



On July 23, 2009, K-State sponsored the *Fourth Annual Dialog on Sustainability* to share information and engage the public in an interactive forum on sustainability-related activities on campus and throughout the regional community. The Dialog was hosted by the Consortium for Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability (CESAS) and the K-State Director of Sustainability. Supporting partners include the Center for Hazardous Substance Research, Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy, K-State Libraries, and the School of Leadership Studies.

### **Opening Session**

The dialog began with an address from K-State President Kirk Schulz, who discussed the future of K-State and the role of sustainability in that future. Given K-State's status as a land grant institution, we have the history and expertise to play a leadership role in the development of sustainability. His plan for moving K-State through and beyond the current fiscal challenges is to build on our strengths, commit to long-term measures, and maintain an active dialog among stakeholders.

Ben Champion, director of sustainability, provided an overview of the forthcoming report from the Sustainability Task Force. The Task Force was charged with developing a comprehensive set of recommendations and responsibilities to chart K-State's future sustainability efforts. Needs identified by the Task Force include:

- Actively engaged university leaders;
- General community knowledge and culture;
- Academic coordination and encouragement;
- Operational coordination, education, and encouragement;
- Support for student life issues; and
- Effective communication and engagement.

Specific recommendations to address these needs include:

- Establishing an Office of Sustainability,
- Developing academic programming,
- Creating an introductory course in sustainability,
- Creating a structural support for research,
- Adopting green purchasing practices,
- Revising planning and management policies and procedures to address sustainability,
- Enhancing transportation options for campus and community
- Providing greater opportunities for campus speakers,
- Supporting the Sustainability Conference,
- Engaging a variety of stakeholders
- Developing green employment resources for students, and
- Developing student orientation programming.

Following the presentation by Dr. Champion, the audience engaged in a question and answer session which addressed topics such as developing a comprehensive energy audit, leadership across culture and context, systems analysis, multidisciplinary partnerships, and sustainability tracking/reporting utilizing the K-State Sustainability website and social networking.

More details on the report of the Sustainability Task Force, please visit

[http://www2.engg.ksu.edu/chsr/sustainability/Dialogs/2009DOS/docs/SustainabilityTaskForceDraftReportOverview-DOS2009\\_BenChampion.pdf](http://www2.engg.ksu.edu/chsr/sustainability/Dialogs/2009DOS/docs/SustainabilityTaskForceDraftReportOverview-DOS2009_BenChampion.pdf)

Poster sessions, exhibit viewing, technology demonstrations, and networking breaks throughout the day provided numerous opportunities for additional information sharing and mindful interaction.

### **Concurrent Dialogs**

Participants were invited to dialog in small groups on one of the following topics:

- Sustainability Leadership - Top Down and Bottom Up
- Sustainability in Academics - Curriculum and Research, Enhancing Intellectual Capital
- Sustainability in the Larger Community – A Regional Planning/ Partnership Approach
- Sustainability in Decision Making-Economy and the Triple Bottom Line: Long- & Short-Term

Each group utilized an ICDD facilitator, recorder, and resource experts in various subject areas to support dialog participants. Summaries of main points from each dialog are presented below.

#### *Sustainability Leadership - Top Down and Bottom Up*

Facilitator: Tim Steffensmeier, Recorder: Ryan Green

Participating resource experts: Ben Champion, Raju Dandu, Barry Dicker, Marci Francisco, Ryan Green, Tom Gross, Gary Schuberth, Bruce Shubert, and Chrissy Wolfersberger.

This group reported the following key points:

- Finding a common understanding is essential;
- There is a lot of discussion about sustainability issues, but not a lot of real commitment of action from leaders. A balance of thinking, talking and acting is needed);
- Rise above self interest;
- Leadership doesn't mean it has to be from the top down. Support from the bottom up is also important, and sometimes, in a legislative process, is very important. The public needs to be involved and show commitment/leadership to issues as well;and
- The media is important.

#### *Sustainability in Academics - Curriculum and Research, Enhancing Intellectual Capital*

Facilitator: Donna Schenck-Hamlin, Recorder: Jennifer Anthony

Participating resource experts: Larry Erickson, Ruth Miller, Noel Schulz, Mary Tolar, and Ray Yunk.

This group reported discussions in the following topic areas:

- Education for sustainability across cultures – we are facing an adaptive challenge, whereupon needed changes require skills, such as interpretation and learning to dialog across divides (technical/non-technical, campus/non-campus).
- Educational opportunities need to be offered at several levels – faculty, students, and extension.
- Technology transfer and research are important issues. Experts transferring knowledge to businesses is a key element to sustainable change.

