

Whitman School, SUNY-ESF, Syracuse Center of Excellence Launch Sustainable Business Collaboration to unite education and research

Thursday, April 10, 2008

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Today more than ever, businesses of all sizes are looking to adapt new practices and ideas that help reduce -- and even eliminate -- the environmental impact of their day-to-day and long-term operations. Today's business executives -- and students preparing to be future corporate leaders -- seek to fully understand how innovation in business practices can benefit the environment, as well as the bottom line. To help business leaders and students address both the economic and practical challenges of incorporating green strategies, Syracuse University's Whitman School of Management, the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF) and the Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems (Syracuse CoE) have launched the Sustainable Business Collaboration (SBC), a distinctive transdisciplinary approach to world-class education and research on business and sustainability. A collaborative effort involving faculty, researchers and students from the Whitman School, SUNY-ESF and the Syracuse CoE, the SBC utilizes combined strengths to provide insight into the best practices and policies for various sizes of businesses; metrics for sustainable efforts; implementation strategies; and associated long-term benefits to an organization and the community. To promote research in business and sustainability, the SBC is making available three mini-grants of \$5,000 each for summer 2008. All professors and researchers from SU, SUNY-ESF and the Syracuse CoE with interest and expertise in sustainable business concepts, practices, metrics and assessments are invited to apply. In keeping with the SBC's emphasis on transdisciplinary collaboration and integration, investigators from at least two disciplines will be required for each proposal. The call for proposals is available by contacting Carolyn Hilleges at chilleg@syr.edu. Additionally, this semester the SBC piloted a graduate class, "Business and Sustainability," which examines the science and policy aspects of sustainability and their application to business organizations; nearly 20 academic and industry experts from Syracuse to Washington, D.C., are participating in the course. In the near future, the SBC aims to create a certificate program open to all SU and SUNY-ESF graduate students that will provide participants with a similarly rich experience and a distinguishing credential. Students who complete the certificate program will be prepared to develop business strategies that further sustainable organizational decision making, assess the impact of proposed actions on the so-called "triple bottom line" and identify and create sustainable business opportunities. "A growing commitment to environmental stewardship in the corporate world has yielded a wealth of innovative ideas and technologies that are making 21st-century business better," says Melvin Stith, dean of the Whitman School. "To ensure that future business leaders are fully prepared to drive sustainable business design and innovation, business schools must likewise adapt. The Sustainable Business Collaboration provides unique value by uniting key resources in the Whitman School, SUNY-ESF and the Syracuse CoE to help students and businesses translate sustainability into effective business practices." "With all of the expertise available through partners of the Syracuse CoE, SUNY-ESF and the Whitman School, this new collaboration in research and education will strengthen our region's position as a leader on issues that address critical energy and environmental challenges in business," says Edward A. Bogucz, executive

director of the Syracuse CoE. "By bridging business and environmental education, the Sustainable Business Collaboration underscores the capabilities that the Syracuse area has for advancing the understanding of key issues in environmental practices, and creating new sustainable solutions to effectively transform the marketplace." "As the global economy has expanded, it has become increasingly evident that the inputs to production are not limitless and the wastes of production can accumulate to levels that are hazardous to human well-being," says Bruce C. Bongarten, provost and vice president for academic affairs at SUNY-ESF. "The private sector will play the pivotal role in addressing these issues, and the Sustainable Business Collaboration will aid in the endeavor by providing the knowledge and workforce required to foster the myriad innovations that businesses will develop in our common quest for corporate and global sustainability." As the inaugural event for the SBC's Business and Sustainability Seminar Series, an April 25 seminar is planned in New York City that will feature a packed schedule of presentations delivered by leaders in business and business education. The seminar - "Business and Sustainability: Purpose? Profitable? Possible!" -- is designed for executives, managers and professionals who want to understand the sustainability imperative and its relevance to their organizations. The seminar will be held at the Steelcase WorkLife Showroom, located at Columbus Circle in New York City. Steelcase, a sponsor of the seminar, is a global leader in the office furniture industry; other conference sponsors and participants are Carrier Corp., Corning Inc., Reliant Energy and Comfort Systems. Featured speakers at the conference include: John Mandyck, vice president of government and international relations for Carrier Corp., who will present "Sustainability Next: Green Companies";

Pat Penfield, director of the supply chain executive management program at the Whitman School, who will deliver "Characteristics of Sustainable Businesses";

Melissa DeSota, member of the Global Environmental Strategy and Programs Team at Steelcase Inc., who will present "From Core Belief to Intentional Behavior: One Corporation's Journey to Embed Environmental Sustainability";

Pat Jackson, leader of Corning Inc.'s Global Energy Management Initiative, who will speak about Corning's Global Energy Management Program;

Mark Lichtenstein, director of operations and outreach for the Syracuse CoE, who will present "Zero Waste and Beyond: A Cradle-to-Cradle Approach to Exceeding Sustainability in Businesses"; and

Elet Callahan, professor of law and public policy at the Whitman School, who will present "Global Warming and Public Policy: Challenges and Opportunities."

For full conference information, visit <http://Whitman.syr.edu/sustainabilityconference>