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# A Greener Dominican?: The Journey of a University Perched on the Threshold of Sustainability

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## A Greener Dominican?

### The Journey of a University Perched on the Threshold of Sustainability

A senior thesis submitted to the faculty of Dominican University of California in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts in Humanities and Cultural Studies.

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With deep gratitude, this work is dedicated to

My Family

My Friends

My Teachers

My Mentors

My home

My Community

and

finally

to myself.

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*Abstract*

We live in a culture in which we find ourselves disconnected with the natural world and yet suffering from the mounting implications of the impact that our actions as developing industry-based societies have had on the ecological systems of the planet. Institutions of Higher Education, such as colleges and universities, educate most of the people who develop and manage institutions in society. As centers for learning and the dissemination of knowledge, institutions of higher learning have an obligation to promote a culture of sustainability within their communities. This paper that explores concepts of sustainability in relation to higher education with particular focus on Dominican University of California (DUC). In addition to studying and reflecting on texts and articles focusing on sustainability in higher education my research includes interviews with faculty and staff at DUC and analysis of information provided on the school's website. My research indicates that, as an institution, Dominican University of California has not addressed or incorporated concepts of sustainability into its processes or culture the highest possible degree. While DUC has taken some steps in this direction, such as implementing the STARS assessment of sustainability, it could go further. At the close of this paper, I make some suggestions for how it might approach future efforts towards sustainability.

*Introduction*

I came to Dominican University of California undeclared, searching for my place and passion in this world. I was searching for a field of study that embraced my values of emotion and feeling, mysticism and reverence, respect and community, alongside the conventionally individualistic academic pursuit. A major in Humanities gave me a chance to learn more about the psychological, social, cultural, philosophical, and religious aspects of what I think of as “human-planet relations.” As with many majors, students with a Humanities major can pick an area of interest or concentration to help focus their study within the major. I picked a focus in Environment, Culture, and Sustainability. With guidance from my academic advisor, I chose courses that fulfilled the requirements of my major and concentration while also fulfilling my desire to study a broad range of topics.

Many of my classes, however, had a clear environmental focus. The one drawback was that my classes didn’t really build on each other. Granted, they often contained interrelated focuses, but there was no clear, linear path. In the Fall semester of my sophomore year, I took my first environmentally centered class at DUC: Environmental Communications. It wasn’t offered that often --- about once every two years, so I wanted to seize the chance to take it. It was an upper division class and I had never taken a communications class before. It was really fast-paced and I often felt lost, like I was missing some foundational knowledge of communications and media. That same year, in the Spring semester, I took my colloquium courses, a mandatory part of the undergraduate general education program at DUC in which students take two classes taught by two teachers on two subjects that are interrelated.

Colloquium encourages an interdisciplinary approach to learning. The two colloquium courses that I took were entitled Environmental Literature and Writing Green Literature. They were, respectively, a review of the American Environmental Movement as reflected in literature of the 19th--21st centuries and a creative writing course that focused on the concepts of “green,” “environmentalism,” and “activism/social movements” in works of fiction pulled mainly from the latter half of the 20th century. In my remaining two years of undergraduate study, I continued to take classes and learning opportunities along the same vein, such as Bay Area Indigenous Histories, Sustainable Economic Development, an internship with the creators of the ECOcalendar, and working as a teaching assistant for the first undergraduate rendition of the Spirituality of the Earth course. But in all of these experiences, the focus on environment and sustainability was primarily limited to classroom discussion and seldom connected to the campus community or other aspects of student life. I found it frustrating to be in an institution where environmental issues, while discussed in the classroom, were not addressed in student life.

I chose to live on campus for my freshman and sophomore year. In my first year, I lived in Fanjeaux Hall, one of the oldest dorms on campus still in use today. The building itself is enchanting, with ivy covered walls, wood flooring in the dorm rooms and vintage paned windows set in wooden tracks. In general, the living situation is as follows: two students of the same gender share a bedroom connected by a bathroom to another bedroom with the same set-up. This arrangement is referred to as a suite. The first floor of the building houses the campus bookstore and a common area, which I learned in my senior year was the Fanjeaux

Student Union. The top two floors of the building are co-ed residence halls for students of mixed levels, but mainly house freshmen.

One thing that seemed very strange to me when I began living in the dorms was the lack of uniform garbage and recycling receptacles. There were multiple locations on each floor where students could dispose of their waste, which was mainly paper and plastic. These disposal sites varied greatly, from a single grey trash bin in a closet, to multiple grey and brown bins with a single blue bin for recycling in a small room at the end of a hall. I had grown up recycling at home and was used to sorting my waste, but every time I went to dump the wastebasket I kept in my dorm room, I was shocked to see recyclables and non-recyclables mixed indiscriminately regardless of bin color. I noticed also that my suitemates, whom my roommate and I shared a bathroom with, often threw plastic containers into the waste basket we had in there, along with non-recyclables. The same situation seemed to be true of the other freshman dorm, Penafort.

Participating in Green Club activities in my senior year helped to fill a void in my academic experience. At the start of this past year, I heard that a small group of students was attempting to resurrect the defunct Green Club. I had tried participating in Green Club in years previous, but in general it was rather uncoordinated and always seemed to disintegrate as the semester went on. I decided to find out more about this newest effort and see if I could be a part of bringing the Green Club back to life as an active and recognized club on campus.

I joined their team in the Fall 2014 semester as a self-proclaimed “very enthusiastic member.” By the Spring, I took on an officer role, becoming Secretary and continuing to be the club’s Inter-Club Council Representative, which I had started doing in the Fall. My experience as

a member and officer in my school's Green Club developed my passion for education and community engagement. That said, I also came to realize the some of the difficulties of working as part of a team: discrepancies over strategy, being unable to relate to one another, lack of delegation, lack of commitment, the disillusionment that can set in when projects fail to achieve their goals. In the second semester, our club membership dwindled to just four students -- the same four that had started the effort at the beginning of that academic year.

As my four years at DUC came to a close, I wanted to know more about the school I was a part of. There were so many questions left unanswered. My experiences in Green Club left me wanting to learn more about what institutions of higher education, like Dominican University, were doing to become more sustainable. This paper explores concepts of sustainable development in relation to higher education with particular focus on Dominican University. Such exploration includes defining sustainability and investigating how it relates to institutions of higher education by means of compiling a brief history of key historical documents aimed at addressing sustainability efforts in higher education. Next, I will examine some recent efforts towards incorporating sustainable practices into the infrastructure of Dominican University with particular focus on the work of the late Greener Dominican Task Force (GDTF) and DUC's use of the Sustainability Tracking and Rating System (STARS) in 2012. The ultimate goal of this study is to examine some answers to the following questions: How can concepts of sustainability be applied and integrated into the college experience and why should they be? What concrete steps has Dominican University taken in this regard?

