

UNM Sustainability Studies Program

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May, 2008

Mission

Our Highest Purposes for Existing

The Sustainability Studies Program (SSP) is housed within the College of Arts & Sciences and partners with five other colleges and schools to provide learning and research opportunities in the sciences, humanities, engineering, architecture, business, fine arts, and other areas. The Sustainability Studies minor degree provides students from most disciplines with sustainability knowledge, skills, and experiences that complement their major, thereby preparing them to bring sustainable practices to many sectors.

Our sense is that educated students in any discipline will have developed an “effective voice” from the simultaneous expression of intuition supported by accurate content and manifest through skillful expression and critical thinking <http://www4.unm.edu/sust/uploads/file/SSPBroadGoals.pdf> .

The SSP bridges between the passionate grassroots community and the professional institutional community of businesses and governmental agencies.

Vision

Our Greatest Aspirations for the Future

As one of the Provost’s Areas of Public Engagement, the SSP spawns experiential learning, research, and service activities to implement practical and systemic solutions for sustainability in the community, Southwest, nation, and planet.

In the future, our faculty, students, and staff will be members of horizontally organized, emergent networks of stakeholders who cooperate as multiple communities of practice to implement sustainability solutions.

Outcomes of our state-wide initiative, the *Alliance for the Carbon-neutral Foodshed in New Mexico*, will ensure the widespread adoption of sound environmental, social, and economic practices that increase access to healthy, local, organic food by means of practices that do not exacerbate global warming or put people at risk.

We aspire to a future in which we are known for:

Strength through Diversity – We actively facilitate the growth of leadership skills among all our students through engagement with a variety of communities on and off campus. Our core courses, SUST 134, 334, and 434 embody measurable outcomes directed to help students develop their “effective voice” and to gain mastery in specific topical domains.

Student Success through Collaboration - We formed the *Alliance for the Carbon-neutral Food-shed* (<http://www4.unm.edu/sust/index.php?page=food-shed-alliance>) which includes the following stakeholders:

[UNM Sustainability Studies Program](#)
[UNM School of Architecture and Planning](#)
[UNM Research Learning Service Program](#)
[Agribusiness Collaborative](#) of the [Mid-Region Council of Governments](#)
[La Montanita Food Coop](#)
[City of Albuquerque](#)
[Farm to Table](#)
[Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District](#)
[New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council](#)
[NMSU](#)
Rio Grande Community Development Corporation
Sandia Labs
USDA Extension Service

Vital Academic Climate – Participating faculty and elective courses for the Sustainability Studies Minor are drawn from 21 departments and programs in six colleges and schools at UNM.

Excellence through Relevance - As a member of the Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), UNM is part of a national community of institutions that value, practice, teach, and research sustainability solutions. We helped to draft the UNM Sustainability Policy (2100) in keeping with AASHE's criteria, cross-tabulated with the universal sustainability goals of environmental protection, social equity, and economic opportunity.

Research for a Better World – The food-shed project entails a multitude of research needs that speak to environment, economics, and social equity. We have pressing research needs related to the future potential for the production of local food, for technological solutions to satisfy our needs for water and clean energy, and for ensuring access to healthy food for all 2 million citizens, 1/6 of whom face chronic food insecurity.

Health and Wellness Leadership – Health is partly an environmental issue, involving biological and social environments. In essence, sustainability is about healthy relationships with self, others, and the environment.

International Engagement – Globalization has made all people neighbors through commerce and atmospheric impacts.

Core Values
Principles that Guide Our Decisions

By stating these values explicitly, we commit to upholding them.

The Privilege of Life Itself. Here, *life* is the sum total of the creativity, perseverance and suffering of our ancestors stretching back to the origin billions of years ago, and *privilege* reflects the awe and mystery embodied in life itself.

Sustainability so that as we meet the needs of the present, we are not compromising the well being of future generations.

Respectful Relationships that build trust, inspire collaboration, and ensure the teamwork that is essential to our success.

Excellence demonstrated by our people, programs, and outcomes, as well as by the quality of our decisions and actions.

Access with Support to Succeed that gives all who desire the opportunity to take full advantage of the wealth of resources at UNM and to be fully included in the community.

Integrity that holds us accountable to our students, the community, and all who serve our mission, to manage our resources wisely and keep our promises.

Diversity that enlivens and strengthens our university, our community, and our society.

Freedom of speech, inquiry, pursuit of ideas, and creative activity.

Program-wide Strategies
How We Will Achieve the Vision

Outcomes Assessment and Adaptive Curriculum Management

Through integrated curriculum development of our core courses, we will ensure that the mission, vision, and values of the program will be achieved.

Synergistic Partnerships

Actively recruit faculty and students from across campus to cultivate research, teaching, and service activities within the context of the program's courses and food-shed project.

Student Centered Decision-making

Major decisions will involve considerations of opportunities to increase the success of our students both directly and indirectly via benefits of relationships both on- and off-campus.

Campus Vitality

Continue to maintain and bring innovations to campus, such as the Growers Market, the Sustainability Policy, Sustainability Showcase, and various experiential learning projects that add value to campus life in practical and educational terms.

Innovative Research-to-Application Platforms

Focus on activities that use research to create a foundation on which to build innovative social, environmental, and economic engines of sustainability in New Mexico, with direct application elsewhere.

Priorities

That Connect, Align, and Activate Our Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategies

Student Success

Support opportunities for transformational learning opportunities during and between semesters such that students see the value of their education and increase their desire to complete their degree in a timely fashion.

Systemic Excellence

Create seamless synergies between research, teaching, and service. Apply principles of diversity throughout, based on our collective values.

Healthy Communities

Sustainability Studies is at the interface of rural/urban communities, and is essentially a matter of personal, human, environmental, and planetary health.

Economic & Community Development

Sustainability is achievable by means of wise developments in communities such that economic opportunity is nurtured as well.

Goals

A Roadmap for Success

Goal 1 – Financial Predictability

Ensure that the Sustainability Studies Program enjoys renewable funding to meet its teaching and outreach needs.

Strategy:

- A. Coordinate with Office of Governmental Relations to become a priority.
- B. Establish relationships with foundation(s) that express interest in creating an endowed chair.
- C. Align UNM with opportunities expressed by foundations.

Goal 2 – Curriculum Effectiveness

Ensure that goals, content, activities, and outcomes of SUST courses are in alignment across the courses and monitored to achieve our educational goals while fostering retention and increasing graduation rates.

Strategy:

- A. Apply the outcomes assessment plan as designed and allow for modification. Build outcomes assessment into the culture of the program through demonstrations of its successful application.
- B. Learn from other departments and pedagogical resources to continually increase our effectiveness.
- C. Recruit dedicated faculty from across campus to participate as appropriate.

Goal 3 – Community Engagement

Regard the community as a living laboratory for teaching, service, and research in Sustainability Studies.

Strategy:

- A. Maintain healthy community connections in SUST courses by means that put our values into action.
- B. Develop the activities and reach of the Alliance for the Carbon-neutral Food-shed in New Mexico to the extent that it accomplishes its goals.