Request for Entitlement to Plan
Collaborative, Online Bachelor of Science Degree Completion Program
in Sustainable Management

University of Wisconsin-Parkside
University of Wisconsin-River Falls
University of Wisconsin-Stout
University of Wisconsin-Superior

With administrative and financial support from UW-Extension

Summary

This proposal is to develop an online bachelor’s degree completion program in Sustainable Management. This degree is intended primarily for adult and nontraditional students. Because the first two years of the program curriculum will consist primarily of general education requirements and prerequisites, students can enter the program through the UW Colleges, the Wisconsin Technical Colleges, or any of the UW System campuses. Students wishing to complete the entire curriculum online may do so by entering through UW Colleges Online and then finishing this online program through any one of the four institutions requesting this Entitlement to Plan.

Introduction

The world is changing quickly, and it is now clear that we must pay significant attention to how we use natural resources and how our business practices impact human welfare. Escalating costs of energy, shrinking supplies of fresh water, and global climate change are only a few examples. The business community understands this issue, and the public is concerned about it as well.

There are very few undergraduate programs—and none at the top tier institutions—that focus specifically on developing effective, engaged, and informed leaders who understand both business systems and natural systems, and who are able to bring to industry relevant and applicable knowledge to enable businesses to be profitable and to contribute to global sustainability.

Four campuses in The University of Wisconsin System are taking a national leadership role in addressing this issue. Parkside, River Falls, Stout, and Superior seek approval to develop a sustainable management degree. UW-Extension will provide administrative and financial support. This degree will focus on developing the competencies required to enable graduates to help businesses meet triple bottom line requirements: strong profitability, vibrant communities, healthy environment.

This sustainable management degree will focus primarily on adult and nontraditional students, helping to ensure that they are well versed in business and science. Particular attention will be paid to teaching students about systems and how various systems interact so that students gain a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which natural processes, business structures, and social needs intersect. This knowledge will make UW graduates especially qualified to help Wisconsin businesses enhance their competitive advantage while preserving natural resources and strengthening communities.
A number of businesses in Wisconsin and in the nation have been consulted about the competencies that graduates should have to be particularly valuable employees. They expressed strong support for this program, and the information they provided has been used in developing the curriculum. It is hoped that the degree will be launched in Fall 2009.

Need and Market Demand

One need not look far to recognize the importance of sustainability for our society and for the world. The need for sustainability, combined with the knowledge economy, creates the need for well-educated individuals who can help contribute to economic development through a focus on the triple bottom line. This is particularly pertinent in Wisconsin where we manage extensive natural resources, where our manufacturing base is changing rapidly, and where we are behind our neighbors and the national average in the number of bachelor’s degree holders that reside in the state.

A quick scan of undergraduate degrees across the UW System and across the nation shows that there are very few that focus on building competencies in the triple bottom line. More specifically, there are no such programs in the UW System, and there are five degrees at four institutions in the U.S. All are at small, private, liberal arts colleges.

Based on these initial scans, the Division of Continuing Education, Outreach and E-Learning, Extension (CEOEL) commissioned a market study to scan business needs, job opportunities, and potentially competing programs. The study was conducted by Eduventures (a higher education market research firm) to determine if a sustainable management degree from the UW System campuses was viable.

The key findings of the survey were:

“Sustainability-related training and education are in demand nationally. Businesses are increasingly incorporating sustainable practices into their operations, and institutions are recognizing the value of incorporating a sustainability theme into curriculum. Clearly, there are opportunities for the four University of Wisconsin campuses to capitalize on this trend and offer a unique program that differentiates itself, while remaining at the forefront of the market.”
Types of individuals potentially interested in this degree include:

- Those working in the professional and business services sectors
- Those working in trade, transportation, and utilities sectors
- General and operations managers
- Construction managers
- First-line supervisors/managers of construction, production and operating workers
- Entry- to mid-level management professionals
- Professionals within environmental health and safety positions
- Individuals aspiring to positions as directors/coordinators of sustainability
- Professionals within construction, business services, manufacturing, and utilities
- Adult and nontraditional students

Learning Outcomes and Overview of Curriculum

Before drafting the curriculum for this program, corporations with histories of being interested in sustainability and triple bottom line criteria were consulted. Some of these corporations have headquarters in Wisconsin, others in the Midwest. A number of them are multi-national, Fortune 500 businesses. As a result of the engagement with these companies, a list of competencies was drafted. Faculty representatives from each of the four partner campuses had opportunities to engage with companies to refine the competencies list. Acquisition of these competencies by students is the intended learning outcome of this program. The competencies are as follows.

