



# The “GIST” of Campus Sustainability Planning: **GAIN IMPACT. SAVE TIME.**

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## **THE CHALLENGE**

Campus sustainability is one of the hottest issues in higher education. For those on the front lines, making the campus “green” may seem a natural – even obvious – win-win for almost everyone and everything. But the realities – incomplete knowledge of “sustainability,” competing agendas, limited budgets, lack of support staff, campus politics, and so forth – can (and do) prove daunting. As a champion for “green,” you are asking people to change paradigms. While this is an effective way for change to occur, it is also the most difficult to implement. Purposeful change usually occurs more slowly and with much more difficulty than people anticipate.

## **THE VISION**

This “white paper” pulls together ideas from various disciplines and from other sources that have successfully implemented change initiatives. We introduce this method by its core benefits: Gain Impact. Save Time. This is the GIST of campus sustainability planning. People are looking for results, and the goal is to secure positive outcomes inside the short time horizon of senior leadership. This introduction to the GIST approach is just a beginning, but you can use it to help yourself visualize and accelerate green success. Review key factors – potential outcomes, vital implementation steps, and key insight. Chart your course. Anticipate and maximize opportunities. Anticipate and minimize difficulties. Gain allies. The list goes on.

## **OUR APPROACH**

Use the following nine steps which are based on the GIST Toolkit. Backtrack when appropriate to take advantage of new knowledge, progress, or challenges. Innovate throughout.

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### **Stage 1**

1. Establish agendas, including mission and vision statements, change directives from senior academic and business leaders, and strong statements of purpose.
2. Build coalitions.
3. Choose goals.

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### **Stage 2**

4. Determine services that you will provide or need.
5. Articulate impacts, including costs and benefits.
6. Develop programs.

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### **Stage 3**

7. Optimize approaches.
8. Deploy techniques.
9. Build relationships and innovate as you go along.



Aspects	From the General to Specifics ▼	From Specifics to the General ▲	GIST Tool (Select...)
Establish agendas...	...in general. ...related to relationships.	...for coalitions.	<b>Agenda</b>
Build coalitions...	...related to agendas.	...relevant to goals.	<b>Group</b>
Choose goals...	...for coalitions.	...that services support.	<b>Purpose</b>
Determine services...	...relevant to goals.	...to achieve impacts.	<b>Service</b>
Articulate impacts...	...of deploying services.	...programs generate.	<b>Impact</b>
Develop programs...	...to achieve impacts.	...approaches support.	<b>Progress</b>
Optimize approaches...	...to carry out programs.	...that use techniques.	<b>Mode</b>
Deploy techniques...	...to support approaches.	...relationships support.	<b>Method</b>
Build relationships...	...to deploy techniques.	...based on agendas. ...in general.	<b>Relation</b>
Innovate...	...throughout the endeavor.	...throughout the endeavor.	<b>GIST</b>

**Figure 1 Key Steps for Your Sustainability Plan**

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## 1. ESTABLISH AGENDAS

Develop one or more overarching agendas. *Communicate visions or a mission. Without at least some image of potential outcomes, key people will likely not join the journey. Without an adequate sense of direction, those people who do join will meander and then lose interest. A vision need not contain a blueprint, but it does need to inspire.* The following figure suggests possible foci.



**Figure 2 Potential Foci for "Green Campus" Agendas**

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## 2. BUILD COALITIONS

For each agenda, build one or more sponsoring coalitions. Decide the functional, political, passion-demonstrating, and other attributes each coalition will need. Recruit. Coalesce. Build momentum. Measure and report on progress. Reward results.

For purposes of illustration, key coalitions might include:

1. Facility and planning/architectural operations
2. Maintenance services
3. Curriculum and facility operations
4. Business services and outside food vendors
5. Business services and outside “build/own/operate” providers
6. Students and faculty sustainability research, coupled with business operations
7. “Town and gown” groups to harmonize campus programs with overall community sustainability initiatives

Review the coalitions. The best coalitions have broad membership, even if that sometimes slows decision-making and direct action. If appropriate, adjust the overall agendas.

