

# Seventh Generation Project

2008-09 Update  
November 24, 2008

**Sierra College Mission Statement:** Luis Sanchez reports that the college's mission statement now has a clear commitment to sustainability linked to a core value to "support and demonstrate the sustainable use of resources." The mission statement was collaboratively developed over the past year with input from the trustees, faculty, management, staff, and students. Establishing such a formal endorsement of the principles of sustainability is a major step forward for the Seventh Generation Project. This imperative is already beginning to affect educational planning in such field as business, auto technology, and construction technology. Other important new initiatives will likely emerge as the mission statement guides our collective planning efforts.

**Institute for Sustainability:** Frank DeCourten is putting the finishing touches on the draft Truckee Educational Master Plan, and the Institute for Sustainability is still a prominent element in it. We have refined it a bit with input from the Truckee faculty this semester, including some very insightful feedback from Kris Hansen, Pam McAdoo, John Arsenault, Eve Quesnel, and several private citizens in the Truckee area. Nonetheless, the main concepts behind the Institute remain largely intact as we have discussed earlier, but they are now articulated in the plan in a more focused and specific manner. The overall plan will be finalized at the end of this semester, and will be forwarded to the leadership team (including Kim Bateman, the recently appointed Dean) for approval and implementation. Frank's engagement in Truckee terminates at end of the current semester with the submission of the draft EMP. After that, the development of the Institute at the Tahoe-Truckee Campus will be driven by the local faculty and the district management. Whether or not the idea spreads to other campuses, or the district as a whole, remains to be seen.

Already the Institute is beginning to have a positive impact in the Tahoe-Truckee region, having co-sponsored several community events with other environmentally-aligned local organizations. Kris Hansen is organizing a Wednesday, January 7th flex session on the Institute for Sustainability for faculty and community members wishing to become more informed and involved in our efforts.

**Environmental Studies Program:** Building on the work done previously by Joe Medeiros and Frank DeCourten, Michael Kane is coordinating the effort to create an Environmental Studies program. Several 7GP Task Force members are involved in this effort and an initial program proposal has already been developed. The strategy is to get the program established this year, even if it is only a beginning, and later expand it to include all the elements we have discussed...a transfer-oriented degree program, a CTE track in Energy Technology and/or Environmental Technology, a humanities-centered track, etc. A key factor in the evolution of the Environmental Studies program is securing a faculty appointment in this field to further develop and refine the program. The great news is that both the program and the position have received early approval by the Educational Requirements Committee (for the program) and the Executive Council (for the position). Pending the dire budget crisis that hangs before us, the Environmental Studies is now poised for launch in the Fall 2009 semester.

Hanging in the balance is the future of our current Interdisciplinary program and courses. As you all know, Matt Archer and Keely Carroll have stepped up to keep this vitally important learning opportunity alive this year, but how this course will be integrated into the new Environmental Studies program remains uncertain. A faculty committee already exists to help develop answers to these questions once our new Environmental Studies person is on board.

**NCC Campus:** Carol Cox is advising the NCC ECOS and Jason Giuliani is ASSC advisor. Both groups have expressed an interest in sustainability and/or environmental issues and activities. There will be an NCC Sustainability Day on Wednesday, 10/22, coinciding with People and Cultures Day at Rocklin. Becky Siemers is continuing to explore environmental themes to possibly link the Ghidotti Early College High School Curriculum with Sierra College courses as part of the Curriculum Alignment project that she is coordinating. Frank DeCourten and Carol Cox have developed a 4-year rotation for earth science and geography courses that includes the initiation of the Interdisciplinary (or Environmental Studies?) courses at NCC over the next two years. A post-construction re-vegetation/"beautification" plan will be developed that includes input from Marcia Braga (Environmental Horticulture) that could emphasize native plants, xeroscaping, or other sustainable concepts. An educational master plan is being developed at NCC by Stephanie Guevara, but to what degree sustainability-related elements are incorporated into it is currently uncertain....at least to us. Potentially, as the both facilities and programs evolve to evolve at NCC, sustainability values will become as strongly embraced by the college as they are in the local community.

**Photovoltaic/Energy Technology:** Stephanie Guevara and Michael Kane are coordinating the Industry Driven Regional Collaborative grant project to start an instructional program in Photovoltaics. Stephanie organized a very productive workshop on this project on Friday, Nov. 14. This workshop addressed several dimensions of a new Photovoltaic Technology program including organization, content, employment outlook, articulation with existing CTE programs, etc. Everything appears to be on track for an initial offering of courses in this field by Fall, 2009. There seems to be strong sympathy for the perspective of the Seventh Generation Project that the Photovoltaic Technician program should serve as a stepping stone to a broader and more comprehensive energy technology CTE curriculum complementing a transfer-track Environmental Studies program. Though the current photovoltaic initiative is specifically geared toward workforce development, there appears to be strong potential for the program to evolve in a major new direction of career and technological instruction geared toward the overall goal of helping our communities shift to a more sustainable practices.

**Graduation Requirement:** Last year, Jane Haproff made considerable progress toward a global stewardship graduation requirement by introducing the idea to our shared governance entities. Luis Sanchez and Jason Giuliani have also expressed interest in this element of our initiative, but I have not heard anything recently. I know we remain committed to establishing some sort of gradation requirement related to sustainability, but someone have to carry on where Jane left off in formalizing that concept. This is probably a long-term goal, because it will require an investment of considerable time and energy in the process to establish a new graduation requirement. It might take action and pressure from a formal shared governance entity such as Academic Senate to give this idea traction. It seems to be too large a task for a single member of an *ad hoc* group such as the 7GP to complete.

**Transportation and Campus Operations:** The last I heard, Vern Martin, Colin Irwin, and Joe Medeiros were still collaborating on a comprehensive transportation plan. I don't know the status of those efforts, but perhaps one the three could fill us in on current developments. I also haven't received any news on the status of sustainability initiatives in grounds, marketing, maintenance, and energy. I know things are happening, but I don't have the details to share with you at this time.