I can see that, while some efforts towards sustainability-centered action were made in the past, they failed to take hold within the culture of the campus, in the three key areas of

curriculum, student life, and campus infrastructure. Interviews I conducted in the Summer 2015 term with faculty in the School of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, a faculty member who chronicled the development and genesis of the Greener Dominican Task Force (GDTF), and two individuals who oversee the Department of Facilities and Auxiliary Operations confirmed what I had gathered from personal experience as a student and provided me with greater insight into the (previously identified) key areas of: curriculum, student life, and campus infrastructure. Analysis of information provided on the DUC website supplemented and supported what information came to light in the interviews.

*A Brief History of Sustainability in Relation with Higher Education*

The term “sustainability” can be a little difficult to pin down. In one sense, for an action or a process to be sustainable, it simply has to be capable of continuing for a set amount of time given the resources available. In relation to higher education, however, sustainability is most often incorporated into the concept of sustainable development derived from economics. Peggy Barlett and Geoffrey Chase, editors of *Sustainability on Campus: Stories and Strategies for Change*, assert that the term *sustainable development* originated in the 1970s, as an outcome of the United Nations Stockholm Declaration, but achieved worldwide recognition with the 1987 publication of the Brundtland Report, which defines the term as: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”(Nolt 119). Barlett and Chase further identify sustainability as “the intersection of three domains: the economic, the environmental, and the social” (6). John Nolt, in his book *Environmental Ethics for the Long Term*, further pinpoints “the Brundtland report” as being the popular name for the report by the World Commission on Environment and Development entitled *Our Common Future*. The nickname comes from the woman who chaired the commission, three-time Prime Minister of Norway and former leader of the World Health Organization, Harlem Brundtland (119).

Nolt points out some other important aspects about the concept of sustainability, mainly that, because the term can be applied to a wide range of topics, it has become a term used to describe just about anything that someone wants to wrap in a “green” mantle. However, Nolt cautions, “sustainability is not the easy thing that popular imagination takes it to be” (119).

Cedric Cullingford, a Professor of Education at the University of Huddersfield in England, takes

the idea of sustainability as a blanket term further by arguing that the very notion of sustainability has become cliché. “This,” claims Cullingford, “is one of the reasons why there is so much disagreement in defining the term: it is open enough to give room for intellectual manoeuvre; but it has also become part of a politically correct mannerism in which different groups misuse the term in a way that tends to de-legitimize the resonance of the idea” (17).

What does this have to do with sustainability in higher education? Cullingford asserts that,

“One of the functions of universities as centres of culture should be to guard against the exploitation of clichés, to expose the fraudulent and to remind us of the real meanings of words and the significance of concepts. This task should not be underestimated. It implies an intellectual rigour and a personal honesty that is counter to the tone of the age in which nothing legitimate is deemed to exist until it is inspected and nothing is inspected until it is made manifest in writing and so more easily accountable” (18).

Cullingford implies that there is a certain moral obligation for institutions of higher learning to differentiate between when the term sustainability is being used to represent actions and practices that really do meet the needs of current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and when the term is being appropriated for a political agenda or marketing campaign.

Yet “needs” is another sticky term. How does one determine what the needs of generations are? In their 1999 journal article, “Critical Dimensions of Sustainability in Higher Education,” Wynn Calder and Richard Clugston articulate in more detail what can be meant by “meeting the needs” of current and future generations:

Definitions of and approaches to sustainability vary depending on the view and interest of the definer, but **each emphasizes that activities are ecologically sound, socially just, economically viable and humane, and that they will continue to be so for future generations.** Historically, the term “sustainable” arose among those with environmental concerns, and most definitions reflect this emphasis. It is critical, however, to address

social justice issues and to **know that there can be no sustainable communities and institutions without social justice**. So, too, is human consideration toward the whole community of life an essential part of true sustainability. Fundamentally, a commitment to sustainability implies recognition that the social and environmental challenges of the 21st century are real and they require that the global economic and political order be grounded in different values and practices [emphasis my own] (Calder and Clugston 2).

Calder and Clugston's comprehensive definition of sustainability shows that, beyond being environmentally and economically focused, it must also incorporate a focus on social justice and community. Furthermore, global economic and political order need to undergo a paradigmatic shift.

In terms of how sustainability can be incorporated into higher education, Calder and Clugston describe a college or university committed to sustainability as an institution that helps students "understand the roots of environmental degradation and [motivates] them to seek environmentally sustainable practices while also teaching the roots of today's injustices in full integration with modeling justice and humaneness" (4).

In 1990, an important attempt was made to define the sustainable university. In that year, Jean Mayer, President of Tufts University in Massachusetts, gathered leaders from 22 international universities to meet in Talloires, France. The purpose of their meeting was to discuss the state of the world, the growing ecological crisis, and where institutions of higher education fit in the larger picture. Out of this meeting came the Talloires Declaration, a document that defines the role of institutions of higher education in relation to the modern ecological crisis and sets out some specific actions universities can take to address this crisis. The Talloires Declaration states that, "Universities educate most of the people who develop and manage society's institutions. For this reason, universities bear profound responsibilities to

increase the awareness, knowledge, technologies and tools to create an environmentally sustainable future” (Calder and Clugston, 2-3).

Signing the Talloires Declaration signifies a university’s commitment to:

1. Engage in education, research, policy formation, and information exchange on population, environment, and development to move toward a sustainable future.
2. Establish programs to produce expertise in environmental management, sustainable economic development, population, and related fields to ensure that *all university graduates* are environmentally literate and responsible citizens [emphasis my own].
3. Set an example of environmental responsibility by establishing programs of resource conservation, recycling, and waste reduction at universities. (Calder and Clugston 3).

Not only was the Talloires Declaration a call to action for institutions of higher education, it also provided one of the first concrete frameworks for incorporating sustainability into colleges and universities and a semi-institutional level. The first two imperatives seem to be curriculum focused, while the last one seems to fall into campus physical operations. As of March 11, 2015, the Declaration has been signed by 497 colleges and universities, 169 in the United States alone. Dominican University is not one of them (ULSF).

Despite all of its promise, Calder and Clugston point out that the real significance of a document like the Talloires Declaration is whether its signatories follow through with their symbolic commitment to the actions outlined in the declaration. Calder and Clugston point out that,

With or without the Talloires Declaration as a guiding set of commitments, the obstacles to transforming higher education are daunting. The modern university is the embodiment of the mechanistic, utilitarian worldview that shaped the scientific and industrial revolutions. Cartesian dualism (separating pure from applied, objective from subjective); Baconian method (emphasizing manipulation, control, and quantitative measurement); and utilitarian philosophy shape academic functioning. The academy is also deeply involved in providing expertise for an ‘unsustainable’ world economy” (3).

