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Foreword: Dr. Michael M. Crow

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Contents

FOREWORD i

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv

ABOUT THE EDITORS v

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER vii

CHAPTER ONE
Liberating Liberal Learning: Integrating Sustainability in the Curriculum
Dr. David E. Shi, President Emeritus, Furman University

CHAPTER TWO
Thriving in the 21st Century by Tackling Wicked Problems
Dr. Judith Ramaley, President Emerita, Portland State University and President Emerita, Winona State University

CHAPTER THREE
Sustaining Sustainability: Ten Ideas from New Hampshire
Dr. Mark W. Huddleston, President, University of New Hampshire

CHAPTER FOUR
Elevating Sustainability Integrating Sustainability: Universities and the Urban Environment
Dr. Wim Wiewel, President, Portland State University

CHAPTER FIVE
Preparing Students for the Sustainable Future
Gloria Cordes Larson, JD, President, Bentley University

CHAPTER SIX
The American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment: Not the End but Rather a New Way of Thinking
Dr. Jonathan C. Gibralter, President, Frostburg State University

CHAPTER SEVEN
The Imperative: Ensuring a Sustainability Goal in the University’s Strategic Plan
Dr. Harry L. Williams, President, Delaware State University

CHAPTER EIGHT
Sustainability: Then and Now
Dr. Theodora J. Kalikow, President, University of Southern Maine

CHAPTER NINE
A Sustainability State of Mind: Smart Growth for UMaine as a Green Campus with Blue Sky Thinking
Dr. Paul W. Ferguson, President, University of Maine
Foreword

Dr. Michael M. Crow, President, Arizona State University

America's colleges and universities are responsible for the majority of the scientific discovery and technological invention that has advanced sustainability science. The impact of the innovation we undertake on our nation's campuses will determine the balance of the dynamic and interactive system of complex biogeochemical cycles that constitutes the earth's surface environment and determines our quality of life. Not only does integrated university-based research, development, and education (RD&E) foster the science and technology that advances sustainability, through the scholarship and expertise developed in the humanities, social sciences, and professional schools, the academic community informs government policy and the application and commercialization of new knowledge in business and industry. Implicit in this assessment is the recognition that the most important role of our colleges and universities is to educate our future thinkers, leaders, and practitioners in every field of human endeavor. But building the capacity of our colleges and universities to respond to the challenges of sustainable development requires that we rethink these institutions and recalibrate their structures and practices. As president of Arizona State University, the nation's youngest major research institution and largest university governed by a single administration, I have thus led efforts to instill sustainability into the curriculum and research enterprise of the institution, as well as its operations and business practices.

Academic leadership to advance sustainability begins with fostering relevant transdisciplinary research, development, and education (RD&E). If we are to reconcile our development goals with the planet's environmental limits, we must advance scholarship at the nexus of social, economic, and environmental systems. While obvious foci for sustainability science would include climate science, renewable energies, and sustainable engineering, for example, academic leaders must reconceptualize their institutions to engage this research within the context of the social and behavioral sciences and the humanities and creative arts. Transdisciplinary breadth fosters use-inspired research, which in turn fuels robust innovation. The alignment of a broad range of strategic research with critical national goals, moreover, may be proposed as an overarching objective of an institutional research enterprise. At Arizona State University, thus, efforts to advance research in sustainability are congruent with or complement such strategic areas as earth and space exploration, renewable energies, advanced materials, flexible electronics, healthcare, national security, urban systems design, and education in the STEM fields—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Through the mandate of a reconceptualized institutional organization, new transdisciplinary schools may thus complement purpose-built research institutes and centers, as well as faculty groups, to promote discovery and innovation. At ASU, the establishment of the Global Institute of Sustainability (GIOS) leveraged historical institutional strengths in interdisciplinary research on human-dominated environmental systems and brought scientists and engineers together with economists, ethicists, legal scholars, and philosophers as well as policymakers and industry leaders to share knowledge and develop solutions to pressing real-world problems. With research in areas as diverse as agriculture, air quality, marine ecology, materials design, nanotechnology, policy and governance, renewable energy, risk assessment, transportation, and urban infrastructure,
the faculty members affiliated with GIOS are addressing some of the most critical challenges of our time as well as training future generations of scholars, scientists, and practitioners. GIOS represents the front line of engagement for our institutional commitment to sustainability and coordinates university sustainability initiatives. The institute has identified 10 grand challenges of sustainability, including climate change, rapid urbanization, water quality and supply, energy, and biodiversity.