*Sustainability in the Larger Community – A Regional Planning/ Partnership Approach*

Facilitator: Charlie Griffin, Recorder: Oral Saulters

Participating resource experts: Robert Wilson, Wendy Griswold, Susan Moyer, Dan Nagengast, Alan Hynek, Oral Saulters, Steve Scanlon, and Lee Skabelund.

This group reported discussions in the following topic areas:

- Quality of life changes are a concern for many and possibly a barrier to moving toward sustainability;
- Education is an essential need;
- Incentives for making changes are necessary;
- Successful models include environmental regulations, Greensburg, transportation, farmers' markets, executive orders, recycling, and sustainable agricultural practices;
- Resources for communities include leadership, creativity, technical assistance, and sharing personal experiences;
- Value shifts are needed among the general population, such as time scales (right now vs. concern for future), individual versus interdependence, partnerships are key (balancing local identity with regional growth, military example); and
- Essential next steps include education, volunteering, marketing effective results/successes, and co-creating a vision for the future.

*Sustainability in Decision Making-Economy and the Triple Bottom Line: Long- & Short-Term*

Facilitator: Terrie McCants, Recorder: Blase Leven

Participating resource experts: Valerie Carroll, David Carter, Valerie Evans, Blase Leven, Becky O'Donnell, Jeff Peterson, and Marie Steichen.

This group reported discussions in the following topic areas:

- Process – different models for engagement are needed;
- Research – facilitate classroom narratives, case studies in triple bottom line decision making, behavior economics (what are the indicators, information, and formats that motivate change?), and
- Investment – this needs to be done at K-State.

**Speakers and Panel Discussions**

Noel Schulz is a professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, with specialization in power systems and energy conservation. Dr. Schulz' presentation focused on comparing attitudes toward sustainability and conservation in the European Union and the U.S., national challenges and opportunities with respect to energy in the U.S., and the need for energy systems to balance

reliability with sustainability. There are many issues related to developing a distributed generation system, including siting and sizing, cost, interconnection issues, storage, and political concerns. For more details, please visit

[http://www2.engg.ksu.edu/chsr/sustainability/Dialogs/2009DOS/docs/SustainableEnergy-DOS2009\\_NoelSchulz.pdf](http://www2.engg.ksu.edu/chsr/sustainability/Dialogs/2009DOS/docs/SustainableEnergy-DOS2009_NoelSchulz.pdf)

Gary Shuberth is the design architect for the new Leadership Studies building at K-State, which will be the first LEED certified building on campus. Mr. Shuberth described the design aspects of the building and explained the LEED process using the Leadership Studies building as a case study. The new building will be certified at the Silver Level. Sustainable features of the building include the use of open space, decreased stormwater impact, decreased heat gain, use of recycled building materials and recycling of construction waste, and a ventilation system that is 30% more efficient than standard requirements. For more details, please visit

[http://www2.engg.ksu.edu/chsr/sustainability/Dialogs/2009DOS/docs/LeadershipStudiesandSustainableBuildings-DOS2009\\_GarySchuberth.pdf](http://www2.engg.ksu.edu/chsr/sustainability/Dialogs/2009DOS/docs/LeadershipStudiesandSustainableBuildings-DOS2009_GarySchuberth.pdf)

A panel discussion following the presentations continued the dialog on the presentation topics. Panel members included Ben Champion, Ruth Miller, Marci Francisco, Noel Schulz, Gary Schuberth, and Mary Tolar.

### **Synthesis/Reflections**

Dan Kahl and Erika Imbody led the group in the closing session. Participants were asked to share the significant ideas that they would be taking away from today's event. These included:

- We have a big opportunity to do something as a university with our students;
- The issues need to be redefined. We need wider perspectives;
- Appreciate the long term implications of decision making;
- We want and need more concrete action items. This needs to be balanced with the need for reflection and dialog;
- Look at the multiple long-term ramifications of community decisions;
- Share success stories; and
- Creating special spaces for parking low emission vehicles is a way of teaching and incentivizing sustainability.

Participants were also asked to record the actions they would take in the future to promote sustainability on a note card. These responses are listed in Appendix A.

Photographs from the event, supporting details, and other sustainability-related activities can be viewed at <http://www2.engg.ksu.edu/chsr/sustainability/Dialogs/2009DOS/index.html>

## **Appendix A**

### **DOS participant planned actions**

- Develop an ongoing workplace discussion on how to make our facility more sustainable (in energy consumption); how to demonstrate, measure and promote it
- Learn more about different systems of motivation, incentives
  
- Compost leaves, recycle food waste in compost
- More concerned effort to educate clients on sustainability action they can take with their buildings
  
- Turn off lights each time I leave a room
- Simply tell my friends what I learned at this conference – voice is a huge tool in spreading an idea/the start of a happening/change
- Incorporate environmental-friendly elements in unexpected places/situations: i.e., parking spaces for particular fuel-efficient vehicles@ leadership studies building
  