The Talloires Declaration drastically helped to call attention to the crucial role that institutions of higher education play in educating themselves and the graduates they produce about sustainability and the modern ecological and environmental crisis. However, there is also a long, enculturated history of running these institutions in a particular, mechanistic, utilitarian manner that dates back to the Age of Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries. This is a considerable obstacle.

David Orr, widely renowned writer and professor of Environmental Studies and Politics at Oberlin College, puts it another way:

Historically, Francis Bacon's proposed union between knowledge and power foreshadowed the contemporary alliance between government and business, and knowledge that has wrought so much mischief. Galileo's separation of the intellect foreshadowed the dominance of the analytical mind over that part given to creativity humor, and wholeness. And in Descartes's epistemology, one finds the roots of the radical separation of self and object. Together, these laid the foundations for modern education, foundations that now are enshrined in myths that we have come to accept without question (8).

Thus, the very foundations of institutions of higher education come from philosophies fundamentally different from the ecological, systems-oriented thinking that is the foundation of sustainable development.

Another important development that emerged from the Talloires Declaration is the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, which functions under the acronym ULSF. According the USLF website, the Declaration included a directive for the creation of a Secretariat (a permanent administrative office or department) to continue the momentum that began with the creation of the Declaration. In 1992, such an office was created at Tufts University under the title Secretariat of University Presidents for a Sustainable Future. In 1995,

its name was changed to Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, “reflecting both a new focus on all levels of leadership within higher education, including senior administrators, faculty, staff and students, and the introduction of a formal membership structure.” ULSF maintained an institutional affiliation with Tufts University through the university’s law school until 1997, when the offices of USLF moved to Washington, D.C., to become the higher education program for the Center for Respect of Life and Environment (CRLE), an affiliate of the the Humane Society of the United States. Over the next ten years, USLF continued to spread awareness about the Talloires Declaration and recruit signatories, while also working to develop strategies for implementation of sustainability policies. In 2007, USLF became independent of CRLE and established itself as a virtual organization while maintaining its position as Secretariat for signatories of the Talloires Declaration.

Another vital organization working to promote sustainability in higher education is the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). According to its website, AASHE began as the Education for Sustainability Western Network (EFS West), established in 2001 with funding from the Compton Foundation and support from Second Nature. The purpose of EFS West was to provide resources and support for sustainability efforts on college campuses in the western US and Canada. In 2006, as demands for the EFS’s services increased, it underwent a transformation and relaunched itself as AASHE, “the first professional higher education association for the campus sustainability community.” In this new form, AASHE was able to extend its work to national level.

In 2009, AASHE launched the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System, otherwise known as “STARS.” According to AASHE’s website,

The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™ (STARS®) is a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance. STARS is intended to engage and recognize the full spectrum of colleges and universities—from community colleges to research universities, and from institutions just starting their sustainability programs to long-time campus sustainability leaders. STARS encompasses long-term sustainability goals for already high-achieving institutions as well as entry points of recognition for institutions that are taking first steps toward sustainability ("STARS Overview.").

What is remarkable about the STARS framework is how accessible it is to a wide range of institutions, no matter where they are in the process of approaching sustainability.

The STARS framework breaks down the components of an institution into four main areas:

1. Education and Research (This includes curriculum and co-curricular activities/student experience)
2. Operations (This encompasses the grounds of the campus, its use of resources, building architecture, waste management, and other similar areas)
3. Planning, Administration and engagement.
4. Innovation

Each of the above sections is broken down further into specific areas of action (aka subcategories), such as curriculum, dining services, financial investment, and public engagement. For each action, certain amount of points are available. The number of points an institution qualifies for determines their ranking in the STARS rating system. From lowest to

highest, the ranks achievable are: Reporter, Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. The rating is valid for three years before an institution must re-evaluate itself and submit an updated report.

*Incorporating Sustainability Practices into the Infrastructure of Dominican University of  
California*

Drawing on Leith Sharp's "Green Campuses: The Road from Little Victories to Systemic Transformation", Barlett and Chase point out that institutional growth in some case leads to "extreme burdens on faculty and administrators, and hence greater inefficiency in dealing with environmental problems or responding to sustainability opportunities" (12). This is likely the case for DUC. In addition to the already inherent challenge that the traditional structures and hierarchies of institutions of higher education pose to the task of incorporating sustainable development into campuses, the expansion and growth of a campus, and the shuffle in administration that accompanies it, makes the task all the more difficult.

The recent history of Dominican University of California gives an excellent example of what this looks like in action. DUC was established as Dominican College of San Rafael in 1890 by the Congregation of the Most Holy Name (aka, the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael/California) ("History of the University," "Historical Timeline"). In 1917, Dominican College became the first Catholic college in California to grant bachelor's degrees to women and it remained an all girls school until it became fully coeducational in 1971 ("History of the University"). As can be gleaned from its history, the institution was once affiliated with the Catholic church, but is no longer a religiously governed institution. While it is somewhat unclear how this particular change came about, occasional references are sometimes made to the school's "Catholic heritage" (USA).

In the Spring of 2000, Joseph R. Fink, then President of Dominican College of San Rafael, announced that, in the coming academic year of 2000-01, the institution would be

officially recognized as a university and would henceforth be known as Dominican University of California (DUC). According to the anonymously authored “History of the University” page on the DUC website, this transition and the institution's new name signified “Dominican's status as a university with graduate degree programs, a diverse student body, and a global perspective.”

In the case of DUC, there is an interesting reference regarding the institution's transition from college to university made in a document that came out of the institution's most recent accreditation process: “Since its last WASC accreditation visit ten years ago, [DUC] has been transitioning from being a liberal arts college to becoming a comprehensive university” (Sansing 3). To me, this reveals that the switch that DUC underwent, from college to university, was not fully completed when it was first announced by President Fink/DUC administration back in 2000-01. While there must have been many efforts leading up to said announcement, the actual transition process carried on into the next decade.

On the DUC website, under “Support Services,” one can find archived PDF files of past and present course catalogs, ranging from 2004 to 2016. These course catalogs offer a pseudo-tangible glimpse into how DUC has changed in the past 12 years. Beyond revealing the course offerings for their respective time periods and providing students with the policies of the institution, these catalogs illustrate the departure of one president and the arrival of a new one; the evolution of the various Schools within DUC, and also how the university's mission statement, along with descriptions of undergraduate education goal/outcome statements, changed and developed. It is this last area that most clearly sheds light on how DUC has changed the way it incorporates sustainability into its vision and identity and how sustainability is incorporated

into the institution's expectations for its students. Or, at least, demonstrates the image DUC wants to portray of itself.

