

July 15, 2011

Our Commitment to Work in Conformity with the Principles for Responsible Management Education

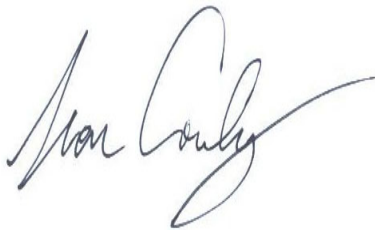
The Marlboro College Graduate School's MBA in Managing for Sustainability is a graduate management program devoted to business theory and practice that enriches human communities, furthers social justice, and safeguards the integrity of the Earth's biosphere. Toward these goals, we are committed to engaging in a continuous process of improvement in applying the Principles for Responsible Management Education, reporting on progress to all stakeholders and exchanging best practices with other academic institutions.

We understand that our educational and organizational practices should reflect the purpose, values, and principles that we ostensibly convey to our students and others associated with our MBA program via our curriculum, marketing, and other communication.

We encourage all academic institutions and other kinds of organizations to adopt and promote the Principles for Responsible Management Education, and stand ready to assist in this process.



Ralph Meima
Director, Marlboro MBA in Managing for Sustainability
Marlboro College Graduate School



Sean Conley
Associate Dean of the Graduate School
Marlboro College Graduate School

The Principles for Responsible Management Education

As institutions of higher learning involved in the education of current and future managers, we are voluntarily committed to engaging in a continuous process of improvement of the following Principles and their application.

Principle 1

Purpose: We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

Principle 2

Values: We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

Principle 3

Method: We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

Principle 4

Research: We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.

Principle 5

Partnership: We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.

Principle 6

Dialogue: We will facilitate and support dialogue and debate among educators, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

Our progress in each of these areas is delineated in the pages that follow.

Principle 1 and 2: Purpose and Value

Principle 1: We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

Principle 2: We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

The Marlboro MBA in Managing for Sustainability was designed specifically to train leaders who seek to address sustainability issues at a root level. Therefore a focus on sustainability is woven throughout every aspect of the program. Sustainability is a consideration in the design and implementation of the curriculum, extra-curricular and student activities, program governance and administration.

Curriculum

Each course in the Marlboro MBA core curriculum (e.g., accounting, marketing, leadership, etc.) is based on principles of social, ecological, and economic sustainability. In addition, a number of required courses specifically focus on sustainability, including Foundations of Sustainable Business, Exploring Sustainability, Systems Thinking & Modeling, and the Global Systems Seminar.

Foundations of Sustainable Business

As an introductory business management course, this looks at both the business case for sustainability and the sustainability case for business. This course includes an overview of key concepts, historical perspectives and state-of-the-art tools and practices within CSR, environmental management and social enterprise, and the broader debates about the relationship between private firms, modern industry and ecological and social sustainability.

Systems Thinking and Modeling

This course aims to ground students in the material and energy systems of modern human societies, and in how these life-support processes can be analyzed as dynamic systems. We assume that these areas of essential resource systems – energy, food, and water – are where the preponderance of sustainability problems arise. The course is set in an ecological context that considers both nature and human welfare. While the course focuses on the "planet" aspect of the triple bottom line, a systems approach is easily extended to "people" or "profit".

Exploring Sustainability

This course, which runs through the entire curriculum during five successive trimesters, familiarizes students with the existential, cultural, historical, scientific, political, economic, and business connections to the emerging notion of sustainability. While sustainability is frequently presented as a simple idea, related to essentially timeless human thoughts about survival, its current usage has been developed and popularized through a variety of scientific and social movements in such areas as labor rights, worker health and safety, consumer safety, environmental conservation, energy, environmental protection, product and service quality, urban and regional planning, civil rights, social justice, ethics, and corporate governance. One result is that conversations and activities toward sustainability become fuzzy and confused.

The overall intent of this course is to examine critical aspects of sustainability in depth, and develop a competence to step back from the standard approaches to sustainability or sustainable development or greening. The purpose is to develop a competence to get underneath the public arguments that dominate virtually all conversations about sustainability and be able to create solutions that dissolve, not resolve, the problems at hand.

