

Sustainable Education

by Nicole Adrian

It seems sustainability and social responsibility news and information, along with green products, are everywhere you look these days. Many people around the world are doing their part to lead greener lives. I try to do my part by recycling everything I can, keeping the lights off as much as possible and biking to work every so often. ASQ has also taken on social responsibility and has launched a website, www.thesro.org, dedicated to the cause.

With so many things going green, why not incorporate these sustainable and socially responsible ideals into education?

This issue of *ASQ Higher Education Brief* focuses on green and sustainable higher education. Colleges and universities everywhere are approaching sustainability in two ways: campus operations and curriculum.

In this issue, Alessandra Cairo and Debra Rowe from the U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development and authors of “The National Trend Toward Sustainability Education Grows,” use the U.N. Brundtland Commission’s definition of sustainability: “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development consists of individuals, organizations and institutions working to help catalyze nationwide sustainability initiatives.

Evergreen State College is one of the institutions that is incorporating green on its campus. The Olympia, WA, college—located on 1,000 acres of Pacific Northwest forest—uses 100% recycled paper and green cleaning products, has 28% of its food service purchasing coming from local and organic sources and offers sustainability-related courses such as “Why Businesses Succeed: Designing a Sustainable Company,” “Sustainability and Justice,” and “Food, Place and Culture.”

In her article, “Integrating Sustainability Into Engineering: Why, How, Risks and Rewards,” Linda Vanasupa, a materials engineering professor at California Polytechnic State University, details how she and the department faculty integrated sustainability into engineering. The department ended up reforming 80% of the materials engineering courses, and the entire process has led to measurable improvements in all areas of graduating students’ performance.

Because sustainability has so many benefits, it's no wonder colleges, universities, faculty and students are incorporating projects, courses and partnerships to better their world and society.

A new look

If you didn't already receive a copy *ASQ Primary and Secondary Brief*—ASQ's newsletter that focuses on K-12 education news, tools and concepts—you might have noticed that this issue looks a little different from the old issues. *Education Brief* has been split into two separate issues: one focusing on K-12 issues and trends and the other focusing solely on higher education. The goal is to give each reader even more information pertinent to his or her particular area of interest.

As always, we'd love to hear what you think about the new format. Is the information relevant? Are the articles applicable to you? What else would you like to see—or not see? Are you interested in contributing to a future issue? Please feel free to contact me at nadrian@asq.org.