The *2004-06 Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog* is the oldest catalog available on the DUC website. As such, it sets a baseline against which changes in the more recent catalogs can be recognized. During this period of time, DUC's mission statement read as follows:

Dominican University of California transforms lives. We are an independent, learner-centered, international university of Catholic heritage, which interweaves Dominican values, the liberal arts and sciences, and the skills and knowledge necessary to live and work in an interdependent world (2).

The mission statement remains the same in the 2006-08 and 2008-10 catalogs, but changes in the 2010-12 catalog:

Dominican University of California educates and prepares students to be ethical leaders and socially responsible global citizens who incorporate the Dominican values of study, reflection, community, and service into their lives. Guided by its Catholic heritage, the University is committed to diversity, sustainability, and the integration of the liberal arts, the sciences, and professional programs (6).

The mission statement remains the same in the following two catalogs, 2012-14 and 2014-16.

One of the most significant changes that can be observed in the new mission statement are the assertions that students of the institution are educated to be "ethical leaders and socially responsible global citizens" and that the university is "committed to . . . sustainability."

From 2004-2014, a section entitled "Educational Aims" was present under the "General Information" section of the catalog. These aims for graduates of DUC were organized into three categories: skills, knowledge, and character. Each category had a list of the qualities students are expected to attain during their study at the institution (For the full list in detail, see Appendix). In the 2014-2016 catalog, the Educational Aims were streamlined and narrowed to address only the

General Education portion of a student's four year academic plan. The section moved from its place in "General Information" to a section entitled "Undergraduate Education Information." It can be assumed that each major or department outlined specific goals/expectations for graduates of their program. One of the most important shifts, however, is the change of phrasing of one of the outcomes. In the 2004-2014 editions of the catalog, DUC's Educational Aims charged students with becoming "global citizens with an informed awareness and appreciation of social, political, economical and ecological interdependence." In the most recent 2014-2016 catalog, this mandate has transformed into goal 4 of the General Education Program Statement of Purpose & Goals: "enhancing self-understanding as citizens of diverse communities in an *ecologically imperiled world*" [emphasis my own] (38). What events transpired to elicit such a change? And what specific things are being done at DUC to ensure that students are able to enhance their "self-understanding as citizens of an ecologically imperiled world?" The answer, in part, may lie in the formation of and work performed by the Greener Dominican Task Force.

The Greener Dominican Task Force (GDTF) began in Fall 2005 when four members of the DUC community realized that they "shared a desire to see the institution put a greater focus on planning for sustainability" (Duvall 1). These four people came from various departments around campus: Dr. Vania Coelho, Assistant Professor of Biology and Director of Environmental Studies Department at that time; Dr. Denise Lucy, Executive Director of the Institute for Leadership Studies within the School of Business; Dominican Sister Carla Kovack, who taught various courses at DUC. Dr. John Duvall, Associate Professor of Communications and Media Studies later joined the team and in 2006 wrote a paper entitled *The Genesis of Greener Dominican: Promoting Sustainability on a Northern California Campus* as a project while

working towards his PhD during the same year. As part of that project, he interviewed three of the founding members of the GDTF: Vania Coelho, Denise Lucy, and Sister Carla Kovack.

Regarding how the GDTF got its start, Duvall cites a quote from his interview with Sister Carla, in which she stated, “We decided that for Dominican to change its embedded culture, that it would take strategic planning and implementation for change to happen on campus” (2).

Duvall expands on this, explaining that the GDTF founders “recognized the need for their efforts to be grounded within the governance system of the university, in order to systematically encourage a cultural shift in campus life that would survive for the long term, and not be over-dependent on the energy of a few individuals” (2). To this end, the founders approached then-Provost of the university, Ken Porada. Porada encouraged their work and suggested that they form a subcommittee under the Campus Utilization Policy Committee (CUPC), which oversaw decisions regarding DUC’s physical plant and landscaping operations. After creating a preliminary vision statement and presenting it to the DUC Faculty Forum, Staff Council, and Provost Council, all of which gave approval, the GDTF became an official subcommittee of the CUPC, added six more members, and began its work in 2006 (Duvall 3). The initial goal of GDTF was to come up with a sort of five year plan that included immediate goals (things that could theoretically be accomplished in one to two years), intermediate goals (which might take three or four years), and long term goals (which might take five years or more) (For a full outline of the the short, medium and long term goals of the GDTF, see Appendix B). In Summer 2015, I was able to interview Duvall regarding his participation in and knowledge of the GDTF. He told me about the history of the GDTF and some of the challenges and changes it faced following its founding in 2006.

The GDTF existed from 2006 to 2010, then task force was folded in to the larger Committee. It ceased functioning as an independent task force and the Campus Utilization and Policy Committee became the Campus Sustainability and Utilization Policy Committee (CSUPC). The CSUPC existed from 2010 to 2013. “But,” said Duvall, “it wasn’t being very productive, at all really, but especially not from a sustainability point of view” (Personal Interview). One of the main reasons for this, claims Duvall, was lack of attendance to committee meetings by certain key members of the university staff. He was unable to comment as to why these members stopped attending. In 2013, under the guidance of a different Provost, Steven Weissler, who joined DUC in 2011, the sustainability aspect was split off from the Committee again. The main committee was renamed the Space and Facilities Committee (SFC), and sustainability work was isolated to an SFC subcommittee: the Campus Sustainability Subcommittee (CSS).

During the era of the Campus Sustainability and Utilization Policy Committee, from 2010 to 2013, Mary Marcy joined the Dominican Community as its new President. Under her leadership, a Strategic Initiative grant was given to a group of CSUPC members to conduct the STARS assessment in the 2011-2012 academic year. The group comprised of Dr. Vania Coelho, Susan Briski, Dr. Jacob Massoud, and two graduate students (henceforth to be referred to as “the STARS Team”). When the STARS report was completed, DUC ranked at Bronze level. As Duvall wrote in a document entitled “A Brief History of the Campus Sustainability and Utilization Policy Committee,” “This accomplishment represents a major first step in documenting Dominican’s pursuit of sustainability, and includes a review of possible next steps towards a Silver rating when Dominican’s status is revisited in three years” (2). The review of

possible steps refers to an article written by Vania Coelho, Yu-Ti Huang, Jacob Massoud, Susan Briski, Ana Toepel, and Marcia Silva entitled “A Mathematical Decision-Making Procedure to Assist in the Development of Sustainability Plans Based on the STARS Framework.” The article was published in the *Sustainability Accounting, Management, and Policy Journal* in 2014. It is based on the data collected by the STARS Team for DUC’s assessment. Not only does the article propose that DUC can reach Silver level in three years by working on 25 specific credits, Gold level in nine years by focusing on 28 additional credits, and Platinum level in 15 years if the institution improves in 10 more credits, it also suggests that the procedure developed for the article’s study can be applied to other universities and other versions of the STARS framework (Huang, et. al, 292).