Global Systems Seminar

This course runs for six successive trimesters. It is designed to familiarize students with critical global ecological and human systems, how they are interrelated, their current condition and trends, and what the informed, engaged business practitioner must know about them in order to manage for sustainability and drive societal change in line with that aim (i.e., "Change the climate of business").

In 2010 Marlboro College created a Master of Science in Mission-Driven Organizations that serves professionals in non-profit/social entrepreneurship careers. The MBA and MSM-MDO programs collaborate on curriculum, guest speakers and events.

The commitment of our faculty to sustainability in the business and economic context is both broad and deep. Most of our faculty members are directly engaged in social and environmental professions, activism, and/or research. They bring their passion for sustainability and their depth of experience to integrating social/environmental themes into the curriculum.

The entire program is a center for activities and thinking related to CSR, socially responsible business, social entrepreneurship, the relocalization movement, renewable energy, mindfulness in the workplace, and related topics. The program offers a wide range of creative, experiential and cutting-edge opportunities for students and the community to engage around these topics. Examples include classroom-based field projects in the Strategic Synthesis class, case studies and guest speakers in several courses, a monthly Leadership in Sustainability speaker series, independent travel/study adventures, the second-year capstone project, and corporate trainings offered by program faculty.

Faculty, staff and students are involved in the continual development of how to apply sustainability in the program via the faculty curriculum committee, a community-building process, emerging new consultation and governance structures, and the Net Impact chapter.

Classroom-based Field Projects

Students gain hands-on consulting experience through classroom-based field projects in the Strategic Synthesis class. Examples of projects from the past year include: Vermont Woods Studios, Vermont Coffee Company and The Commons.

International Programming

Students in the Marlboro MBA in Sustainability program can choose to participate either in an international trip offered by a faculty member, or to design and complete an Independent Learning Adventure that involves travel to an international or U.S. location of their choice. Either option is worth one credit, and completion is required to graduate from the program.

Because we live and work in a global economy, a successful sustainability leader must have the ability to apply his or her knowledge and skills in diverse settings that may operate with assumptions and values different from their own. The Independent Learning Adventure is an opportunity to visit a cultural, social, and/or political setting that is new, in order to broaden perspectives and cultivate connections, to explore how some aspect of sustainability is being addressed there, and to strengthen the ability to communicate and work with a diversity of people and organizations around issues of sustainability.

In the past year students have participated in two trips to Malawi, Africa. While there they have consulted with the owner and managers of Toleza Farms, a 4000-acre farm that is developing a sustainable and entrepreneurial agricultural environment at the farm and within the local community around Toleza in Balaka, Malawi. They also taught an entrepreneurship class to high school girls, and researched how to develop micro-finance opportunities for women.

The trips to Malawi have given students the opportunity to learn about complex global economic issues including how to bring value down the supply chain to the local villages/workers, how the economic realities and resource constraints of a developing country impact business development, and what new business opportunities or product lines can be developed to engage and empower the women of the local community.

After returning from Malawi the MBA students created an educational scholarship program for girls from Toleza Farms. In addition, one student chose to focus his Capstone project on Toleza Farm and created a “Feasibility Study for Emerging Organic or Specialty Markets for the Sustained Economic Vitality of the Toleza Agricultural Enterprise, Balaka, Malawi”.

Net Impact

The Marlboro Net Impact Club is part of an international network of MBA students and business professionals who seek to use business to improve the world through responsible management and sustainable practices. Each Marlboro MBA student is given a national Net Impact membership upon matriculation, and the Chapter works to make sure that students take advantage of the resources that Net Impact makes available.

Highlights from the past year include:

- A Net Impact Case Competition: a team of students was a finalist in a national competition to create a sustainability scorecard for xpedx.
- Assisting to promote and produce the 2011 Slow Living Summit, a new sustainable business conference that focused on topics of social and economic sustainability with the goal of exploring ways to build healthy, thriving local economies while encouraging, mentoring and supporting a new generation of activists, entrepreneurs and engaged citizens.
- Hosting several speaker social events during monthly class weekends, giving members the opportunity to network with the leaders in business and sustainability who visit the program.
- Chapter members are forming an investment club, which will provide students the opportunity to learn and participate in local and sustainable investing. The investment club will incorporate sustainability and socially responsible investing principles into its decision-making.
- In July 2011 the Chapter will put on a Farm-to-Table dinner as a fundraiser, supporting local entrepreneurs.

