

The Evergreen State College
Sustainable Leadership and Decision Making

CRN: 20276 (Grad), (UG)

Fall, 2011

SEM II, E2109

Syllabus

Last Update: September 7, 2011

Instructor: D. Michael Mucha, P.E., MPA

Weekdays: 608-222-1201 (ext 242)

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Dates:

Friday, October 28 (5-9)

Saturday, October 29 (9-5)

Sunday, October 30 (9-5)

Course Description:

This course will focus on ways for the manager or team leader to use sustainability as a management competency to achieve community or organizational goals in a way that empowers people, promotes healthy eco systems and creates thriving and vibrant communities. Instead of viewing sustainability as being an abstract end goal, this course will focus more on how students can lead in a sustainable way. That is the idea behind *Sustainable Leadership*.

This course will also help students improve their own capacity to lead in times of uncertainty, conflict, and skepticism. Through smart questions appropriately applied, students will learn how to navigate these difficult circumstances as a facilitator and convener of change, rather than being in the unenviable role of problem fixer. Sustainability, as a decision-making platform will help students build trusting relationships, channel creativity and create balanced solutions that last and have fewer unintended consequences.

Learning Objectives:

This weekend intensive course will focus on four learning objectives,

- **Meaning**
Understanding modern frameworks for conceptualizing sustainability
- **Purpose**
Setting a leadership strategy that identifies where to start and how to translate intent into meaningful action
- **Results**
Developing performance measures and assigning accountability for results
- **People**
Building trusting relationships and influencing sustainable behaviors in others, including employees, partners and citizens.

Student Expectation

"Having respect for others is fundamental to having open, educational dialogue. All students are expected to support and contribute to a well functioning MPA classroom learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MPA program."

Instructor

Michael Mucha is the Chief Engineer and Director for the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District in Madison Wisconsin. Before that, he served eleven years as the Director of Public Works for the City of Olympia. He has over 25 years of experience working in local government and has put sustainability to action in creative ways. He holds a B.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of Wisconsin, an M.P.A. from the University of Washington, and a leadership certificate from Harvard University.

Michael is involved in the District's efforts to view wastewater as a resource and is helping to transform a industry to find beneficial uses of wastewater to society. He has also lead the City of Olympia's efforts to adapt to the affects of sea level rise, has led the City's efforts to move Olympia toward being a zero waste community, and has implemented policies to lower greenhouse gases below Kyoto targets.

Michael is the Chair for the American Public Works Associations new Center for Sustainability for North America serves on the American Society of Civil Engineers National Sustainability Committee and advises other local governments on how to incorporate sustainability principles into the management of their organizations.

Day 1: Framing Sustainability...the Big Picture

Readings: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)

1. Reviewing modern sustainability frameworks
2. Making sustainable decisions
3. Building trust
4. Whole system thinking
5. Open Space Discussions about readings 1,2 and 3. (see note below)

Day 2: Leading sustainability in our organizations

Readings: [4](#),[5](#)

1. Adapting a work culture.
 - Guest Speaker: Acting Chief Steve Nelson. Olympia Police Department. "From Steno Pads to Sustainable Jail."

2. Creating Purpose
 - Strategy making made easy
 - Linking sustainability to organizational priorities
 - Setting priorities, being focused
 - Sustainability Indicators
3. Success Indicators
 - Measuring the right things
 - Defining accountability
 - Holding people accountable
4. Open Space Discussions about readings 4 and 5.

Day 3 Leading sustainability with our citizens

Readings: 6, 7

1. Your role as leader
2. Phases of change
3. Adaptive change versus technical fixes
4. Open Space discussions about any subject in the course.
5. Dealing with resistance
6. Helping others make decisions
 - Guest Speaker: Rich Hoey, Director of Water Resources for the City of Olympia. Influencing Sustainable Behavior. Using ethnographic research and Community Based Social Marketing.

About Open Space Discussions

Open Space Technology (OST) will be a group discussion format used on all three days of the course. OST has been around since 1985 and used in America, Europe, India, South America and Africa with groups from five to five hundred. The goal is to provide structured time during class for students to set the agenda for group discussions about the assigned readings and lectures. It can be a powerful and engaging learning tool if students come prepared to both lead a group and actively contribute to others. Each student shall come to class prepared to lead a discussion topic taken from one of the readings or lectures. More instructions will be provided in class.

Required Readings

1. ***The Key to Sustainable Cities: Meeting Human Needs and Transforming Community Systems***, Gwendolyn Hallsmith, pages 1-12, 27-64, 86-98, 169-215, New Society Publishers, 2003

2. ***The Natural Step for Communities***, Sarah James and Torbjorn Lahti, New Society Publishers, 2004, pgs 2-14, 189-194. Access through Moodle.
3. ***Sustainable Action Map***, City of Olympia Website,
<http://www.olympiawa.gov/community/sustainability/SAM/>
4. ***Strategy Making in Non-Profits***, Journal of Association Leadership, James G. Dalton, Fall 2006.
<http://www.asaecenter.org/Resources/JALArticleDetail.cfm?ItemNumber=19978>
5. ***Finding Balance in Everything: Diary of a Public Works Director***, APWA Reporter, Michael Mucha, May 2009, pgs 32-36
<http://www.apwa.net/Publications/Reporter/ReporterOnline/>
6. ***Fostering Sustainable Behavior***, Doug McKenzie-Mohr, Read Introduction, Pages 1-17, New Society Publishers, 1999.
<http://www.cbsm.com/public/images/FosteringSustainableBehavior.pdf>
7. **The Power of Imagination, 50 Lessons from Durban South Africa**, Sogen Moodley, City of Durban, First Edition, September, 2009. Pages 1-44. Access through Moodle or <http://sustainablecities.net/docman-resources>

Credit Requirements

For credit in this class, students are required to:

1. Complete all the assigned readings.
2. Attend all three days of class and actively participate in open space discussions.
3. Create a one page briefing paper that makes the case for a solution that you will lead in a sustainable way.
4. Consistent with MPA program requirements, students will prepare a self-evaluation and an evaluation of the instructor. The student evaluation shall emphasize the one major take-away from the course and how it will influence your thinking. Please do not summarize the course material. This will play a major part in your success at receiving credit for this class.