The CSS continues to function to this date. However, Duvall disclosed, none of the founding members of the GDTF are associated with it any longer. Sister Carla has been moving towards retirement and Dr. Lucy has not been involved with the committee for several years, except for a few matters involving parking. Neither has Dr. Coelho. I asked Duvall if he knew why these key players drifted away from work on sustainability initiatives for DUC. “Well, I think with Vania . . .” he began to say, but then paused. After a moment of hesitation, he continued: “This is the kind of thing that’s sort of personal, but I think it should go on the record, because it’s the only way to really explain what happened.” As Duvall tells it, Dr. Coelho was getting course relief in order to take on the heavy workload that accompanied her position as Head of the Center for Sustainability, a now extinct DUC office that functioned to coordinate a network of people from the different schools to try to integrate sustainability efforts across the campus.

Contracts for full-time faculty at DUC are based on how many units each faculty member teaches per semester. Term faculty, who are not tenured or tenured track, are expected to teach 12 units per semester, or 24 units per academic year. Faculty who are tenured or tenured track teach nine units one semester and 12 another. Those three “release units” allow time for research (Clow). For faculty doing administrative work, the amount of time required to do said work is considered equivalent to a specific number of units. Thus, a faculty member doing administrative work alongside teaching courses is released from having to teach a certain amount of units (Clow).

“When Dr. Weissler came as Provost,” continued Duvall, “one of his initiatives with which I disagreed, was to cut out a lot of the course relief that professors were getting. He wanted professors to teach.” As a result, many professors lost course relief that they were getting for various things they were doing around campus. For some, this meant losing course relief they had been given to serve in the role of chair for departments. In terms of how this affected efforts towards sustainability, Duvall painted the following picture:

[When] Vania had her course relief taken away, she knew that . . . she just wouldn't have time anymore to commit to doing that work, and so she quit. She told the Provost, if I'm not going to get course relief for doing this work, then I can't do the work. And it was very unfortunate. Because . . . For example, when we filed our STARS report two years ago, we were able to say that someone was getting course relief to be, essentially, a sustainability officer. And now that that has been taken away, [we'll lose those points on the STARS report], because we don't have anybody who has the title of Sustainability Officer or something similar to that. That hurts. And it not only hurts in terms of the STARS report and points, but it obviously hurts that there's nobody to coordinate the sustainability initiatives in the various schools.”

Regarding the position Coelho vacated, Head of Center for Sustainability, as of the time of our interview, Duvall asserted that there's nobody who currently holds such a position at DUC. In his words, "There's nobody who has clear, official, professional responsibility for tracking sustainability at our university."

This is a rather significant problem, according to Duvall:

You need to have somebody like a sustainability officer who's tasked professionally with monitoring progress in these various initiatives. The university seems to think that our Campus Sustainability Committee should be able to do this work, but that's really pie in the sky. I mean, it's at least a part time job. At many universities, it's a full time job! And professors and staff members just don't have the time in their 40 or 50 or 60 hour week to do that sort of assessment work on those programs. So that's a big reason why nothing happens.

Duvall has examined the structure of universities comparable to DUC in terms of size and liberal arts focus who have done an exemplary job of adapting sustainable policies and practices.

"Virtually all of them," he stated, "were ranked above us. And every single one of them whose president had signed the President's Climate Commitment had a full-time sustainability officer! We are simply not walking the talk. We say that we're prioritizing sustainability, but we don't do the fundamentally basic things you need to do to really prioritize sustainability." Regarding the original five year plan created by the GDTF, Duvall estimated that, "Unfortunately, if you actually track that against what's actually been done, I think we accomplished a few of the near term goals, probably none of the medium or long term goals. So, we were not very successful in really institutionalizing those goals."

When it comes to the STARS assessment and how it was implemented at DUC, one must consider where it fits into the historical timeline of sustainability efforts at DUC. There was the foundation laid by the GDTF. Then, thanks to the grant from President Marcy and the course

relief, the STARS team was able to conduct the STARS report, which was officially filed in 2013 and was based on data collected in 2011-2012. During the period in which that data was being collected, a lot of information about relatively new programs and initiatives was included. These programs and initiative had been active for usually less than a year. This was included in various aspects of the report and all of those things scored points towards a higher rating for the university within the STARS ranking system.

When the STARS assessment was complete, DUC received a Bronze ranking, which is the second lowest ranking. Duvall speculates that this may have caused some disappointment on some levels and a sort of loss of interest in continuing to put more money and focus into future sustainability efforts. One of the outcomes of this, theoretically, is that a lot of those aforementioned new programs and initiatives died out as sustainability efforts began to receive less funding, as course relief was taken away from key players like Vania Coelho. Fast forward to present day: Dr. John Duvall is on sabbatical for the Fall 2015 term in order to conduct the next STARS assessment. He estimates that DUC will again not be able to rank above Bronze.

Looking at DUC's situation retrospectively, one can see how the STARS assessment (which is arguably the high point of comprehensive sustainability efforts at DUC) coincided exactly with the school's transition from one president to another. One source that gives some insight into the inner workings of DUC and the shifts and structural changes that occurred during that decade is the *Report of the WASC Visiting Team (RWVT)*. This 37-page Report was prepared by a WASC Visiting Team in response to an Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) that was submitted to WASC by DUC earlier in 2010.

The reaccreditation process must be undertaken by an institution of higher education every ten years. Institutional accreditation helps set a baseline of quality for institutions of higher education. This is helpful for prospective students seeking to learn more about an institution and it is helpful to the institutions themselves as the accreditation process often prompts said institution to conduct periodic, intensive self-studies against baseline standards set by a third party ("College Accreditation in the United States"). According to the Dominican University of California profile on *College Navigator*, an informational database on institutions of higher education provided by the National Center for Education Statistics, DUC has received institutional accreditation from WASC Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities since 1949 (USA).

As an acronym, WASC stands for Western Association of Schools and Colleges. It encompasses two of the seven regional commissions that operate in six geographic areas of the U.S.: the first is a commission that monitors the quality of community and junior colleges and operates under the acronym ACCJC; the second is a commission that does the same for senior colleges and universities -- it operates under the acronym WACSCU ("Regional Accrediting Commissions"). However, as is evidenced in the RWVT and on the WACSCU website ([www.wascsenior.org](http://www.wascsenior.org)), WACSCU often refers to itself simply as "the Commission."

The RWVT is dated April 28, 2010 and was retrieved from archives on the Dominican website at some point in July of 2015. It is just one component of the latest round of the multi-step accreditation process that DUC recently underwent. The document itself was composed by six WACSCU members sent as a team to visit and evaluate DUC as an institution. WACSCU team members are listed as Lucille H. Sansing, Nancie Fimbel, Rees

Hughes, Kenneth L. Pifer, Gerald W. Platt and Irma Walker-Adame. Their report is divided into three sections:

- I. Overview and Context
- II. Evaluation of Institutional Educational Effectiveness Under the Standards
- III. Findings and Recommendations From the Capacity and Preparatory Review and the Educational Effectiveness Review

While the primary purposes of this report are to inform DUC of its progress in the accreditation process and advance the process of accreditation by WACSCU, there is other information to be gleaned by the semi-casual reader regarding the state of DUC as an institution.

