



St Andrews Sustainability Institute



University
of
St Andrews

University of St Andrews and progress towards sustainable development

The University of St Andrews has sought to place sustainable development at the heart of its operations along four integrated fronts: governance, teaching, research and sustainable Estates Management. The idea has been to integrate sustainability into day to day thinking and decision making processes of the University”

Governance

The University of St Andrews has a senior management team (from the Principal downwards) that is committed to sustainable development. This ‘tone from the top’ is supported by an active interest in championing sustainable development from many of the staff who work in the University as well as support from the student body (including various student societies and the Students’ Association). The initiatives undertaken by the University across the board (and in partnership with the Students’ Association) resulted in the University being awarded the inaugural THES award for outstanding contribution to sustainable development.

Actions include:

1. A sustainable development strategy, underpinned by annual objectives and targets, as well as internal monitoring and reporting process on achievements in line with targets.
2. Committees that report directly to the senior management team, namely an Environmental Task Force, supported by a Travel and Parking Group and a separate Changing Behaviour Group.
3. Day to day environmental management is the responsibility of Estates and the Environment Team. A team of three staff have roles and responsibilities to develop strategies, policies, processes and procedures to deliver improved environmental performance.
4. Part of the ‘integration of sustainability’ ethos has been to utilize expertise from within the academic and student community to respond to the University’s sustainability objectives. For instance, a staff and student travel survey was undertaken in 2006. I.T. staff developed the on-line survey and analyzed the results and the student survey was circulated and promoted using student labour. This approach helps the University to better understand its impact. It also creates an awareness amongst staff and students and it also develops skills that bring long term benefits to staff and students.
5. In partnership with the Carbon Trust, a carbon management programme for the University with the aim of exploring the possibilities for a carbon neutral university. This includes considering travel, utilities use, waste production, fuel

- consumption and procurement. A number of feasibility studies are underway including exploring the possibilities for renewable energy production on and off site. This renewable agenda supports the University's Utilities Strategy.
6. A rolling fund of £1.3 million over two years to ensure energy efficiency measures are retrofitted in all of the University estate. Savings made on the basis of this investment is recycled back into the scheme. This is match funded by SALIX (Carbon Trust) and the University.
 7. The management of the built environment of the University to attain the highest possible environmental ratings for buildings. Two halls of residence (David Russell and New Hall) have been awarded gold status in the Green Tourism Business Scheme accreditation scheme. In addition, sustainable development considerations are being factored into the design, build and operation of refurbished and new builds. This includes the proposed new Medical Sciences Building.
 8. The University also has programmes of action in place to manage its environmental impact in terms of: (i) waste and (ii) travel. Surveys of each area have been completed and action plans for reducing the impact of each area are in place. The University currently recycles 22% of its waste and is moving towards waste minimization. A Transport Forum has been formed involving Stagecoach, First ScotRail, the Taxi Association, the University, and Fife Council. This has arisen from the University's Travel Plan.
 9. A biodiversity audit of the University estate is in the process of being undertaken using expertise from the School of Biology. Gathering baseline data is the first step of developing a biodiversity action plan.
 10. Achievement of fair trade status for the University, Students' Association and the town of St Andrews.
 11. Currently the University's Finance Committee is investigating how it can undertake ethical investment for the funds under its control. The Students' Association already undertakes ethical screening of its investments.
 12. The University of St Andrews is involved in a partnership with the UHI Millennium Institute to put on the Sustainable Development Leadership Lecture series. Past speakers at these lectures include Jonathon Porritt, Tim O'Riordan, Michael Meacher and Jorgen Randers.
 13. The Student body has been actively engaged as part of this approach too. A range of student environment and sustainability groups have been formed and there is a steady dialogue between these Groups and the Estates Environment Team via the Student Association's Environment and Ethics Committee. This ongoing dialogue is helping to create awareness and improved environment and sustainability performance. The recently issued student 'People and Planet' league table placed St Andrews joint top in Scotland and 8th in the UK for environment and sustainability performance.

Teaching

Teaching (in all its forms) is a core part of University of St Andrews business. Aspects of sustainable development is contained in many degree programmes (such as those in biology, chemistry, economics, english, international relations, management, maths & statistics, social anthropology and philosophy) as well as being the specific focus of the following degree programmes.

1. The University of St Andrews has an undergraduate interdisciplinary degree programme in sustainable development. The first graduates from this programme will graduate in June of 2008. There are approximately 24 students in each of the honours years for this programme and the first year module attracts approximately 180 students each year while the second year modules have 85 students on them. These numbers are evidence of a strong demand for sustainable development education.
2. There are existing postgraduate degrees that have a significant element of sustainable development within them. In the first instance, the School of Geography and Geosciences has a degree in understanding environmental change. In addition, the School of Management has a number of modules in corporate social responsibility that are available to masters students.
3. Most significantly in September of 2008 the University will be launching its taught Masters degrees in sustainable development. The exact shape of these programmes is not yet finalized but they will follow the highly successful model of the undergraduate programme and put interdisciplinarity at the core of the programme.
4. Development and delivery of executive education programmes in sustainable development leadership commenced in 2007. These are tailor made programmes of various durations that are delivered by SASI staff. This is part of the knowledge transfer activities of the University.

Research

The creation of knowledge of our current unsustainability and how society may progress towards the goal of sustainable development is a focus for a number of academics within the University of St Andrews. There are some 60 full time academics that have an interest in sustainable development research ranging from studies of the impact of mining operations on indigenous communities to understanding habitat change and land use management.

In addition, there are two research centres and one institute that champion and facilitate sustainable development work.

1. The Centre for Research into Ecological and Environmental Modelling (CREEM) is an inter-disciplinary research centre at the University of St Andrews, linking researchers from the schools of Mathematics and Statistics, Biology and Geography and Geosciences. Our remit is to develop and apply advanced

- mathematical and statistical methods to practical problems in biology, ecology and geography.
2. The Centre for Social and Environmental Accounting Research sits within the School of Management and is concerned with the social and environmental impact of organizations and how accounting and reporting (as a technologies of control and accountability). CSEAR has over 400 members in 33 countries and operates as a networking organization for researchers in the field. It also hosts an annual international congress in St Andrews each year with conferences in Australian/New Zealand, Italy, Spain, Portugal and North America also taking place in partnership with CSEAR.
 3. The St Andrews Sustainability Institute was formed in 2006 and is charged with developing postgraduate education in sustainable development, bringing together researchers at St Andrews in the field as well as facilitating knowledge transfer within and outside of the University.

At the same time, the University of St Andrews is working in partnership with other higher education institutions in Scotland to develop a bid to the Scottish Funding Council for a Scotland wide centre for sustainable development research. The development of this bid has progressed beyond the initial consultation stage and is currently being finalized ahead of seeking co-funding opportunities.

Conclusion

In summary, the integrated approach of combining governance, teaching, research and sustainable Estates Management activities places the University of St Andrews at the forefront of higher education establishments who are seeking to address the challenges of sustainable development. A final aspect of activity in this area is that of the St Andrews Prize for the Environment (see <http://www.thestandrewsprize.com/>). This prize is sponsored by ConocoPhillips and was launched in 1998. The prize is currently USD\$50,000 for the selected project with a further \$10,000 for two runner ups. The prize money is used to advance a project that will significantly contribute to environmental conservation.

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