find integrative ways and approaches to promote sustainable solutions. For more information visit http://www.ias.unu.edu/sub_page.aspx?catID=1852&ddlID=2171.

The second ProSPER.Net Young Researchers' School was successfully organized by Hosei University and the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies in Tokyo, Japan from 1-12 August 2011. The main focus of this school was 'Learning from Japan's experiences on urban sustainability'. The salubrious clime of the Tama Hill campus of Hosei University provided the ideal location for hosting the summer school. The curriculum for the summer school was a perfect blend of lectures, field trips and workshops to enable participants to explore new horizon in the field of urban sustainability.

The lectures were well organized and interactive with enough opportunity for the participants to engage in discussions. The talks from eminent dignitaries in the field of environment sustainability gave an insight into the vigorous focus of the host country towards achieving this goal. By incorporating research proposal development, the school also indirectly provided young researchers with an opportunity to work on sustainability-related topics in interdisciplinary and intercultural teams.

The supporting staff was extremely efficient, helpful and always willing to extend support thereby creating a friendly atmosphere right from day one. The catering staff consistently dished out excellent food and went all out to ensure that all participants felt at home.

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Upcoming Events:

5th ProSPER.Net General Assembly and 9th Board Meeting

The University of Tokyo is to host the 5th ProSPER.Net General Assembly and 9th Board Meeting. The meetings will take place at the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies in Yokohama, Japan, on 9 and 10 July 2012. Members will be discussing new initiatives, policies and procedures, resource generation, promotion, communication and dissemination and will elect members of the new Board. In the Board meeting, members taking lead in the ongoing joint projects will share the developments in the projects.

Upcoming Events:

2012 ProSPER.Net-Scopus Young Scientist Award Symposium and Award Ceremony



In conjunction to the ProSPER.Net organizational meetings, the University of Tokyo will also host the 2012 ProSPER.Net-Scopus Young Scientist Award Symposium and Award Ceremony on 11 July 2012. This year's awards will be given in each of three categories: "Sustainable Infrastructure", "Sustainable Consumption and Production" and "Health with a Focus on Poverty Eradication". Three finalists will be selected from each category and will be invited to present their work in the Symposium. A panel of experts in each area will judge the finalists' presentation and work to decide the winner. The panelists will also engage in a panel discussion on recent developments and trends in each area by sharing their experiences on sustainability issues. During the Award Ceremony, the winner of each category will be awarded a cash prize together with a fellowship offered by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Runners-up will receive MacBook

Air computers and speakers as a bonus prize sponsored by Elsevier.

For more information on the Award Symposium and the programme, please visit: www.ias.unu.edu/efsd/prospernet/ysa

Upcoming Events:

2012 Young Researchers' School "Building a Resilient Society in Asia"

Following the success of the first and second Young Researchers' School organized by RMIT University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (2010) and by Hosei University in Tokyo, Japan (2011), Universitas Gadjah Mada will host this year's School in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 17 to 28 September 2012. The School will be organised under the theme of "Building a Resilient Society in Asia" with special focus on policies and projects involving health and well-being, poverty eradication, social entrepreneurship, urban development and disaster management. The aim of the School is to provide young researchers with an opportunity to better understand the wide range of challenges that underpin sustainable development. Through lectures, field trips, interactive seminars and group work, the participants will be able to experience how Universitas Gadjah Mada has been contributing to the development of local communities and will benefit from the expertise of the ProSPER.Net community.

This is a publication of UNU-IAS, the ProSPER.Net Secretariat.

Please send your comments, suggestions and materials to prospernet@ias.unu.edu

We appreciate your collaboration.



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