There are three key points that the visiting team makes about DUC:

1. “Since its last WASC accreditation visit ten years ago, [DUC] has been transitioning from being a liberal arts college to becoming a comprehensive university” (Sansing 3).
2. The concerns of the visiting team included: lack of consensus about the identity and plans for the institution; unclear processes for planning, budgeting and decision making; and the low number of full-time faculty (Sansing 3-4).
3. The team warns that, “DUC should consider the dangers of the ‘silo’ effect and conflicts over resources that can accompany RCM” (Sansing 11).

The first point reveals that the switch that DUC underwent, from college to university, was not fully completed when it was first announced by President Fink/DUC administration back in 2000-01. While there must have been many efforts leading up to said announcement, the actual transition process carried on into the next decade. That aside, the ongoing process of transition is a reminder of how change takes time. It might it also explain the broken lines of communication between the different departments at DUC.

The second point illustrates DUC's problem areas, all of which could plausibly have contributed to the stalling of DUC's sustainability efforts, especially the "unclear process for planning" and "lack of a united vision and consensus around identity." Furthermore, all of these concerns were echoed in the interviews I conducted.

All of these concerns were echoed in the interviews I conducted. I recall in Chase Clow's interview, especially, she mentioned there being many conflicting views about the identity and plans ("the vision") of the university. I asked Clow about her perspective on the structural and administrative changes that had occurred at DUC in the past decade. She replied with the following:

Every time somebody new comes into a position, they have a new vision. . . Dominican was pretty stable for a long time. We had the same President for 22 years. So, some of the people changed [during that period], but not really, there wasn't a huge amount of change. . . . But since Mary Marcy's been here, there's been a tremendous amount of change. A lot of turnover, a lot of moving people, some people not staying long in the positions that are new, bringing in new energy and new ideas, but sometimes those new ideas are old ideas that we had here that we tried 10 years ago. And [sometimes it's a matter of new people] not really knowing who's at this institution and what kind of expertise is here.

Clow speaks from personal and professional experience, having been at Dominican since the early 2000s, first as a student to get her Masters degree, then as staff in the Humanities Department, and eventually becoming full-time faculty and Chair of the Humanities Department.

The final key point involves DUC's financial situation. DUC is reported as adopting Responsibility Centered Management (RCM). At the time of the WASC team visit, "the team found the transition to RCM to be "still in its earliest stages" with many details remaining to be worked out (Sansing 10-11). The team warns that, "DUC should consider the dangers of the

‘silo’ effect and conflicts over resources that can accompany RCM” (Sansing 11). As Barlett and Chase note, “academic culture tends to be organized into silos---insulated, vertical units with little cross-flow of information” (11).

According to an article written by physicist and university budget analyst, Leroy W. Dubeck, for the annual peer-reviewed journal of the National Education Association, RCM is a concept that emerged in the 1970s which recommends that each individual school or college within a university manages its own finances regarding fundraising and budgeting (81). The title of Dubeck’s article, “Beware Higher Ed’s Newest Budget Twist,” indicates the author’s clear distaste for RCM strategy. His basic argument is twofold: first, it is unlikely that upper administration would cede the necessary financial authority to the individual heads of each college within a university; second, RCM’s divisionary tactics create a setting that invites intense competition between colleges/schools over financial resources, especially those generated by tuition. Therefore, this budgetary model could provide incentive for the separate schools to keep as many students as possible within their respective courses and facilities. Overall, Dubeck argues, RCM encourages individual schools within a university to work *against* each other rather than *with* each other. From a sustainability-minded student’s perspective, a budgetary model such as RCM does no favors to an institution seeking to adapt a paradigm of sustainability, which recommends/entails holistic, interdisciplinary approaches to learning. According to one faculty member at DUC, the RCM structure failed to take hold permanently and has since been abandoned (Simon). Still, it is noteworthy that the DUC leaned towards this budgeting practice during the same time period that many of its efforts towards sustainability were in their prime. It demonstrates the conflicting philosophies present within the administration during that time.

### *Conclusions*

I found it frustrating to be in an institution where environmental issues, while discussed in the classroom, were not addressed in student life; where misinformation about programs seemed to be commonplace; and where, despite the dedication of faculty and the admirable efforts of individuals, sustainability was not a clear priority in all areas of the institution. At the start of my investigation of DUC, I wanted to understand why the university had not made a more focused effort to become more sustainable. I knew a little bit about some sustainability-focused projects: the Green Club, a few select teachers who placed an emphasis on environmental issues and sustainability within their classes, a composting system, the appearance and disappearance of the GDTF, the 2012 STARS report. All of these little threads beckoned to me and I wanted to follow them to their source. The process was maze-like and confusing, especially when it came to figuring out what information on the DUC website was up to date. The Greener Dominican Task Force was a superb effort to unite sustainability efforts through-out campus and initiate new ones. However, it seems to have lost its momentum as the Dominican made the shift from college to university. The high turnover in high level administrative positions, the frequent restructuring of the university's governance system, and the shifting identity, vision and strategic plan of DUC that accompanied the shift from college to university no doubt contributed to GDTF initiatives getting lost in the shuffle.

Perhaps the mindset of seeking to "score points" and improve the ranking of DUC with the STARS assessment undercut an understanding of STARS for what it really is: a framework for change, a guide to make a shift not just in operations or mission statements, but a tool for

the ongoing process of a paradigmatic shift. This calls to mind a reflection made by Orr about perspectives and what goes on in the modern university:

I think the power of denial in a time of cataclysmic changes undermines our willingness to talk about important things. There is scene, for example, in the movie *The Day After*, in which a woman, knowing that an H-bomb is about to hit, scurries about to tidy things up. A good bit of what goes on in the modern university likewise seems to me like a kind of tidying up before all hell breaks loose. Of course, it has already broken loose, and more is on the way. The twentieth century is the age of world wars, atomic bombs, gulags, totalitarianism, death squads, and ethnic cleansing. Looking ahead, we see the threats of biotic impoverishment, changing climate and overpopulation. In the light of such prospects, it is understandable that many find it easier and safer to tidy things up rather than roll up their sleeves to turn those trends around (45).

In many ways, it seems like DUC's sustainability efforts have been more like "tidying up" than delving into the considerably more difficult task of turning around the trends that Orr mentions.