Anticipate “negative coalitions” – those that might try to thwart your agendas. Believe it or not, there are still people out there who see sustainability as a “communist plot.” (Oregon State University found this out in 2005 when a local foundation stopped giving scholarships based on such a view of OSU’s sustainability initiatives.) Anticipate steps to win over or quiet them.

Attention to coalitions can be pivotal. For example, under the guidance of Tom Buckholtz, the U.S. General Services Administration launched in 1990 a nationwide grassroots coalition – of academic, news-media, and private- and public-sector individuals and organizations – to improve governmental service to the public. GSA did not seek formal legislation, budget, or even a long-term leadership role, but did provide early vision and enthuse the first participants. Coalition members and their organizations provided the resources and made the progress. This movement generated early successes and provided momentum toward today’s one-stop permitting and e-government.

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## 3. CHOOSE GOALS

Within each coalition, develop principles, goals, or standards. Pinpoint, communicate, and prepare to achieve outcomes.

Review occasionally the coalitions and their goals. If, for example, the combination of coalitions and goals significantly does not match the agendas, backtrack. If you feel that you cannot set “goals,” establish principles – for near-term and long-term guidance and to help eventually to set goals.

Practice “back-casting” when setting goals: begin with the end in mind. Start from the end and visualize a series of actions that will get you from where you are today to your goals in 2020, 2015 and 2010. Understand that the short “life span” of students on campus argues for a strong

focus on short-term goals, but intelligence argues for nesting those into longer-term goals that may need five or more budget cycles to become realized. When used with a SWOT Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), back-casting can be a powerful method for linking tomorrow's goals with today's realities and devising methods to move forward.

Consider especially developing statements of principles that will gain widespread "buy in." As exemplified by a 1980s program that introduced personal computing into a large energy utility, people benefit from starting with key principles when not being able to forecast accurately the future; when making, announcing, and implementing decisions; when wanting to make it easy for other people to make decisions that reinforce agendas; and when "saying no" and trying to disagree agreeably. After three years the program still had not developed numeric goals, but corporate officers had attributed \$100 million in annual cost savings to the use of \$20 million of technology.

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#### **4. DETERMINE SERVICES**

Likely, the coalitions will require help to achieve the goals and fulfill the agendas. Consider what support the coalitions will need to provide to other entities so that those entities effectively and efficiently further the agendas. Similarly, consider what support the coalitions will need from other entities so as to ensure completion of the agendas and goals. In many sustainability efforts, the use of consultants may be needed to "jump start" the planning process, and there may well be foundation grants or special university grants to help fund these services. However, a goal should be also to identify internal resources that can act as consultants to various programs.

If appropriate, adjust your list of needed coalitions or recalibrate expectations regarding goals.

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#### **5. ARTICULATE IMPACTS**

Determine anticipated impacts. Announce the impacts – qualitative, quantitative, and financial – achieving the agendas will have – on people, causes about which they care, and organizations with which they associate. Consider impacts on key anticipated recipients of services and on key potential providers of services.

Ensure that the agendas and related endeavors will be competitive for capturing adequate involvement – emotionally and functionally – by constituents.

A key issue for sustainability programs is developing metrics that assess the current situation, allow for surrogate measurements of key impacts where needed, and monitor progress in a reportable fashion, year by year. The Energy Star and LEED-NC, LEED-CI and LEED-EB rating systems allow assessment of the environmental impacts of building design, construction and operations and provide good metrics for reporting purposes. However useful, they are not sufficient in scope to assess overall campus sustainability efforts. Further metrics, such as pounds of fuel used in transportation, total waste sent to landfill from food service, pounds of locally generated compost used in landscaping and gardening operations, etc., also need to be developed. This should add to the fun of the effort. Imagine a campus-wide contest to develop sustainability metrics!

