SCC Practitioner Survey: Results and Implications

SCC Faculty Conference

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Peter A. Soyka
President

SOYKA & COMPANY, LLC
Today’s Discussion

• Context

• Survey Results
  – Respondent Characteristics
  – Current Conditions
  – Recommended Areas of SCC Focus
    • Emphasis on views of those actively teaching sustainability

• Questions, Comments & Discussion
Context

• Growing importance of sustainability
• Lack of clarity
  – Terms, scope, boundaries
  – Acceptance and support
  – Approaches and methods
• Many anecdotes but few systematic studies
Respondents

Geographic Distribution of Survey Respondents (n=92)

- Northeast, other than New England: 8
- West Coast: 5
- Middle-Atlantic: 10
- Great Plains: 3
- Not Specified: 3
- Outside North America: 1
- Rocky Mountain West: 14
- Midwest: 15
- Southeast: 2
- New England: 3
- Southwest: 4
- Canada: 3
- Alaska, Hawaii, or U.S. Territory: 1

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Respondents

Primary Responsibility in Sustainability in Higher Education

- Teaching faculty
- Research faculty
- Adjunct faculty member
- Administration
- Chief Sustainability Officer
- Other administrative role
- Graduate student or fellow
- Consultant
- Curriculum developer
- Other

Number of Responses

- Actively Teaching Sustainability
- All Respondents
Respondents

Prevalence of Use of Core Sustainability Concepts

- Fundamental/Integral/Consistent
- Tactical/Targeted/Frequent
- Occasional/Episodic
- Infrequent
- Not used

Number of Responses

[Bar chart showing the prevalence of use of core sustainability concepts with bars for inter-disciplinary approaches and systems thinking]

Inter-disciplinary Approaches
Systems Thinking

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Current Conditions

Perceived Customer Satisfaction:

Our students want to learn about sustainability, but may be frustrated by a lack of...

- practical skills training in our curriculum.
- coherence in our approach to teaching it.
Current Conditions

Leadership and Faculty Support:

At my institution...

there is a clear and widely shared understanding of why sustainability education is important.

the leadership fully supports our efforts to formulate and deliver trans-disciplinary sustainability education.

faculty members outside my discipline share my interest in bringing multiple/integrated perspectives.

my efforts to deliver sustainability education have been recognized and/or rewarded.
Current Conditions

Conceptual and Practical Constraints:

At my institution...

most people think that sustainability in higher education means recycling programs, building energy efficiency improvements, and other campus-oriented activities.

we have a clear and widely shared understanding of how sustainability education should be delivered.

we have a coherent, broadly accepted institution-wide approach for integrating sustainability into higher education.

we understand and respond to the importance of systems-thinking and multi-disciplinary problem-solving across our courses.

our faculty is highly collaborative, and we easily work across boundaries.

there are disincentives to working with faculty outside one's own department or school.
Current Conditions

Adequacy of Resources and Moral Support:

At my institution...

- we have had difficulty in defining suitable learning outcomes.

- I have found it challenging to locate the materials needed to teach sustainability.

- I have trouble fitting sustainability teaching in, given my existing teaching and/or research commitments.

- in promoting sustainability education, I sometimes feel like I’m trying to push a big rock up a steep hill.

Number of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>No Opinion or Unsure</th>
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## Needs and Recommended Focus

### Perceived Importance of Potential SCC Work Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Area</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating an on-line repository of sustainability teaching resources.</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining the core competencies needed to perform sustainability work in the U.S. economy.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing sample learning objectives for developing core sustainability competencies.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a business case for why sustainability should be incorporated into standard college and university curricula.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying and compiling best practices for delivering sustainability instruction, and examples of role models/mentors.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafting guidance for how best to apply in-class, on-line, experiential, and other instructional methods.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documenting barriers and suggesting strategies and tools for surmounting them.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**
- **Crucial**
- **Very Important**
- **Somewhat Important**
- **Marginally Important**
- **Unimportant**
Needs and Recommended Focus

Alignment of Prospective SCC Work Areas with Respondent Priorities
Questions, Comments & Discussion
Contact information

Peter Soyka
Soyka & Co.
peter@soykaandcompany.com
+1 (571) 748-5547
www(soykaandcompany.com