- Be a part of “Green Education” program for School of Leadership Studies and the K-State Campus, possibly through SEA Student Organization
  
- Attendance at the conference today was a reminder of the rich diversity of K-State folks – across disciplines interested and engaged in sustainability issues.
- Will continue to explore new connections with others at K-State for new opportunities to collaborate with other faculty to bring sustainable issues and ideas into regular dialogues and activities. Conference always a good opportunity to connect and reconnect with folks.
- Incorporate sustainability goals and approaches into my work with the CHSR in terms of technology development; and further integrate long term/lifecycle/systems decision making into my personal behaviors and practices whenever possible
  
- To be honest, I am unsure. Often times the “emotional” moment motivates, but I slip back into familiar routines
- In general, I try to be more aware of my daily purchases and what I label as “wants” and “needs”, realizing that many of my “needs” are really luxuries and “wants” and try to react accordingly
  
- Help develop a report of the dialog on sustainability
- Help advance educational and research programs related to sustainability
  
- Share ideas and thoughts – staff and communities in Kansas
- Meeting the needs of the present while not inhibiting the ability of future generations to meet their needs
- Our actions impact the environment, social and economic consequences
- Energy responsibility, need education, life styles, thoughts – what actions can you take?

- I intend to incorporate more sustainability principles in my teaching
- Learn more about students' assumptions about sustainability
- I was encouraged by President Schulz' message that sustainability can be a core cross-cutting priority for our university. I will work to prepare to make sustainable part of the 2025 strategic planning process.
- I will assist groups in including sustainable plans in our ongoing strategic planning, share models, examples, concepts, frameworks
- Ask President Schulz more detail about how KSU will implement sustainability priorities for our strategic plan
- Continue to be mindful of my own behaviors with eye to long term
- I feel today's discourse on sustainability strengthens my previous knowledge on sustainability. I think sustainable action is the need of an hour in every respect/discipline of life. I would like to practice both in my profession and personal life, because I feel sustainable decision making in every respect of life and work would lead us more closely to nature.
- Discovered (in a greater sense) how I think about the concepts and the definition of sustainable energy especially in comparison to those thoughts of others.
- I am interested in renewable energy, but today I was informed about many other sustainable aspects.
- I will also spend more time spreading the human/social aspects as a result of today's seminar
- Need to focus on finding the root of the problems and not get carried away with discussing the effects of what the problems have produced.
- Work to develop the proper mediums and skills needed to motivate and promote change
- Reduce the ignorance of others on these topics and subjects to provoke a realigning of self/personal values that each person has. This will then create a collaborative effort on a natural intrinsic level for each individual to achieve these common goals.
- Short Term: everyone needs to evaluate how they use food, water, shelter, energy, and resources. This is what students should be encouraged to think about, as they are not today's policy makers yet.
- People need to realize and research the effect that they have on the planet and the effect that the society that they live in has on the planet
- Long Term: actually think longer than a 5 or 10 year plan
- Educate people, get rid of propaganda on coal or promote this ridiculously unsustainable status quo
- Get intelligent, caring politicians that are not corrupted by all they have had to do to get their position

- Will work on incorporating examples of sustainability (or sustainable design) in my engineering courses
- Each day, take a few minutes to plan what “sustainable” action I will take today
- As an international student, from my childhood I was raised in a community where “anything goes” in the trash. But hearing about sustainability in a “broader” sense, I realize that I can do much more and be an example to others. It has been an inspiring “dialog” today, an interaction that has taught me how to value what was, what is/are, what will be future materials, commodities, energy sources and to lean towards research topics that would also focus on sustainability
- Segregation and minimization of waste
- Learn much more knowledge and techniques for sustainability
- Share the information with others, find problems and discuss with others
- Save energy from little things in daily life
- Action items: advocate for resources for sustainability office/center at K-state
- Seek funding for research on sustainable messages (behavioral economics)
- Encourage K-state sustainability audit
- Network with sustainability partners to build a sustainability portfolio
- Advance social science tools for sustainability
- Focus more energy on developing community capacity to actively participate in changing society
- Educate more people
- Continue to educate myself
- When I talk about sustainability, mention the positive impacts on the environment, social issues, and the economy rather than focusing on a single concern or impact
- I would like to make a Greensburg Documentary which discusses historical trends that have failed to produce sustainability, the need for triple-bottom line decision making, the need for grass roots participation in such decision making, the universal (cross cultural) appeal of sustainable economics, the difficulty of putting cultural and environmental values in dollar terms (necessity)
- The influence of feedback (metering) on behaviors and responsible consumption, the nature of morality and our universal rejection of unfair economics, and the importance of quantifying corporate social and environmental behaviors through a rigorously scientific, unambiguous system.