Technical competencies

- Carbon trading, carbon credits, how the economy is expected to react to this new currency, and how corporations can be part of the process
- Climate change, global warming, and the science, policy, and economic implications of global warming. Looking beyond CO2 is important
- Water policy and water science: application and reduction of water use, efficiencies of water use, dry-base processing, water policy, water law, focusing on innovation rather than regulation. Looking at how a company uses water as a competitive advantage
- Logistics and transportation of raw materials, just-in-time logistics, rail, shipping, etc.
- Supply chain structures, functions, and opportunities to brand
- Energy generation, the mechanics of energy generation, energy infrastructure, energy management, energy policy, and purchasing energy
- Marketing, communications, and public affairs vis-à-vis the human impacts of manufacturing
General competencies

- Understanding world geography, cultural literacy, world religions, etc.
- The ability to apply cultural understanding to real-life business issues
- Knowing how to navigate political landscapes at various levels (local, state, national, international)
- Geopolitical dynamics
- Global gender issues
- The ability to identify potential, innovative, and symbiotic relationships, such as partnerships between energy producers and manufacturers

During the curriculum drafting process, adult and nontraditional students were consulted and asked about their preferences for course and curriculum formats. They expressed strong preference for having courses offered online in both traditional, semester-length formats and in accelerated formats. Students also expressed strong preference for a streamlined list of courses with few or no electives so that there is no ambiguity about which courses students should take, and which courses are required for graduation. Students also asked to minimize repetition or redundancy in the curriculum. In response to students’ requests, as the partner campus faculty representatives drafted the curriculum, they limited the number of courses to 21. Every student will be required to take all 21 courses to graduate once he/she has completed an associate’s degree or the first two years of coursework, including prerequisites. There are no electives.

Because this is a collaborative degree and there are four partner campuses, each campus will teach five or six courses in the degree. As the faculty representatives developed the curriculum draft, they made initial course assignments by campus based on campus curricular and faculty strengths. The draft curriculum is as follows.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM COURSE LIST</th>
<th>CAMPUS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SMGT 115 Environmental Science and Sustainability</td>
<td>River Falls</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMGT 230 Triple Bottom Line Accounting for Managers</td>
<td>Superior</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMGT 235 Economics in Society and Sustainability</td>
<td>Superior</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMGT 240 Technical Writing for Sustainable Management</td>
<td>Parkside</td>
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<td>SMGT 310 Ecology for Sustainable Management</td>
<td>Stout</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMGT 315 Global Environmental Chemistry</td>
<td>Superior</td>
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<td>SMGT 320 Energy for Sustainable Management</td>
<td>River Falls</td>
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<td>SMGT 325 Natural Resource Management</td>
<td>Parkside</td>
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<td>SMGT 330 Marketing for a Sustainable World</td>
<td>Stout</td>
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<td>SMGT 331 Sustainable Organizational Finance</td>
<td>River Falls</td>
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<td>SMGT 332 Economics of Environmental Sustainability</td>
<td>Parkside</td>
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<td>SMGT 335 Management &amp; Environmental Information Systems</td>
<td>Parkside</td>
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<td>SMGT 340 Organizational Behavior and Sustainability</td>
<td>Stout</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMGT 350 Operations Management and Sustainability</td>
<td>Parkside</td>
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<td>SMGT 360 Environmental and Sustainable Policy</td>
<td>River Falls</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMGT 370 Logistics, Supply Chain Management, and Sustainability</td>
<td>Superior</td>
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<td>SMGT 430 International Management for a Sustainable World</td>
<td>Stout</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMGT 435 International Development and Sustainability</td>
<td>Superior</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMGT 440 Systems Thinking</td>
<td>River Falls</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMGT 460 Environment and Society</td>
<td>Parkside</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMGT 495 Sustainable Management Capstone</td>
<td>Stout</td>
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It should be noted that considerable attention was paid to the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation. The curriculum was designed so as not to create accreditation complexities for campuses that are AACSB accredited. By its very nature, this is an interdisciplinary degree and so does not fit the AACSB model. Hence, the partner campuses that have AACSB accredited colleges of business will offer the program through their College of Arts and Sciences or, in the case of UW-River Falls, through the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences. Those campuses that are not bound by AACSB accreditation criteria will offer the program through their business colleges.

