

APPENDIX I

TRENDS in SUSTAINABILITY and HIGHER EDUCATION

(Information gathered for President Appleton by Monty Hempel, March 2010)

Arguments in support of sustainability as a core organizing principle are becoming stronger each year. The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) has grown in 5 short years from a few dozen to over 1,000 institutional members. When it started five years ago, a membership goal of 300 universities by 2010 was thought to be very ambitious. The fact that AASHE has been growing at a rapid pace throughout the recession says a great deal about how university leaders are responding to uncertainty and opportunity.

Evidence of growing demand for education with this kind of mission and characteristics is becoming pervasive. Some of it is focused on green economy/green jobs potentials, but much of it reflects the broader view of sustainability and intergenerational ethics. A snapshot of recent surveys and reports might include the following:

- The Princeton Review's 2008 and 2009 "College Hopes & Worries" Surveys indicate a growing and deepening interest among incoming freshmen in sustainability and environmental issues. In answer to the question "If you (your child) had a way to compare colleges based on their commitment to environmental issues (from academic offerings to practices concerning energy use, recycling, etc.), how much would this contribute to your (your child's) decision to apply to or attend a school?", 66% of 15,722 respondents in the 2009 survey said they would favor having such information (up 3% from in 2008), and 24% said it would "Strongly" or "Very Much" contribute to their assessment of a school.
- A survey of over 1700 students across nine diverse campuses by researchers at the College of William and Mary found that "current freshmen are two times more likely to choose their school based on sustainability concerns than the entering freshman class just 3 years ago (13.5% vs. 6.5%, respectively)."
- Results of a 2008 survey of 240,580 first-year, full-time students at 340 four-year institutions conducted by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute. Almost half (45.3 percent) said "adopting 'green' practices to protect the environment" is "essential" or "very important" to them.
- The recent attention to sustainability issues and campus greening from the major college guide companies is further evidence of demand for such information from prospective students. The 2009 editions of Princeton Review's college guides included a new "Green Rating" for 534 colleges and universities. The Kaplan College Guide 2009 included a special "Green Section" featuring 25 green campuses and 10 green careers. Peterson's college guide has or is about to release a guide to green campuses, and the US News & World Report has expressed interest in developing green rankings of its own.

In sum, the available evidence is consistent in suggesting that a significant and likely growing proportion of prospective students are making decisions about where to apply and attend based on campus commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. Redlands is positioned to respond to this interest, but it has not distinguished itself in any way that allows us to stand out among our peer institutions. Moreover, in comparison with some of our aspirational institutions, we may be falling behind.