

**Bunker Hill Community College
Sustainable Mini-Grant Program Proposal**

“Introduction to Sustainable Business”

**A Course Proposal for a Learning Community Seminar
Open to Business and Non-Business
Degree Program Students**

**Erin DeCurtis, MBA
Adjunct Instructor, Business and
Coordinator, Community Center for Entrepreneurship**

“INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS”

PROJECT ABSTRACT

With the combination of increased market demand for environmentally sustainable products and the significant impact Global Warming has and will continue to have on raw material components on which products and their manufacturing processes are based, it is critical for students that will work in the for-profit sector to understand new trends in sustainable business.

Using the content framework of Bunker Hill Community College’s existing “Introduction to Business” coursework, “Introduction to Sustainable Business” will utilize the annual ***Ceres Roadmap for Sustainability*** publication (found at: <http://www.ceres.org/Document.Doc?id=568>) and relevant business case studies to present both the recommended framework in which businesses can make environmentally sustainable business choices as well as the reality of how those choices play out in businesses today. The course will have sufficient new sustainable business content as to be educational for students who have taken “Introduction to Business” but not be so advanced in presenting leadership, economics, marketing, operations and other “Introduction to Business” content as to preclude non-business students from understanding, absorbing and applying concepts taught in the course.

PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

“Introduction to Sustainable Business” is relevant both to Bunker Hill Community College’s Climate Change Committee Mission as well as the Massachusetts Community College Mission Statement. This course incorporates meets the College’s Climate Change Committee’s Mission by “integrat[ing] sustainability into the curriculum.” By educating students about the dynamic nature of sustainability efforts in business using an annual publication drafted by one of the leading non-profit organizations advocating for sustainable business practices, the course meets the Massachusetts Community College Mission Statement by “ensur[ing] a workforce equipped to meet the needs of a changing economy.”

PROJECT PLAN

The course will be developed and taught by Erin DeCurtis. Utilizing the 2010 *Ceres Roadmap for Sustainability* Publication (*CRS*) as a framework, the course will include the following content modules:

Module 1. Introduction to Sustainable Business

- Overview of For-Profit Business in the US
- History of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) In the US
- Definition of Stakeholder vs. Shareholder/Investor
- Definition of Economic/Environmental Externalities (including basic overview of Pollution, Global Warming and Its Causes)
- Historic Examples of Government Regulation of Business to Protect the Environment
- Case Study examples of comprehensive, long-standing CSR efforts focused on sustainability

CRS Content Included:

- The Stakeholder Perspective
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Business Model Innovation
- Public Policy

Module 2. Sustainable Business Leadership & Management

- Typical Leadership and Management Structure of for-profit business entities, including start-up business ventures, growing businesses and mature businesses
- Case studies of exemplary and flawed leaders and Entrepreneurs through an Environmentally Sustainable Lens
- Career tracks in sustainability
- Sustainability efforts as a recruiting tool

CRS Content Included:

- Governance for Sustainability
- Executive Compensation
- Corporate Policies and Management Systems
- Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles

Module 3. Sustainable Products and Production

- Sustainable Products – Getting Back to Business Origins, Certified Organic Products, Carbon Neutral Products
- Sustainable Production and Building Operation Methods (includes overview of green buildings)
- Sustainable Supply Chains – Cradle-to-Grave Certification, Certified
- Sustainable Distribution Methods, from biofuel delivery trucks to e-books

- Case studies of sustainable products, production, supply chain and distribution

CRS Content Included:

PROJECT PLAN (continued)

- All Products and Services, Operations, Supply Chain, and Transportation and Logistics content
- Product Transparency

Module 4. Sustainable Business Reporting

- How are businesses measured and reporting their sustainable efforts?
 - Global Reporting Initiative
 - ISO 14000

CRS Content Included:

- The Investor Perspective
- Standards for Disclosure

Timeline for Course Development:

February 2011

- Development of Module Lesson Plan Outlines
- Search for Supplementary Content readings and media to solidify basic business and environmental sustainability concepts

March 2011

- Selection of Supplementary Course Content
- Development of Student Course Deliverables
- Identification of possible guest speaker(s) from Ceres and from Industry

April 2011

- Finalization of Lesson Plan Outlines
- Drafting of Final Course Description for Catalog

May 2011

- Development of Course Syllabus
- Submission of Course Content for Post-Grant Evaluation Review

ENHANCEMENT OF STUDENT OUTCOMES

As a result of this proposed course, students will achieve the learning outcomes listed below. These are outcomes that build upon those included in “Introduction to Business” as well as those that comprise Learning Community Seminars.

