Integrating Sustainability into the Curriculum as Part of Q2S Transition

Faculty Sustainability Group
GE Subcommittee
May 11, 2015
Who is the Faculty Sustainability Group?

Broadly interdisciplinary group of faculty (CLASS, COS, CEAS).

Convener: Karina Garbesi (Director of Environmental Studies)
Recorder: Jillian Buckholz (Director of Sustainability)

Active Members (Development/Review of SLOs):
Carl Stemple (Sociology), Cristian Gaedicke (Engineering),
David Larson (AGES), Erik Helgren (Physics), Grace Munakata (Art),
Henry Gilbert (Anthropology), Jason Singley (Physics),
Laurie Price (Anthropology), Linda Ivey (History), Michael Lee (AGES),
Michael Massey (Env. Science), Michele Korb (Education), Sherman Lewis
(Political Science), Zach Hallab (Hospitality, Recreation, and Tourism)

Welcome all faculty with teaching and research interests in sustainability.
FSG’s Purpose

• Reconvened Fall 2014 to address:
  • How to integrate sustainability into the curriculum. Including developing
    – A model to integrate sustainability coursework into the curriculum for all students
    – Student learning outcomes for such coursework.
Overview

• Background
  – CSUEB mandate to integrate sustainability into the curriculum
  – Review of Existing Sustainability SLOs
  – Recommendations for Sustainability ILOs
  – Differences with respect to CGWs SLOs
  – Recommendations for Integrating Sustainability into the Curriculum
CSUEB AND CSU POLICY ON SUSTAINABILITY AND CURRICULUM
• Sustainability Resolution
  (06-07 BEC; April 3, 2007).
Resolved that the Senate supports
  — “actions to make climate neutrality and sustainability a part of the curriculum... for all students”
Institutional Learning Outcome 5

- Graduates of CSUEB will be able to act responsibly and sustainably at local, national, and global levels
CSU Sustainability Policy

• Adopted Summer 2014:
  – “The CSU will seek to further integrate sustainability into the academic curriculum working within the normal campus consultative process.”
  – “The CSU will develop employee and student workforce skills in the green jobs industry, promote the development of sustainable products and services, and foster economic development.”
These policies have not been implemented.

Q2S is an ideal opportunity to do so.
The FSG Reviewed Existing Sustainability SLOs

Numerous sources:
State, National, and International
Review Highlights


- **STARS** Database of Sustainability Learning Outcomes, American Association for Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE):
  - >700 members
  - 267 Current Sustainability Ratings

- **Sustainability SLOs of CSUEB and UC Campuses**
Main goals for SLOs

• Broad definition consistent with international norms and our own ILOs (3Es)

• The most widely accepted definition of Sustainability some from definition of sustainable development
    • Economic development that is Environmentally sustainable and Equitable
  – Use format adopted by CGW for consistency
    • knowledge, skills, action
  – Avoided specification of disciplinary approaches where possible
Recommended Sustainability SLOs (Knowledge)

• Students will be able to demonstrate KNOWLEDGE of:
  – ecological, social, political, and economic dimensions of sustainability, and its central related concepts;
  – the interconnectedness, exchanges and feedbacks between human activities and natural systems;
  – key threats to environmental sustainability and its social justice implications for diverse populations and communities;
  – how individual and societal choices affect prospects for sustainability at the local, regional, and global levels; and
  – prominent existing and emerging strategies to achieve sustainability.
Recommended Sustainability SLOs (Skills)

• Students will be able to (SKILLS):
  – speak and write accurately on sustainability issues as described herein;
  – analyze, compare, and evaluate sustainability threats, solutions, and their impacts on diverse human populations, other organisms, and the physical environment; and
  – use quantitative data to understand sustainability.
Recommended Sustainability SLOs (Action)

• Students will be able to (ACTION):
  – make personal, civic, and career decisions that promote local, regional, and global sustainability;
  – contribute to the building of socially and culturally diverse, inclusive, and sustainable communities that alleviate poverty and address the needs of future generations; and
  – participate in transformative projects for sustainable living.
While these are all appropriate contexts for sustainability, effectively restricting all university approved sustainability coursework thereto violates international and academic norms on sustainability and the spirit of its emphasis on a common global future.

CGW’s SLOs address sustainability only as it affects indigenous tribal cultures, communities of color and/or women
FSGs vs. CGWs SLOs: Knowledge

• Students will be able to demonstrate KNOWLEDGE of:
  1. ecological, social, political, and economic dimensions of sustainability, and its central related concepts as they impact indigenous tribal communities, communities of color, and/or women [CGW addition]
  2. the interconnectedness, exchanges and feedbacks between human activities and natural systems; local and global indigenous epistemologies, knowledges, and traditions with regard to sustaining life in harmony with natural processes, exhibiting respect for Mother Earth, and contesting climate change. [CGW addition]

• (1) Inconsistent with national norms, it effectively calls for special protections for a subset of the world’s people, regardless of income
• (2) The purpose of #2 is the interdependence of man and nature. Indigenous traditions offer but one lens on this issue: some successes, and many failures in our ancestral past.
CGWs SLOs Add to Skills and Action

Students will be able to apply the “methods of inquiry of arts and humanities, natural sciences, or social sciences” to

(SKILLS):

– envision a healthy sustainable planet consistent with local and community based values including thus of indigenous tribal communities, communities of color, and/or women.

(ACTION):

– build sustainable communities consistent with local community-based social, political, and economic prerogatives of indigenous tribal communities, communities of color, and/or women.

SIDE NOTE: Reference to the ‘methods of inquiry of arts and humanities, natural sciences, or social sciences’ is so general that it adds nothing to the definition of SLOs...displaces focus away from specific sustainability knowledge.
Calling out certain populations, and ignoring the needs of others contradicts the very principles of sustainable development

- Increasingly erstwhile ‘indigenous tribal communities’ have dispersed and become the world’s urban poor
  
  Does that make them any less deserving of human rights to resources?

- Formerly more racial distinct peoples are mixing into less identifiable ‘colors’.
  
  Does that make them any less deserving of human rights to resources?

THE FSG recommends maintaining the FSG SLOs
Model for Integrating Sustainability Coursework into the Curriculum: FSG Recommendations

• CSUEB should adopt the following University Course Requirements for Sustainability to which the FSG Sustainability SLOs would pertain:
  – 1 Upper Division course (all students)
  – 1 Lower Division course (native students)

• Students can take as an Overlay for the Major or GE

• Benefits of allowing an Overlay for the Major:
  – Integrating sustainability more deeply into the curriculum (departments make it their own and enables prerequisites, increasing potential depth)
  – Retaining the opportunity for the traditional broad diversity of topics in GE to which many of us owe our professions

• Urge the Senate to consider this broad overlay model for all GE courses
In Summary:

- We have committed ourselves to including sustainability in the curriculum.
- Sustainability has its own mandate separate from cultural groups and women.
- Restricting sustainability to focus on specific cultures, races, or genders violates international and academic norms.
- The FSG strongly urges:
  - preserving the FSGs Sustainability SLOs as written,
  - allowing sustainability courses to be an overly
    - for GE,
    - or for the Major.
- The FSG also urges that this model be considered for other them areas.