

TITLE:

Sustainability Development at Hull College

DATE:

September 2008



INSTITUTION PROFILE

FE

8500 FTE students

1500 staff

Urban

15 buildings on 9 sites

SUMMARY

Hull College, one of the largest general further education colleges in the country, serves Hull and East Riding and recruits nationally to its commissioned work and HE provision. Since 2005, sustainability awareness-raising has taken place for both students and staff. This has led to wider understanding of sustainability with influences beyond the college. Core work continues with increasing engagement and appreciation.

EAUC COMMENT

This case study provides an excellent example of how a culture change can take place to embed sustainability into a college and its curriculum.

THE PROBLEM

Hull College wanted all staff to have a greater understanding of sustainability, as this became an increasingly important topic for education, believing the college had a moral responsibility to equip its students with knowledge of the subject for them to become better citizens. As the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) also requires sustainability to be integrated into the curriculum, the college wanted to deliver this as well as becoming sustainable in its management, buildings and community.

Although most staff had a general awareness, they needed to better understand how sustainability was relevant to them and their jobs. In 2005, the new college principal wanted a whole-college co-ordinated and considered approach to increasing staff's skills and awareness of sustainability, which would lead to a culture change.

THE APPROACH

In early 2005 a Sustainability Group was set up, made up of volunteer 'Sustainability Champions' – staff volunteers from a range of subject and service areas.

The approach was developed through:

- consultation across the college with staff and students on the approach to sustainable development
- consideration of research on sustainability issues produced by other organisations
- examination of sustainability policies developed by related and other sectors (e.g. Higher Education, local government, the private sector)

The college's virtual learning environment (VLE), which is part of the college's intranet, has been used as a method of consultation and to disseminate the results at each stage.

A baseline audit of sustainable development and environmental activity in the different parts of the college and in the curriculum was undertaken by the group, so a strategy and action plan could be developed and progress measured against a reliable starting point.

OUR GOALS

- A culture change so sustainability is integral to all the college does
- Laying a foundation for creating awareness
- Embedding sustainability in wider curriculum delivery
- Broadening awareness raising and information seeking activities
- Enthusing staff and students about sustainability and enabling them to see how it is relevant to them

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

Obstacle

- Implementing a consistent approach right across the college
- Students not aware of green issues
- Not enough student involvement on the steering committee
- Developing suitable performance criteria with which to monitor progress year-on-year

Solution

- Support given directly and through the college VLE with background material
Resources available include:
 - power point presentations
 - scheme of work and lesson plans
 - example projects
- Technology was more widely used to reduce paper use:
 - an e-mail culture was developed for electronic documents and central college documents made available on the VLE
 - use of the VLE included the posting of minutes and documents for committees and other meetings and the use of wireless laptops for such meetings
 - development of VLE sites for curriculum areas and development in the use of technology e.g. electronic whiteboards
 - centralised printing was installed, with training on the machines
- Make it easy for people to make different choices – about recycling, energy use and travel
- Set an example e.g. motion sensors used where practicable for lighting, influenced route of new park and ride service so it passes the college, launched cycle scheme with bicycles supplied for travel between college sites and built new secure bike sheds
- Provide the right facilities - mixed recycling bins for both paper and plastic introduced in both communal areas and in staff rooms. Additional general plastic recycling bins supplied following requests by students
- Maintain interest and profile - periodic campaigns by building supervisors to feed back where lighting and computers are left on and student projects to raise awareness
- The college's VLE and portal are used to store and share information. New sections of the portal include forums for people to post items they are willing to give away, such as surplus vegetables from an allotment, as well as discussion boards. This perpetuates the college's wish for sustainability to be embedded in its culture

PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

A continued programme of awareness-raising with the staff to encourage behaviour change, with a central theme of sustainability, included an event with a key note speech delivered by former Environment Minister Michael Meacher MP. This has helped maintain enthusiasm and reinforce that sustainability is relevant to everyone's work.

Sustainability has been included in tutorials for students since 2006, resulting in student work which has raised and shared awareness. For example, students developed a successful online campaign 'Sooner than later' devised to encourage other students and staff to make pledges for sustainability, which everyone was able to view.

A showcase for sustainability work was combined with Citizenship awards, featuring displays of dance with a sustainability theme and art and design projects using recycled products, along with posters and presentations. This year a competition was run with projects submitted such as concept building designs and a top trumps game giving eco-details about cars. This game will be used to stimulate interest in sustainability for next year's groups.

The college now has a sustainability policy, which has been updated to include economic and social factors.

A new, NVQ level two qualification in Waste Disposal was developed to meet the needs of local firms.

The college has sponsored a local academy, an education provider for 11-18 year olds with a different curriculum encompassing vocational areas and branded as an Eco-Academy, offering specialist courses in Sports and Environmental Science.

Ofsted asked the college to provide a good practise report for its website on how it tackles sustainability following its inspection in 2008 when the college was rated outstanding.

LESSONS LEARNT

- Support and experience from peers with expertise in their area is invaluable
- Staff don't need to be specialists in sustainability to stimulate debate among students – which itself raises awareness
- Fully embedding sustainability is a long-term project
- Continual assessment of how you define sustainability is needed. Hull College started by focusing on environmental factors, and now includes social and economic considerations in its definition

FURTHER INFORMATION

Dr Debbie Meakin
Staff Performance, Development and External Research Manager
Hull College
Queen's Gardens
Hull HU1 3DG
01482598891
dmeakin@hull-college.ac.uk

Teresa Chalmers
Director of Marketing and Customer Service
Hull College
Queen's Gardens
Hull HU1 3DG
01482480975
tchalmers@hull-college.ac.uk

Dr Elaine McMahon
Principal
Hull College
Queen's Gardens
Hull HU1 3DG
01482598700
emcmahon@hull-college.ac.uk



The Environmental and Sustainability Champion within Further and Higher Education in the United Kingdom.

The EAUC provides training, advice and support to our members as well as providing a forum for best practice in the sector.

To join phone 01242 714321

Disclaimer:

Although every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this document is accurate the EAUC, the contributing institutions, the funding and the endorsing bodies do not warrant its accuracy and disclaims any liability for its use.

www.eauc.org.uk
info@eauc.org.uk