The School of Sustainability (SOS) is a comprehensive degree-granting program with a transdisciplinary focus on creating practical solutions. The school coordinates a comprehensive research program addressing such issues as the impacts of migration on the environment, effects of globalization on biodiversity and rural communities, food security, and climate change-related disease. Because our objective is to educate new generations of leaders through collaborative, transdisciplinary, and problem-oriented training, sustainability is inherent throughout the curriculum. In an effort to engender an institutional culture of sustainability, ASU offered sustainability-themed courses in 25 subject areas during the past academic year, including anthropology, architecture, biology, economics, engineering, industrial design, law, philosophy, nonprofit leadership, and urban planning. The Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering, for example, provide a full range of degree programs in sustainable engineering, with the School of Sustainable Engineering and the Built Environment established to address the need for sustainable infrastructure. Additionally, the W. P. Carey School of Business offers a concentration in sustainability in order to incorporate sustainability practices into profitable approaches to business.

Sustainability scholars engage with research initiatives across our four campuses. Especially relevant is the Biodesign Institute, the premier multidisciplinary research center dedicated exclusively to advancing biologically inspired design to address global challenges in healthcare, sustainability, and national security. The research of this large-scale array of labs and centers working in the broad domains of biological, nanoscale, cognitive, and sustainable systems is aimed at improving human health and the environment through interdisciplinary efforts in such areas as personalized diagnostics and treatment; infectious diseases and pandemics; and renewable sources of energy. Also relevant are the Complex Adaptive Systems Initiative (CASI), a collaborative effort to address global challenges in health, sustainability, and national security through the creation of new technologies and novel solutions; LightWorks, a multidisciplinary effort in renewable energy fields including artificial photosynthesis, biofuels, and next-generation photovoltaics; and initiatives in the humanities and social sciences, including the Institute for Social Science Research and especially the Consortium for Science, Policy, and Outcomes. CSPO is an intellectual network aimed at enhancing the contribution of science and technology to the pursuit of equality, justice, freedom, and overall quality of life. The consortium creates knowledge and methods, cultivates public discourse, and fosters policies to help decision makers and institutions grapple with the immense power and importance of science and technology, as society charts a course for the future.

Institutional leaders must recognize that promoting sustainability begins internally with campus infrastructure, business practices, and university policies. ASU has thus reaffirmed its commitment to the construction of LEED-certified facilities for all new construction of University-owned and operated buildings. Green building design has environmental, economic, and social elements that benefit all stakeholders, including students, faculty, occupants, and the general public. ASU campuses currently feature 21 buildings with LEED Silver certification or better. A commitment to the advancement of renewable energy will lead to the largest deployment of solar power infrastructure by any American university, with the goal of expanding solar installation across all four campuses to 20 megawatts by 2020. In order to achieve carbon neutrality, ASU has committed to 100 percent
mitigation of energy emission by 2025; 100 percent reduction of waste, agriculture, and refrigerant emissions by 2025; and 100 percent mitigation of transportation emissions by 2035. Our efforts in this context reaffirm the objectives of the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, which calls for institutional signatories to exercise leadership in their pursuit of climate neutrality through the development of a comprehensive plan as well as tangible actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

For academic institutions, fostering teaching and research that advances sustainability thus requires new institutional arrangements. But, more broadly, universities should be at the vanguard of producing societal transformation and solutions to the challenges that confront humanity. Much like the triple-helix of innovation described by the economist Henry Etzkowitz, collaboration between academic, government, and business and industry is imperative. And these collaborations must be transdisciplinary, transinstitutional, and transnational as well. While the general public has begun to embrace sustainability and younger generations take it as axiomatic, the task remains to implement advances in knowledge through sound policy decisions in academic, the private sector, and government alike. But with their transformational impact, our universities and colleges must take the lead. Ideally, the academic endeavor will not only advance academic excellence but also access to a broad demographic while exerting maximum societal impact. These are the objectives that guide the model of the New American University and have relevance for colleges and universities throughout the nation and worldwide.