“Introduction to Sustainable Business” Learning Outcomes:

- Discuss the nature of for-profit business and its historical impact on environmental sustainability in the United States
- Discuss the impact of the U.S. capitalist economy’s impact on the environment through the lens of economic externalities
- Articulate the distinction between business stakeholders and stockholders
- Describe the mechanisms that stakeholder groups can impact corporate environmental sustainability efforts
- Compare and contrast corporate leadership and management styles that have both positive and negative impacts on the environment
- Describe the role of government regulation in curtailing the negative environmental impacts of for-profit businesses in the United States
- Articulate the considerations for-profit businesses can take into account in developing environmentally sustainable products and services
- Articulate the considerations for-profit businesses can take into account in developing environmentally sustainable supply chains
- Articulate the considerations for-profit businesses can take into account in developing environmentally sustainable production and operation methods
- Articulate the considerations for-profit businesses can take into account in developing environmentally sustainable supply chains
- Articulate the considerations for-profit businesses can take into account in developing environmentally sustainable distribution methods
- Define cradle-to-grave product development concepts
- Define the Global Reporting Initiative and how it is applied in a business context
- Define ISO 14000 production methods
- Articulate the challenges involved in environmental sustainability reporting by the corporate sector

“Introduction to Sustainable Business” has the capacity to achieve the following Learning Community Seminar objectives:

ENHANCEMENT OF STUDENT OUTCOMES (continued)

Reflection & Exploration

- **Career Exploration & Planning.** Upon completion of the course, students will demonstrate enhanced knowledge of careers in the for-profit sector which utilize knowledge of and a commitment to environmental sustainability

Critical Thinking & Information Literacy

- **Critical Thinking & Critical Reading.** Upon completion of the course, students will develop enhanced ability to practiced disciplined inquiry through the reading and analysis of business case studies involving positive and negative impacts that business can have on environmental sustainability.
- **Information Literacy.** Upon completion of the course, students will demonstrate enhanced abilities to determine what information is needed, sort and organize it and evaluate and apply what is selected from a range of source materials that discuss business and its positive and negative impacts on environmental sustainability.

Communication

- **Communication Skills.** Upon completion of the course, students will demonstrate enhanced ability to read, write, speak and listen critically, reflectively and effectively through course assignments emphasizing class participation, oral presentations and writing skills.

Diversity & Community Engagement

- **Team Work & Diversity.** Upon completion of the course, students will demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively in a team through work on a semester-long team project. Through this experience, students will learn to appreciate a diversity of perspectives, thereby enhancing their ability to participate effectively in an increasingly complex world.
- **Community Engagement.** Upon completion of the course, students will demonstrate the ability to apply what they are learning about business in the classroom to the local and global community.

ASSESSMENT PLAN

The three primary methods of student assessment will follow those similar to the types of assessments individuals are subject to in a business setting. This is a strategic selection to reinforce career skills students will need to be successful in the business world.

The three primary modes of assessment are:

- Active class participation, including leading discussion of current events in sustainable business
- 2-3 written case analyses, and
- A semester-long team project analyzing the sustainable business practices of a New England-based company. Students will be required to present as a team their full company analysis.

Assignment specifics will be solidified once supplementary content is identified to ensure that the assignments provide students the opportunity to absorb, link and reflect on the linkages between the content and the CRS.

BUDGET WORKSHEET

Faculty Stipend, New Course Development		\$1,000
Budget for Sustainable Business Case Research & Selection*		\$125
Budget for DVD Media as Supplementary Course Content*		\$150
Budget for student field trip to local corporate sustainability event (roundtrip travel by MBTA for 30 students total; \$3.50 x 30 students)**		\$105
		\$1,380

*Budgeted costs represent high costs estimates. Many sustainable business course resources are free for faculty through resources like the World Resources Institute’s publication database, CasePlace.org and Harvard Business School Publishing. These costs are included in the event that there are resources that would be compelling teaching tools that do have a cost to acquire them.

** Still working to identify field trips that could be applicable. Local organizations I would research for these types of events would be Net Impact Boston, the Northeast Sustainable Energy Coalition, Nexus/The Green Roundtable as well as a local business schools like MIT, Harvard Business School, Babson College and Simmons School of Management, all of which have sustainable business events throughout the academic year.