If the most influential stakeholders at DUC see its STARS ranking as nothing more than a seal of approval that they are "doing right" in regard to sustainability---in other words, if it is simply something that was done for marketing purposes or in the hopes of gaining prestige---then they are missing the point completely. There is no "quick-fix" solution to the ecological crisis that confronts humanity now.

There could be a more holistic approach to adapting a paradigm of sustainability that reaches all sectors of DUC. The current approach appears to be fragmentary, sporadic, and often the result of the work of passionate individuals. This, in and of itself, is unsustainable. Even President Marcy expressed a similar sentiment in a video that was produced for DUC's

Sustainability Fair in 2012 (which was a one time event):

What we need to do next, I think, is link some of those programs so [that] they become a part of the whole institution. Whether it's the day to day actions of recycling and turning off the lights, or whether it's the more ambitious action around the carbon footprint of the institution, or whether it's the more ambitious action around our own research and the

kinds of things students will do in their own businesses once they graduate. It's important that it feels institution wide and not just individuals with good intent.

The greatest obstacle that DUC seems to face in terms of sustainability is the challenge of following up with monitoring, tracking and assessment of their sustainability initiatives across the university. While the STARS assessment is a helpful framework and resource, it is no substitute for a central office of sustainability with at least a part time head position whose job it is to follow up on and support various initiatives throughout the institution.

Furthermore, it is crucial that DUC put more of a sustainability emphasis into the FYE program and new student orientation in order to build a foundation for understanding the importance of the cultural shift towards sustainable practices and learning at DUC and to connect students to their campus and to their community. The existing FYE Big History curriculum, now in its sixth year, works well for students interested in sustainability for the following reasons: (1) it promotes systems-thinking and an understanding of the interrelated nature of the world of which we are a part; 2.) it demonstrates that, at least when it comes to curriculum, there is enough faculty, administrative, and financial support to develop such a program over time (e.g., its very existence shows just how capable DUC is of adopting new frameworks/paradigms for the mandatory general education component of the undergraduate academic program). But the First Year Experience Big History Program isn't enough. Big History does a commendable job of orienting incoming students towards an understanding of how they as individuals and we as the human species fit into a larger narrative of increasing complexity, its focus on broad topics, abstract concepts, and the challenge of working through all of the different thresholds. At the same time, it must be take into consideration that this is a lot of information for students to grasp

in a single semester. As Stephen Jay Gould remarked, “We cannot win this battle to save species and environments without forging an emotional bond between ourselves and nature as well---for we will not fight to save what we do not love” (Orr 43). The same can be said for the shift towards sustainability on a college campus. If people don’t understand why this process is happening, and what is driving it, it may seem tedious, like a waste of time, or even threatening to an existing structure of a university with which they are familiar and comfortable.

The key areas outlined at the start of this paper, student life, curriculum, and campus infrastructure, were the areas I identified where a culture of sustainability had failed to take hold. All of these areas overlap; they are like organs, the subsystems that work in conjunction with one another to keep the body of an institution up and running. A college campus is complex. But complexity should not be confused with complicatedness; on this topic, David Orr argues that with the industrial revolution and humanity’s increasing use of fossil fuels, the world we live in has become not just more complex, but more complicated. In an essay entitled *Reflections on Water and Oil*, Orr writes that,

Complicatedness is the result of high energy use . . . With complicatedness has come specialization in knowledge and the “expert.” Exit the generalist and the renaissance person. The result is a society and economy that no one comprehends, indeed, one that is beyond human comprehension. Complicatedness gives rise to unending novelty, surprise, and unforeseen consequences. As the possibility of foresight declines, the idea of responsibility also declines. People cannot be held accountable for the effects of actions that cannot be foreseen. Moreover, a high-energy society undermines our sense of meaning and our belief that our own lives can have meaning. It leads us to despair and to disparage the very possibility of intelligence (56).

We can function in the modern world without having to possess a deep understanding of it. There are all of these human technologies in place that give the illusion of a divide between “us” and the natural world. We live in a globalized world where, thanks to the age of technology (born of

the toxic, unjust, coal-powered loins of the Industrial Revolution), we have the ability to connect with communities around the world in a way that was never before possible. We can view the Earth from space! We know more about individual components of our planet and more about the functions of its interconnected systems than ever before.

But the boom of information cannot be understood all at once. And the state of the world today, even if one were to be able to comprehend it in its entirety, will grow and change and evolve into the state of tomorrow. And so we humans, with our categorical minds, process this intense input of information into designated areas of knowledge. And we focus on the areas that directly impact our lives while leaving other areas for “experts” to worry about. But the problem with this is that the real world does not operate within the metaphorical boundaries we superimpose over it. It is alive and in flux. Nature colors outside the lines.

*Reflection on the Experience of Green Club*

The Green Club at Dominican was founded in 2007 as part of the work of the GDTF. I had tried participating in the campus Green Club at various points during my time at DUC, but . . . for the most part it was defunct. I can't know what it was like in the years of 2007-2010, in the time before I came to DUC. In 2011-12, my freshman year, there were some student representatives at the annual club fair. I signed up for their mailing list but never heard from them. In my sophomore year, the club made another jump start under new leadership in the Fall semester. There were a few monthly meetings, during which about five students, including myself, tried to get a brand together for the club. This was the first time I realized that there was a lack of continuity in the identity of the club; if it had started out with a strong foundation, *that* had been lost when the students or faculty who oversaw the club either graduated or left. By the spring semester of my sophomore year, club meeting attendance had plummeted. Even the club president disappeared. I lost touch with the club and turned my attention to my classes, which were environmentally focused in the colloquium I was taking that semester. As summer drew near, what was left of the Green Club launched one last project: a drive to collect donations from students as they left their residences on campus for the summer term. It was a tremendous success, if only because students living in the dorms seized the chance to jettison all the random items that had accumulated in their dorm rooms over the year. In the next year, what was my junior year, the Green Club languished. One student made some valiant attempts to get it back off the ground, but she was alone, without other leaders to share with whom to share the task of

running a club. Students simply weren't joining the club, maybe for lack of knowledge that it even existed. Like a sick animal, it seemed the Green Club had been abandoned by the herd.

Then came my final year at Dominican, the year that I received an email from another student, a junior, who was interested in starting the club up again. He had already recruited three other people to act as officers. I decided to give Green Club one more shot and, this time, to take a more active role. I dedicated one year of my life in service to the Green Club at Dominican university. Simultaneously, I was a student, engaged full-time in my classes. Still, I endeavored to meet with my fellow club officers at least once a week, to set up club meetings (which were rarely attended by the student members of this club). We coordinated events like "50 Shades of Green," an information campaign designed to inform the DUC community about different individual actions they can take to promote a sustainable lifestyle. We organized a campaign to promote awareness about the environmental dangers of fracking and coordinated a carpool for students to go to a march (only one student outside of the the officers came). We sent out weekly emails and newsletters. People became more aware of the club's presence on campus, but meeting attendance dwindled to almost zero students by the second semester.