Dr. Michael M. Crow became the 16th president of Arizona State University on July 1, 2002. He is guiding the transformation of ASU into one of the nation’s leading public metropolitan research universities, an institution that combines the highest levels of academic excellence, inclusiveness to a broad demographic, and maximum societal impact—a model he terms the “New American University.” Under his direction the University pursues teaching, research, and creative excellence focused on the major challenges of our time, as well as those central to the quality of life, sustainable development, and economic competitiveness of Arizona and the nation. He has committed the University to sustainability, social embeddedness, and global engagement, and championed initiatives leading to record levels of diversity in the student body.

Crow was previously executive vice provost of Columbia University, where he also was professor of science and technology policy in the School of International and Public Affairs. As chief strategist of Columbia’s research enterprise, he led technology and innovation transfer operations, establishing Columbia Innovation Enterprises (renamed Science and Technology Ventures), as well as advancing interdisciplinary program development. He played the lead role in the creation of and served as the founding director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, and in 1998 founded the Center for Science, Policy, and Outcomes (CSPO), dedicated to linking science and technology to optimal social, economic, and environmental outcomes. In 2003, CSPO was reconstituted at ASU and is now based in both Phoenix and Washington DC.

He is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and National Academy of Public Administration, and member of the Council on Foreign Relations and U.S. Department of Commerce National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The author of books and articles analyzing science and technology policy and the design of knowledge enterprises, Crow received his PhD in Public Administration (Science and Technology Policy) from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University.
Preface and Acknowledgements

Dr. Marylouise Fennell, RSM, Senior Counsel for Council of Independent Colleges  
Dr. Scott D. Miller, President of Bethany College

A recent post on LinkedIn asked, “Has Sustainability Run its Course?” Given the progress in just the past decade, how could such a question be asked? The Presidents’ Climate Commitment has close to 700 signatories. The creation of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) has developed centralized thought leadership and resources for colleges and universities. Degree-granting programs have grown, as more students are interested in sustainability as a career, and the number of campus sustainability jobs continues to rise. Yet, the future of campus sustainability remains unclear.

It is easy for sustainability to become lost in the higher education dialogue given the myriad of other data, financial challenges, and public scrutiny facing the academy. An institution’s commitment to sustainability may seem like a luxury in and of itself at a time when higher education finds itself defending the value of a college degree. Surely, eliminating “save the earth”, “social justice,” and other “green” ideals would help reduce the cost of higher education—or would it? Has sustainability demonstrated it has inherent “value” and how does it sustain the institution’s mission?

Perhaps it is precisely because of the current economic environment that the tenets and impacts of sustainability deserve a second look. Indeed, the Triple Bottom Line creates quantifiable benefits to society, the environment, and an institution’s financial standing. Some institutions are embracing sustainability and are leading the way for others. Some campuses are advancing sustainability to solve multiple problems. Can or even should their approaches be emulated? What lessons can be learned from these institutions to help those facing greater social and economic pressures. How can sustainability move from the perception of being a “cost center” to one that is part of the broader solution set to today’s higher education?

 Authored by notable presidents whose institutions are in the forefront of innovation, the 2013-2014 series of Presidential Perspectives tackles how higher education is “Elevating Sustainability Through Academic Leadership.”

Now in its eighth year, Presidential Perspectives endures due to the generosity and innovation of ARAMARK Higher Education, a leading provider of award-winning dining, facilities management, and conference center services to colleges and universities. Each month a different presidential chapter is distributed electronically and posted on the Presidential Perspectives website www.presidentialperspectives.org.

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• Annie Miller, Scott’s wife of 30 years, a dedicated supporter of education, who has loyally served as “first lady” of three colleges
Dr. Marylouise Fennell, RSM, is an internationally recognized management consultant in higher education. Dr. Fennell specializes in independent higher education as a mentor, counselor, search consultant, and consultant to Presidents, Administrators, and Boards of Trustees of colleges and universities, and to for-profit businesses who serve the non-profit sector. She is a partner in the search firm Hyatt-Fennell, LLC.

