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Sustainability Education Profile #3

Outlining a Framework for UNM-Taos in Sustainability Education

The previous update focused on New Mexico Higher Education/Sustainability Offerings and the UNM-Taos Outlook, while the current profile suggests a framework—flexible to FEEDBACK AND INPUT from all of you!—of potential ways for UNM-Taos to provide a core of support and educational services to promote the wide ranging cultural-ecological and green design sustainability “waves” in our branch campus area. By way of follow-up to the last email, please note the new program at Santa Fe Community College is titled “Center for Community Sustainability,” with courses falling under these categories: 1. Home Building and Design Series (a 4-lecture sequence, somewhat similar to what Karlis Viceps et al. put on during Solar Summer School and the Sustainability Successes seminars we’ve also held, 2005-2006), 2. Renewable Energy Technology (part of a certificate program), and 3. Biomass Energy (mostly focusing on solar heating and hot water systems). However, I haven’t noticed any specific ecocultural links to CCSF program/course descriptions or any comments on the context for sustainability education during meetings I’ve attended, so presumably sustainability is roughly equivalent to green technology here.

While earlier proposals and narratives include a general philosophy and some specific action areas for sustainability issues in Northern New Mexico, I would like to work collaboratively with several UNM-Taos members, at least a couple of students, and members of the community to create a template that serves our COLLECTIVE OBJECTIVES for sustainability education in Northern New Mexico. With this in mind, the following outline reflects TALKING POINTS rather than initiatives, which would be the logical outcome of such collaboration!

- I. Defining Sustainability Education at UNM-Taos
- II. Role of UNM-Taos
 - a. academic programs
 - b. certificates to trades
 - c. continuing education
 - d. community outreach
 - e. research and implementation
 - f. practical resources
 - g. collaborative hub
 - h. conferences, seminars and lecture series (open to all)
- III. Administrative and Faculty Issues
 - a. program coordinator (currently not funded, but SRD in place)
 - b. interdisciplinary focus
 - c. faculty participants
 - d. administrative direction and review (committee?)
 - e. ongoing evaluation and needs assessment, including feedback/input loops from our constituency, regional/local collaborators & branch campus outreach area
- IV. Budget & additional funding opportunities
 - a. minimal ongoing commitment to keep the program going
 - b. resources and office location
 - c. meeting space
 - d. endowment, grant sources and other funding possibilities

- V. Resources and networking opportunities
 - a. newsletter
 - b. website
 - c. interactive public forums and Talking Circles
 - d. drop-in sessions on sustainability themes, an informal “sustainability clinic” to have regular hours (3-5 per week, at a campus and locally accessible site)
 - e. surveys and input/feedback-garnering mechanisms, possibly also to include radio
 - f. collaboration on community gatherings
 - g. increased tracking of all educational links; expanded registration for UNM-Taos
 - h. fund-tracking and legislative group to suggest and pursue opportunities as they arise
 - i. resource center (all kinds! library to demo projects to living lab?)
 - j. conferences, meetings, open networking, sustainability fiestas
 - k. interactive and collaborative public projects and art, music, etc.
 - l. ecocultural trail at Klauer Campus
- VI. Steps to successful sustainability at UNM-Taos: a plan! (recommending slow-grow, cumulative initiatives interwoven into all our academic and community outreach activities)

Please consider points you would like to add to or any modifications to the above so that we can identify a few strong priorities as the bones of our sustainability education identity! Examples are extremely useful, and I do have plenty to contribute when several of us have the opportunity to discuss these items in person. It is actually very difficult to propose funding a program, or to solicit donors or grantors, without this kind of framework in place, though I do appreciate the words of encouragement along the way.

Once again, thanks for looking over this profile, and I look forward to hearing from each of you regarding sustainable directions at UNM-Taos!
Sylvia