Sustainability Metrics	Actions
1. Energy use in buildings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-tool your approach to building design and operations to make high-performance on energy efficiency a key factor.</li> <li>2. Renovation of older buildings and assessment using Energy Star, LEED-EB and other tools can start to provide data for benchmarking energy use.</li> <li>3. Third party vendors can be used to provide capital for investments that the university otherwise couldn't afford in the near future.</li> </ol>
2. Water use in buildings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Change fixtures in buildings; fix leaks; begin looking at gray water systems for landscape irrigation and general purpose outdoor uses.</li> </ol>
3. Use of recycled-content materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Change purchasing policies to promote use of reclaimed and recycled materials.</li> </ol>
4. Use of paper on campus and recycling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve recycling to 60%+ of all campus waste.</li> <li>2. Change purchasing to greater recycled content.</li> <li>3. Change printer settings to automatically duplex.</li> </ol>
5. Carbon dioxide emissions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Measure all carbon sources, including direct and indirect/induced (for example, purchasing outside power).</li> <li>2. Examine building energy conservation options and vehicle purchase policies.</li> <li>3. Institute new policies to reduce gasoline use.</li> <li>4. Invite third-party vendors to propose solutions that involve outside capital investment.</li> </ol>

**Figure 3 Some Possible Sustainability Metrics and Actions**

## 6. DEVELOP PROGRAMS

Develop program and project plans for achieving the desired outcomes. Prepare to focus the enthusiasm and capabilities of the coalitions. Prepare to provide and receive needed services. While most university sustainability programs should have a “bias toward action,” note that this is the sixth of nine steps. Avoid the temptation to plunge headlong into programs before carrying out the steps above this one.

Here’s where the “rubber meets the road.” People will see your programs as the whole picture. Programs need to be comprehensive and vital, encouraging ownership by various stakeholders. Programs must be more than information dissemination. Students and faculty, as well as other internal and external stakeholders, want to see positive actions quickly, rather than endless studies.

For example, most universities do not act as responsible owners in driving green building programs forward with their building design and construction. In today’s world, there’s plenty of evidence that it’s possible to build LEED “Gold” buildings with no additional capital investment. Why not require any design and construction team to “guarantee” that result when choosing teams for your projects? If you don’t drive the process, who will?

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## 7. OPTIMIZE APPROACHES

Put “green” – effectiveness and efficiency – into your programs themselves. Steer programs and projects to be symbiotic and procedural, not isolated and haphazard.

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### Styles for Making Progress

Effortless  
Symbiotic with other Procedural endeavors  
Procedural  
Haphazard  
Nil

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For example, consider managing each of the following four aspects of your programs in as close-to-effortless a style as possible (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4 Aspects of a Program or Project**

Leadership requires commitment and communication of commitment. It also involves securing the necessary funds for campus sustainability programs. In other words, a leader has to use her “political capital” to promote sustainability on campus. In one large architectural/engineering firm, more than 100 principals have committed to securing the status of “LEED Accredited Professionals” by exam before the end of 2006, a clear leadership action. How many of the top three levels of university management and administration will commit to becoming personally knowledgeable (and testable) about sustainability issues before the end of one year?

Knowledge management and usage requires setting up internal systems such as intranets that focus on collecting usable “lessons learned” and accessible information systems to guide sustainability efforts, both from a particular campus and from other sources. Without such systems, which are inherent in scholarship, teams will always be “reinventing the cart” (for example, the Mayans had the wheel and the cart, but as a toy, not as a usable object).

Learning – education and training – means supporting change agents in their skill-building activities. Some leading American architectural firms send their promising young designers on six-week sabbaticals to Europe or Asia to study the state of the art in green buildings and report back to the rest of the team on their findings. Could you do this with key campus professionals?

Finally, internal operations tell the story that people encounter every day. Where are the “Flex Car” or “Zip Car” operations on campus and preferred parking for hybrids, van pools, etc., and are they given priority over faculty or administrative status? Is there a place to plug in electric cars at every building? Can total energy and water use be held constant or even reduced, as campuses grow and expand? Is every new passenger car purchased a hybrid or hyper-efficient vehicle?

Choices of style can (and often do) make significant differences. For example, people opposing development proposals for a shoreline learned their way from haphazard to procedural. Opposition to development became easier, but was still labor-intensive and risky. A jump to symbiotic behavior – take the initiative and establish a preserve – led to decades of community enjoyment and effortless defense. Or, in the realm of software development, a project that used just enough symbiotic behavior led to a fully satisfied government agency’s receiving flawless software developed with at least 10 times the productivity of normal procedural programming.

Throughout your programs, anticipate the styles that people would likely emphasize, determine the styles that would be most effective, and work to close significant gaps.