Dr. Fennell brings a unique perspective to her specialty—namely, an intimate knowledge and respect of the presidency and higher education administration. She has served as President of Carlow University; Assistant Dean of the Graduate Division of the University of St. Joseph; and has been a tenured faculty member, Department Chair, Division Chair, founder and Director of the Counseling Institute, Director of the Pastoral Ministry Institute, and founder and Director of the Cross Cultural Counseling Symposium. Prior to these assignments she served in teaching/clinical/ positions at the University of Hartford and Boston University. Dr. Fennell is the first graduate of the University of Hartford to be named a college president. In 1999, Governor Tom Ridge named Dr. Fennell a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Fennell received her degrees in Education, and Counselor Education from the Diocesan Sisters College (B.A.), University of Hartford (Masters of Education) (Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies), and Boston University (Doctor in Education).

She is the Senior Counsel for The Council of Independent Colleges and has been the chief consultant for the Association of Private Universities of Central America. She has assisted the Central American Universities in the establishment of an accreditation system and is the author of the Central American Accreditation Guidelines for Excellence in Education. Dr. Fennell is presently serving as Executive Director of the Interamerican Consortium of Higher Education (CIDES). She is a consultant to numerous associations, colleges, and universities.

Honors bestowed on Dr. Fennell include the Peace Through Education Award from the SAGE Scholarship Program, the Distinguished Alumni Award of the University of Hartford, the Athena Award, Pittsburgh Leadership Award in Education, The Mercy Higher Education Colloquium Leadership Award, Pennsylvania Hardworking Women Award, Pittsburgh Women of the Year Award, Pittsburgh Woman in Education Award, Outstanding Black Catholic Service Award, Pi Lambda Theta Distinguished Research Award, Award of Service to Women and Children, and the Boston University Outstanding Alumni Award as well as approximately 45 honorary doctoral degrees and numerous awards from universities and colleges throughout the world.

Dr. Fennell is presently serving or has served on numerous boards including Huntington Bancshares Incorporated, Clarke College, Robert Morris University, Mercy College of Ohio, the New England Institute of Art, the Art Institute of Pittsburgh (Chair), the Art Institute of Los Angeles (Chair), the Art Institute of Charlotte (Chair), the Art Institute Online (Chair), the Art Institute of Seattle, Asher School of Business (Chair), Bradley College of the Visual Arts (Chair), the Art Institute of New York City (Chair ), the Art Institute of Seattle, and the Art Institute of Portland (OR) and has been Vice Chair of the McGillick Education Foundation, and Chair of the Western Pennsylvania Health System Foundation, and Educational Management Foundation. She has been a Director of SKY Financial Group, Standard Mortgage Corporation (GA), Frontier Financial, Three Rivers Bancorp, and Omni Staffing Service, as well as a past trustee of more than 50 boards. She was the first woman to be elected to the Board of Directors of the Duquesne Club, which was founded in 1873.
Dr. Scott D. Miller has served as President and M.M. Cochran Professor of Leadership Studies at Bethany College in West Virginia since 2007.

Now in his 23rd year as a college chief executive officer, Dr. Miller served for 10-1/2 years (1997–2007) as President of the College and Du Pont Professor of Leadership Studies at Wesley College in Delaware. He also has served as President of Lincoln Memorial University (1991–97). Before being named President there, he was Executive Vice President (1988–91) and Vice President for Development (1984–88). A native of Pennsylvania, Dr. Miller is a former Director of College Relations and Alumni Affairs at the Rio Grande College (now University) in Ohio and a former journalist.

