

Faculty college to help integrate sustainability into curriculum

by Jaime Hunt - Wednesday, March 05, 2008

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This May, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh faculty members will have an opportunity to spend two days learning how to integrate the idea of sustainability into their curriculum by participating in the Winnebago Sustainability Project.

During the two-day faculty college, participants will be given the opportunity to introduce sustainability into their teaching by revising an existing course or creating a new one.

“Sustainability is not something that should be confined to one department or one class,” said Jim Feldman, assistant professor of history and environmental studies. “We want to infuse the idea throughout the curriculum, so that students encounter it in a variety of contexts and disciplines.”

Although there are various definitions of sustainability, the basic meaning is living in a way that ensures that future generations enjoy the benefits of a healthy environment and social well-being. Sustainability is not limited to environmental concerns but rather integrates three dimensions: ecological integrity, social justice, and economic security. It is also not limited to merely preserving resources, but includes positive steps toward ecological, social, and economic health.

“For the university, sustainability has special meanings,” said Feldman. “We have the chance to integrate sustainability into what and how we teach and research, and also to serve as an example of sustainable ideas and practices to the larger community.”

UW Oshkosh is taking a leadership role in the national campus sustainability movement, and has won several national awards for sustainable practices such as energy and water management. The proposed Campus Sustainability Plan recommends initiatives like this faculty college, to infuse sustainability into the curriculum.

All faculty and academic staff in all departments and colleges can participate in the faculty college. Funding has been provided by the Office of Faculty Development and the provost’s office, with additional support by the Center for Scholarly Teaching (CST) and the Campus Sustainability Council.

To participate, submit a one-paragraph description on how you plan to change an old course or to develop a new one to Jim Feldman at feldmanj@uwosh.edu. The deadline is March 14, 2008.

If you have questions or if you are interested but unsure how to proceed, contact Jim Feldman at feldmanj@uwosh.edu or David Barnhill at barnhill@uwosh.edu.