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## 8. DEPLOY TECHNIQUES

Use techniques and tools that realize and amplify the approaches. Use technology – human skills and “green” innovations – to advance your programs via desired approaches. Use your own engineering and technical faculty and students to monitor and evaluate new technological approaches to introduce into campus buildings and operations.

For example, introduce new approaches for achieving integrated design with green building programs, to keep costs in line with current “less green” or “brown” methods. LEED Platinum buildings are being built for less than 5% premiums, in some cases, less than 2% premiums. Solar electric power systems (photovoltaics) are often available at competitive prices, using a myriad of incentive programs from government and utility sources.



Oregon Health & Science University  
Center for Health & Healing, Portland  
LEED Platinum (pending)  
Total cost premium - 1%.  
*Photo: Interface Engineering, Inc.*

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## 9. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Build partnerships to implement the techniques and tools, thereby optimizing the approaches and, ultimately achieving the intended impacts and agendas. Ensure effective relationships with “external” groups – for example, relevant government agencies and architectural, construction, vehicle and other suppliers. Develop ways to build effective relationships by measuring and monitoring outcomes. Finally, consider traversing the nine-step cycle to build win-win relationships.

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## 10. INNOVATE THROUGHOUT

We’ve presented you with a methodical and methodologically-sound approach to delivering effective sustainability initiatives on campus. There are two or three layers to this toolkit, but we’ve only presented the overview. Your own innovation will drive the process to successful outcomes. Contact us for further information on the entire toolkit.



## **An Unlimited Potential**

*Campus sustainability initiatives are tasked with important goals and outcomes, yet most people do not have a clear method for proceeding from good ideas to clear results. This white paper outlines an approach that combines proven practices that have delivered results for many government and private-sector initiatives.*

### **PLEASE CONTACT: GREENWAY CONSULTING GROUP, LLC**

Jerry Yudelson organized the Greenway Consulting Group to provide high-level sustainability planning and green building technical and process expertise to higher education and local and state government sustainability programs. Jerry's expertise lies in his ability to bring diverse stakeholders together to fulfill common purposes. He facilitates "eco-charrettes" and "visioning" sessions for green building projects, and works to communicate what's possible in green building and green development through speeches, writings and consulting efforts. In 2006, Greenway Consulting Group is introducing the GIST Toolkit to higher education sustainability efforts.

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### **Thomas J. Buckholtz, PhD, Senior Associate**

Tom helps people innovate incisively. His ideas led to the creation of the Palos Verdes Estates, California, Shoreline Preserve; Rotary International's Donations-in-kind Information Network; and the United States federal government's 1992-present Government-Wide Acquisition Contract. He had significant roles in the creation of \$100 million in productivity gains throughout a \$6 billion company; multi-participant computer games; automated document libraries; hand-held computers; the enterprise software license; and the early 1990s United States nationwide grassroots coalition of private-sector, news-media, academic, and government employees and organizations that spotlighted the opportunity to improve governmental service to the public.

Tom has seen his Direct Outcomes "thinking tools" and books catalyze diverse gains in business and personal effectiveness. People use Tom's new book, *GIST: Gain Impact. Save Time.*, to learn and teach Direct Outcomes techniques. His earlier work, *Information Proficiency: Your Key to Information Age* (1995) provides people a roadmap for their Information Age opportunities.

### **Jerry Yudelson, Principal**

Jerry serves on the Board of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). He has also served on the national board of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). A registered professional engineer, he is an expert in the LEED green building rating system and serves as a national LEED faculty member for the USGBC. He has more than 20 years of experience with renewable energy systems, building design, site planning, environmental remediation, water conservation and related business systems.

In 2004, Jerry's work was recognized by the "Better Bricks" award of the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, as "Green Building Advocate" of the year. He was also named as one of the top 25 Green Building Leaders in the Northwest by *Sustainable Industries Journal*. In 2005, for the Society for Marketing Professional Services, he authored the authoritative 200-page, *The Insider's Guide to Marketing Green Buildings*. In 2006, he published two books on green building markets and technology for the Association of Energy Engineers and the National Association for Industrial and Office Properties. He holds an MBA with highest honors from the University of Oregon and engineering degrees from Caltech and Harvard University.