Well known nationally for his contributions to higher education, he was one of 17 presidents nationwide featured in a Kaufman Foundation-funded book, *The Entrepreneurial College President* (American Council on Education/ Praeger Series on Higher Education, 2004). Dr. Miller and the Wesley story were one of four amazing transformational stories featured in the book *The Small College Guide to Financial Health* (National Association of College & University Business Officers, 2002) and one of six featured in *The Small College Guide to Financial Health: Weathering Turbulent Times* (NACUBO, 2009). He was extensively interviewed in *The First 120 Days: What A New President Must Do* (Jerold Panas, 2008) and *Born, Not Made: The Entrepreneurial Personality* (Fisher/Koch, 2008).

He is a regular columnist for *The Huffington Post, College Planning and Management, The State Journal, Enrollment Manager,* and a widely distributed e-newsletter, *The President’s Letter,* which addresses a wide variety of higher education issues.

Dr. Miller earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from West Virginia Wesleyan College, Master of Arts from the University of Dayton, Ed.S. from Vanderbilt University, and Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from The Union Institute & University.

Both Drs. Fennell and Miller serve as consultants to college and university presidents and boards. Dr. Fennell is principal of Hyatt-Fennell Higher Education Services, an executive search firm. Dr. Miller is Chair of the Board of Directors of Academic Search, Inc.

Both Drs. Fennell and Miller serve as consultants to college and university presidents and boards and are regular columnists to *College Planning and Management* magazine.
About the Publisher

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CHAPTER 1

Liberating Liberal Learning

*Integrating Sustainability in the Curriculum*
Liberating Liberal Learning

Integrating Sustainability in the Curriculum

Dr. David E. Shi, President Emeritus, Furman University

Over the past decade or so, the higher education sector has been the seedbed of the sustainability movement in the United States—for good reason. Sustainability is one of the few enterprises that foster cooperation among academic departments, faculty and staff, campuses and communities, and otherwise competing institutions. Yet, ironically, most of the initial campus projects and programs related to sustainability—especially those associated with energy conservation and environmental stewardship—have been outside the academic arena. Nearly 700 presidents have signed the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, and many institutions have developed innovative programs and projects related to energy conservation and efficiency, recycling, and high-performance buildings. There are also some 80 sustainability centers on campuses scattered across the nation. And students in large numbers have embraced co-curricular and extracurricular activities related to sustainability on their campuses and in the surrounding communities.

But initiatives in the academic program—teaching, learning, and research—have been lagging. More often than not, the curriculum has been the last area of campus life to incorporate the principles and practices of sustainability. As Oberlin College’s David Orr recently observed, higher education has developed “green operations and brown curricula.” This is a pity, for colleges should be much more concerned about fostering learning than simply saving kilowatts. The great need and grand challenge of the 21st century is to prepare talented young people to create a truly sustainable society, one in which everyone has the opportunity for a good life without corrupting the health of the planet. Providing such an education for sustainability requires both a different outlook than the prevailing self-indulgent consumerism animating modern American life and a different approach to education as praxis, the process by which a new field of learning is enacted.

Integrating the premises and processes of sustainability into the curriculum has been a difficult challenge, for curricular change is neither easy nor straightforward. Many faculty members already operate under excessive work loads and outdated faculty assessment criteria that allow little room for interdisciplinary creativity. Many also believe that their college curriculum is already overburdened with too many requirements. In addition, entrenched disciplinary perspectives as well as departmental territoriality impede emergent interdisciplinary fields such as sustainability. Many professors at first blush do not see the connections between sustainability and their own fields of interest. That sustainability remains an ambiguous term encompassing an array of complex issues also makes it difficult to champion as a new academic field.

“More often than not, the curriculum has been the last area of campus life to incorporate the principles and practices of sustainability.”
What is sustainability in an academic context? In essence, it involves recommitting ourselves to the original premises of liberal learning. Education for sustainability involves helping students imagine—and eventually enable—a better life for all by taking the long view about what really matters. A Native American proverb expresses the essence of sustainability: We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children. Ultimately, sustainability is a strategic way of enhancing the interactive dynamics of people and place over time. It requires balancing the growth in human population and societal expectations with the earth’s limited resources and carrying capacity. What could be more important than for students to develop the competencies necessary for creating a more sustainable civilization?

