

**2011 Symposium on Sustainability –**

**Sustainability Interactive Visioning Session Overview**

Faculty Brainstorming Sessions: Integrating Sustainability into Research and Teaching

Title of Group:

Committee Members (Chair and member names including department):

Cinzia Cervato (Chair), Department of Geological & Atmospheric Sciences

Nadia Anderson, Department of Architecture

Ulrike Passe, Department of Architecture

Overall Objective:

The objective of these sessions is to facilitate a discussion on integration of sustainability into research and teaching among ISU faculty members.

Specific Goals and Outcomes:

The goals of the sessions are to allow faculty members to share existing efforts to integrate sustainability in research and teaching at ISU, to identify their needs, and to create networking opportunities. The expected outcomes of the sessions are: a better knowledge of individual efforts at ISU; the exchange of ideas on funding, presentations, potential barriers, and opportunities; and the potential for collaboration on research and curriculum projects.

Process (How session is organized):

To allow faculty to pick and choose their main interest and give them maximum flexibility to fit their participation into their schedules, we will hold two concurrent one-hour sessions (2-3 PM and 3-4 PM) that will each be held twice. Two committee members will coordinate one session on teaching and one on research next, while the other two will coordinate one of the sessions on research and then one on teaching. One session will focus on integration of sustainability in research and the second one on integration of sustainability in teaching.

The sessions will be modeled after Pecha Kucha (Japanese: *chit chat*) Nights that have recently become common in the design world. The goal is to allow all participants to share their work, ideas, and/or tips in a concise (2-3 minutes maximum), quick-paced, and engaging way. Participants then will divide into small groups based on common interests or random counting and discuss commonalities, barriers, and opportunities regarding the incorporation of sustainability in research or teaching. The outcome of the small group discussions will be short and targeted ideas to be shared with students and staff at the common session from 4-5 PM.

Summary of Results:

Six faculty members participated in the visioning session in addition to the organizers. For the first half of the session, we discussed ways to integrate sustainability in the curriculum and in our teaching. The second half was dedicated to research.

Within teaching, participants identified several existing activities involving sustainability including the new sustainability minor, a graduate program in sustainable agriculture, some courses on globalization, environmental sustainability, etc. In addition, faculty collaborations on sustainability-related projects give students the opportunity to be involved in outreach projects.

The most common perceived need for improvement in this area is networking. This could be achieved through a university faculty sustainability committee or a faculty learning community modeled after ISU’s success with student learning communities and professional learning communities that are successfully linking faculty across research projects focused on student learning. These activities would lead to better integration of interdisciplinary, sustainable concepts across the curriculum. However, there is not a good mechanism for creating truly interdisciplinary courses taught by faculty from different Colleges and/or Departments. A key point in this discussion was the need for funding to promote broader faculty involvement and mechanisms to reward faculty who are actively involved in sustainability in the curriculum.

Research on sustainable issues is perceived as central to ISU’s mission as a land-grant institution. Existing projects that were mentioned include: non-oil dependent agriculture systems; sustainable and organic food supply; obesity, health and nutrition; resource efficiency in buildings; energy systems in the developing world; and the Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods.

Faculty at the session advocated for better communication and access to information on existing projects, and for broadening faculty involvement in existing projects. It was also suggested that groundbreaking research in sustainability should involve truly transformative changes rather than ways to maintain a non-sustainable lifestyle.