Relation to Institutional Mission

The Sustainable Management Bachelor’s Degree contributes directly to the institutional mission of the University of Wisconsin System by supporting the UW Growth Agenda. The three components of the Growth Agenda are to increase the number of degree holders in Wisconsin, increase the number of high paying jobs, and build stronger communities. The Sustainable Management degree contributes to all three components of the Growth Agenda by providing a degree that is in demand, supported by Wisconsin businesses, and develops competencies that enable graduates to help Wisconsin employers meet the triple bottom line (strong profitability, healthy environment, and vital communities). It is a degree targeted at adult and nontraditional students and thus broadens access to the university.

The Sustainable Management Bachelor’s Degree supports the institutional missions of the four partner campuses by contributing to the core of liberal education by developing communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, analytical, leadership, teamwork, and collaboration skills.

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Furthermore, this is a multidisciplinary degree that helps build bridges among disciplines and develops students’ abilities to think in terms of systems and interrelationships.

At UW-Parkside the Sustainable Management degree aligns well with its mission to build high-quality educational programs, creative and scholarly activities, and services responsive to its diverse student population. This degree supports its local, national and global communities mission, and it strengthens its goals to utilize technology creatively and effectively in courses, programs, and services. For UW-Stout as a comprehensive polytechnic university, programs are presented through an approach to learning that involves combining theory, practice and experimentation—all tenants of the Sustainable Management Bachelor's Degree, and all in alignment with Stout’s mission. Modeling sustainability principles is Goal 2 of “Living the Promise,” the strategic plan for UW-River Falls adopted in 2007-08. The second initiative under that goal states that the university will “promote sustainability across all dimensions of the campus and beyond” including incorporating sustainability into the curriculum. Hence, the Sustainable Management degree fits very well into the Campus strategic plan. The mission of UW-Superior is to foster intellectual growth and career preparation within a liberal arts tradition that emphasizes individual attention and embodies respect for diverse cultures and multiple voices. Students who master the liberal arts competencies embedded within the Sustainable Management degree will be fulfilling the UW-Superior mission by becoming positioned to help businesses meet the triple bottom line (strong profits, healthy environment, and vital communities) in a dynamic and rapidly evolving global economy.

Relation to Other UW-System Programs

As noted above, there are no such programs in the UW System.

Among the UW System four-year campuses, Madison offers some business courses with “sustainability” in the course title, although these are 600 level programs. Stout offers a minor in Sustainable Design and Development, and several of the other campuses offer a few courses with “sustainable” in the title. A number of UW four-year institutions have sustainability efforts focused on greening their campuses, with projects including energy efficiency, green building, and recycling, but only a few include goals to incorporate sustainability into their curricula. Among the UW System two-year campuses, there are courses that pertain to the environment, conservation, geology, etc., though none specifically focus on sustainability per se.
Although this is a unique and new degree, it complements the broad array of degrees offered across the UW System by creating a new point of entry for adult and nontraditional students, by building upon the associate’s degree offered by the UW Colleges and other campuses, and by engaging faculty who have expertise in related areas on all of the partner campuses. In addition, the Sustainable Management degree is an excellent starting point for students who wish to go onto master’s degrees in business, public policy, environmental science, and related fields.

Resources
This collaborative degree is part of the Adult Student Initiative. The budget model developed for this degree is designed so that the program will become self-supporting within 5 years from the time that classes are first offered. In order to minimize the financial burden on partner campuses, CEOEL will cover program deficits until the program is producing net revenue. Once the program is producing net revenue, funds will be split so that two-thirds of net revenue is returned to the campuses and one-third is retained in CEOEL to support future program development on UW campuses, improve student services, etc.

Conclusion
The Collaborative, Online Bachelors Degree in Sustainable Management will be offered by UW-Parkside, UW-River Falls, UW-Stout, and UW-Superior. The first two years are already offered by all System campuses and also available through UW Colleges Online.
The undersigned Provosts request approval for the Request for Entitlement to Plan to move this degree forward.

Gerald Greenfield, UW-Parkside

Terry Brown, UW-River Falls

Julie Furst-Bowe, UW-Stout

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Supported By

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Greg Lampe, UW-Colleges