As Frank Rhodes, the former president of Cornell University, declared in 2006, sustainability represents the epitome of liberal learning because of its breadth and significance. Educating for sustainability, Rhodes explained, involves exposing students to the appropriate sciences: geology, natural resources, ecology, and climatology. Certainly, too, some understanding of social interaction: sociology, economics, and history. And also, surely, some extensive familiarity with the great issues and themes of human inquiry, self-reflection, and moral consideration that have guided human conduct and reflected human creativity — with the arts and the humanities, in other words.

Sustainability is thus a bridge-building field of learning, a problem-solving, project-oriented, and research-based approach to learning that combines theory with practice, knowledge with action, analysis with values. Its holistic nature enables a campus community to connect across fields, departments, divisions, and colleges. It also facilitates enhanced relations between a campus and its surrounding community by enabling students and faculty to undertake robust off-campus research projects and service activities. The experiential learning opportunities afforded by sustainability-infused courses, research projects, and internships directly expose students to the practical skills, systems thinking, and integrative outlook sought by more and more corporations. As Bruce Schlein, the director of corporate sustainability at Citi, noted in 2010, the emphasis of sustainability on combining deep expertise in a field with a holistic perspective “makes liberal arts skills [into the] hard skills” desired by employers.

For these and other reasons, sustainability represents an exciting frontier of curricular innovation. Furman University, for example, has taken a comprehensive approach to the incorporation of sustainability into every facet of university life, not just campus operations and construction practices, but also the curriculum, co-curriculum, and community partnerships and outreach programs. In 2001 the University’s Board of Trustees agreed to promote “sustainability through educational programs, campus operations, construction practices, and public awareness initiatives.” Six years later, in 2007, the faculty approved a new general education requirement whereby all students must take at least one course focused on the interactions of humans and nature.

The following year, the University created an academic center for sustainability that has served as an animating hub for promoting the study and practice of sustainability, on and off campus. A generous grant from the Andrew Mellon Foundation provided four years of start-up funding for the Center for Sustainability. Since 2009, the Center has launched an array of curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular initiatives to connect the university’s academic emphasis on sustainability with student life and community outreach activities. The Center has also sponsored a series of grant-funded faculty workshops to promote the integration of sustainability-related topics and techniques into existing courses. Twenty percent of Furman faculty members participated in these workshops over a three-year period. The Center has also created a faculty affiliate program that includes 54 professors representing the majority of academic departments. These faculty affiliates are eligible for research fellowships offered by the Center. They also participate in Center-instigated discussions focused on multi-disciplinary collaborations for teaching and research projects.
During its first five years of operation, Furman’s Center for Sustainability has made student/faculty research a high priority. The Center provides hands-on experiences with many of the university’s sustainability initiatives, from behavioral change related to energy use to efforts to enhance the water quality of the campus lake to assessment of the various renewable energy platforms scattered across the campus and in the Greenville community. The Center tries to make every campus sustainability project (such as solar energy and geothermal energy projects as well as the lake restoration project) a learning laboratory for faculty and students.

In its first year, the Center for Sustainability initiated a student fellows program that offers practical opportunities for learning in sustainability. To date, 100 student fellows with many different majors have done service work and conducted research projects, often in partnership with non-profit organizations and municipal agencies.

In 2010 Furman’s Earth and Environmental Sciences Department launched the nation’s first undergraduate major in sustainability science offered by a private liberal arts institution. The new sustainability science major is interdisciplinary and systemic. That is, it employs the perspectives and tools of a variety of disciplines (the physical and social sciences as well as humanistic ethics and values) to explore the ways in which the interactions of social, economic, political, biological, and cultural systems impact ecosystems—and how resilient societies adapt to environmental change.

Such a holistic educational approach echoes the premises of liberal learning. Although an emerging discipline as well as a field of study, sustainability science already has become a hallmark of liberal learning in that it is an inherently interdisciplinary enterprise that asks profound questions about the ideal elements of a good life and confronts daunting problems created by the heedless exploitation of the environment. The systemic thinking driving sustainability science helps students better appreciate the complexity of environmental issues in the process of developing appropriate responses to contemporary problems, many of which are profoundly complicated and intractable. Within just two years, some 40 Furman students have opted to major in sustainability science. Some of them are focusing their research on food systems. Others use ecological footprint analysis to identify practical initiatives to promote sustainability. One student has participated in research related to the electric-vehicle partnership program in Greenville, South Carolina, where Furman is located. Others help municipal officials promote land conservation and sustainable eco-tourism. A handful of students have traveled to Tanzania in the summer to improve the economic possibilities of women living in small villages.