And now, as I perch on the final threshold of my college experience, I find myself wondering if anything will be different for the students that still remain here at this school, and for those that come after. Like previous sustainability efforts at DUC, so often unveiled with fanfare and promise, will the Green Club lose its momentum? Will its members and leaders become burnt out and discouraged? Will it ever find a way to appeal to a larger community and free itself of its token status? Will that year of work make any difference at all?

There is no doubt that while already balancing a full course load and often working at least one job, the added demands of running--- even participating in--- a club can be a tremendous challenge for the typical student. But I found this challenge to be worth it, for the most part. Even with all the setbacks that we faced, something kept me coming back. That something was the spark of light that flared inside every time I was able to catch someone's interest through Green Club's activities. It's the same light that sparks inside when I look up to see the sun shining through green leaves overhead, when I hear a mocking bird sing, when I get caught up in an intellectual discussion with my peers, friends, teachers, or even with strangers. It's a feeling of connection, a small mirror-like shard that shines in my heart, reflecting all the interconnectivity present in the universe. My work in Green Club helped me to discover my college community in a new way and helped me to engage with my peers. Being a part of the DUC Green club was as demanding and discouraging as it was enlightening and inspiring. It was an experience that I will always be grateful for. It's an experience that I hope will continue for and be maintained by future students of Dominican University.

For there is beauty in what is broken and  
There is love amidst the loss.  
Faith can return what was forgotten,  
Decay be transformed by soft, green moss.

## Appendix A

Dominican University of California produces skilled, knowledgeable persons of character.

### Skills

Dominican graduates:

- Read and listen critically
- Write and speak clearly and effectively
- Think independently and work collaboratively
- Use information technology proficiently and with the ability to evaluate critically the quality of the sources.
- Are skilled in the analysis, interpretation, and application of quantitative measures.
- Use quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze, question, and solve problems logically and creatively.
- Manage the challenges of personal and professional decisions in a rapidly changing world.
- Develop multi-culturally informed leadership and citizenship skills.

### Knowledge

Dominican graduates:

- Have an interdisciplinary understanding of the main branches of knowledge: the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the arts and humanities.
- Possess an informed awareness of the many cultural perspectives and languages that shape civilization.
- Are aware of the theological and spiritual dimensions of the human condition and of the role of religion in life and society.
- Become global citizens with an informed awareness and appreciation of social, political, economical and ecological interdependence.
- Acquire a substantial and coherent body of knowledge in their major.

### Character

Dominican graduates:

- Aspire to virtue, practice compassion, and respect the dignity, worth, and individuality of others.
- Are conscientious and ethical.
- Seek to contribute to the progress of a civil society.
- Are committed to the lifelong pursuit of truth.

## Appendix B

**DOMINICAN'S ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN OUTLINE**

The Greener Dominican Task Force (GDTF) has developed a list of sustainability goals and objectives for the university, a template on their strategic development, and finally it proposes short, medium and long-term goals providing clear steps in incorporating these changes in order to implement the university's commitment to environmental sustainability. This outline does not mean to be all-inclusive.

**DOMINICAN'S ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES****1. Increase Understanding of Sustainability and Sense of Personal Responsibility within the University in Support of the Greater Community**

- a. Develop and enhance partnerships with private, public and non-profit partners to meet our goals
- b. Incorporate sustainability and awareness into all curricula
- c. Incorporate sustainability education and awareness into employee culture
- d. Incorporate sustainability education and awareness into student life
- e. Foster research on and about sustainability
- f. Incorporate socially responsible investing and purchasing practices (fair trade, organic, locally grown)
- g. Foster lifestyles that promote reduce, re-use and recycle

**2. Make all Decisions within the Sustainability Framework**

- a. Ensure that university actions are consistent and coordinated and that they facilitate implementation of these goals
- b. Develop standards for contracts with vendors and social equity and purchasing standards

**3. Promote Overall Body, Mind and Spirit Wellness**

- a. Protect the health and safety of people
- b. Promote human resource practices that promote body, mind and spirit health and wellness
- c. Ensure the highest quality for indoor and outdoor air quality

**4. Reduce Waste and Pollution**

- a. Optimize operations and maintenance practices
  - b. Reduce the use of energy from fossil fuels
  - c. Minimize hazardous materials used and waste
  - d. Reduce solid waste
5. **Conserve Resources**
- a. Protect and conserve water resources
  - b. Monitor and reduce the use of resources thru technology, conservation and re-use
  - c. Base remodeling and building decisions on Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)'s standards (green building shall be based on environmental costs and value and construction and long-term operational and disposal costs)
  - d. Maximize retention of green space
  - e. Offer and encourage alternative transportation
  - f. Implement Supply Chain Management purchasing strategies for sustainable purchasing operations
6. **Protect Biodiversity**
- a. Encourage the use of native plants in gardens
  - b. Increase composting throughout the university
  - c. Eliminate the use of industrial fertilizers and pesticides
  - d. Minimize the use of toxic products

### **TEMPLATE FOR STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

The GDTF produced a template to be used for developing and refining strategies to implement the goals and objectives. The following steps should be followed in developing a green strategy towards continuing improvement:

1. Identify the existing conditions or baseline for the campus (e.g. conduct an energy audit)
2. Define targets and indicators of successful implementation
3. Educate the community about the existing conditions, targets, indicators and the relationship to the sustainability goals
4. Identify gaps and tasks to be accomplished in order to meet targets
5. Contact partners and form collaborations to assist in strategies
6. Locate funding sources
7. Adopt the precautionary principle\*
8. Develop and recommend policies to support the sustainability plan

9. Ensure that sustainability policies are incorporated into the campus Master Plan or other document receiving funding and implementation

## **SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG TERM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Short Term**

In the short-term (within 3 months) the GDTF proposes the establishment of a campus-wide recycling program that includes education of students, staff and faculty. Dominican's recycling program will provide comprehensive recycling throughout campus with appropriate containers, equipment and maintenance support. The GDTF will be a partner in developing the specific operational plan. A pilot recycling program was approved by the President's Executive Council in Summer 07 for implementation in Fall 07 (not completed).

### **Medium Term**

In the medium-term (within 1 to 1.5 years) the GDTF proposes to work with Green MBA faculty and students to further develop the Greener Dominican Plan\*\*. The GDTF will incorporate the expertise of Green MBA faculty and students as partners in developing comprehensive and systemic green proposals. The plan will encourage students and faculty from across the campus to be involved in sustainability efforts.

### **Long Term**

For the long-term (within 2 years) the GDTF proposes that the university should establish a fully staffed and funded Office of Sustainability (OS). The OS will implement the Greener Dominican Plan and the GDTF will serve in an advisory capacity.

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