Liberal learning at its best encourages students to become active participants in the learning process. Furman has long stressed engaged learning that is truly experiential; it thrives upon discussion, debate, experiment, and reflection. By creating learning laboratories both on and off campus for the new sustainability science major, Furman is encouraging students to analyze, synthesize and evaluate information; pose questions, challenge assumptions and form hypotheses; conduct their own research and experiments; and test their knowledge in real world situations, then present their findings to others. Such active engagement gives education substance and savor.

So how does a college begin to integrate the premises and practices of sustainability into its academic program? Of course, every college has its own unique culture and resources, so there is no universally applicable template for integrating sustainability into the academic program. But the obvious first step for presidents is to assess whether there is sufficient interest among a critical mass of faculty and students to consider curricular innovations centered on sustainability. If there is, then the academic dean
should assemble a task force or ad hoc planning committee to study the emerging field of sustainability science as well as the ways that other colleges and universities are incorporating the principles and practices of sustainability into their curriculum and develop initiatives appropriate to its institutional culture. At Furman we have tried to give professors the space and the resources to experiment with new approaches to learning in the context of promoting sustainability. This requires patience and resilience as well as resources. It takes time and a tolerance for “trial and error” to incorporate new academic fields and ways of learning.

In recent years, the resources supporting sustainability as an academic enterprise have escalated. There are many fine books and dozens of articles dealing with the academic aspects of sustainability. The planning group should also take advantage of the many local, regional, and national resources, including consultants, available to assist their efforts. In addition, many private and corporate foundations as well as government agencies are focusing their philanthropy on promoting sustainability in higher education.

As centers of learning and research as well as dynamic communities, colleges are especially well suited to model sustainable behavior; to expose students to the implications of climate change and the depletion of natural resources; to inspire students to embrace more sustainable ways of life; and to discover new ways to ensure that future generations will inherit a world still teeming with possibility. In sum, sustainability is an interdisciplinary concept promoting values, skills, and activities that are ecologically sound, environmentally conscientious, socially just, and economically viable.

For sustainability itself to be sustainable within higher education, it needs to be integrated throughout a campus culture, but anchored in the academic program rather than in the energy office, business affairs, facility services, or student life. If implemented correctly, sustainability can become a driving force in institutions’ missions, a guiding principle of campus life, and an academic discipline in its own right. As Neil Weissman, the provost at Dickinson College, asserted in 2012, sustainability “has the potential to vitalize and validate liberal learning in ways that both deepen our practice as teachers and engage us meaningfully with the wider world.”

Dr. David E. Shi, the 10th president of Furman University from 1994 to 2010, is a leading figure in American higher education. A prolific writer and speaker, David has shared his knowledge of such topics as American history, sustainability, and leadership with thousands of people in the corporate, higher education, and nonprofit sectors. Shi, an Atlanta native and a 1973 Furman graduate who earned a Ph.D. in history from the University of Virginia, championed the University’s emphasis on engaged learning, energy conservation, and environmental stewardship. Under his direction, Furman became a national leader in promoting sustainability.

In 2003 Shi received the Presidential Leadership Award from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and was named Greenville Magazine Business Person of the Year. David was a charter signatory of the American College & University Presidents’ Climate Commitment in 2006. During his presidency, Furman built the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified building in South Carolina (there are now 7 LEED-certified buildings on campus). In 2010 the environmental organization Upstate Forever presented Shi with its Extraordinary Achievement in Environmental Conservation Award. That same year, Furman University’s Board of Trustees named its dazzling new Center for Sustainability in honor of Shi. Established in 2008, the David E. Shi Center for Sustainability has evolved into an animating hub where educators, students, and community leaders work together to address the most complex issues of sustainability.