Principle 3: Method

Principle 3: We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

Underlying the design of the Marlboro MBA in Managing for Sustainability is the belief that effective leaders of sustainability efforts have cultivated self-knowledge and self-reflection. These leaders will also have developed emotional intelligence competencies that support them to work well within teams and organizations, and to navigate as a leader across multiple paradigms, world-views and business sectors. To achieve these goals the Marlboro MBA encourages students toward personal transformation so that they can “walk their talk” and “be the change” they want to see in the world. Although opportunities for learning about responsible leadership are found throughout the Marlboro MBA program, two unique and especially effective components of the program are the Personal Leadership Development course and Community Building.

Personal Leadership Development

All students in the Marlboro MBA in Managing for Sustainability participate in a six-trimester Personal Leadership Development (PLD) course. This course explores ideas and approaches for the development of personal leadership, from personal mastery of leadership competencies to the leadership of teams and larger organizations. In the context of reflecting and learning with peers and mentors, the course is organized around the concept of the personal hero's journey (J. Campbell) and the creation of a personal leadership development plan.

Through readings, podcasts, in-class activities, leadership journaling, peer mentoring and mentoring from an individual in a sector, industry, or role toward which a student aspires, the course focuses on such emotional intelligence leadership competencies (D. Goleman) as emotional self-control, transparency, hope, optimism, adaptability, achievement, empathy, service to others, organizational awareness, and matching personal values to organizational strategies.

The PLD course examines the concept of servant leadership in relation to sustainable business practice, whether in large organizations or small, entrepreneurial efforts. It explores leadership ethics, how personal values inform workplace decisions, and challenges students to become “fearless leaders” who are informed by inner wisdom, clear values and personal conviction while learning how to lead change, especially when the future is not clear.

Community Building

At the Marlboro MBA in Managing for Sustainability the entire program is engaged in and supported by a facilitated process of community building. The program has developed principles and practices that help create a welcoming, inclusive community where faculty and students experience and practice the communication and emotional intelligence skills that are essential to support the social change process within organizations and communities.

The program seeks to create a learning environment that “is the change we want to see in the world”. The MBA community is a “living laboratory” where students, faculty and staff are all learning partners with each other, and are encouraged to develop “human capital” -- their individual gifts and talents; their authentic, true or natural self, distinct from roles or expertise.

We believe that learning to connect with each other through our humanness--rather than simply through hierarchical roles--supports the building of safety, trust and creativity. Thus there is also an emphasis on creating “social capital”. This involves learning to recognize the gifts and talents of others; to respect others as human beings beyond roles; to understand that the diversity of a group is its strength; to show up authentically rather than strategically; and facilitate action generated by reciprocity, trust and social norms.

Students learn experientially about community building by participating in Community Circle each day that the program meets in-person. Our expectation is that developing these skills of how to “be” together, positively impacts the quality of what is being done together -- whether that is in team projects for school, or as a member of a work team or organization.

As a community the MBA program has adopted the following norms, which include a commitment to be:

Authentic
Open-minded
Mindful communicators
Learning partners
Trustworthy and trusting
Fearless leaders
[Being] The change we want to see in the world

These aspirations are all in the service of the program's slogan, which is to "Change the Climate of Business".

Principles 5 and 6: Partnerships and Dialogue

Principle 5: We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.

Principle 6: We will facilitate and support dialogue and debate among educators, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

The Marlboro MBA in Managing for Sustainability facilitates cross-sector learning and dialogue about sustainability issues by offering or co-sponsoring events that bring together sustainability leaders, the Marlboro MBA community and interested participants. When possible, recordings of these events are posted on Youtube.com so that others can also benefit from the information shared during these dialogues. Highlights of this work in the past year include:

The Slow Living Summit

Marlboro College Graduate School partnered with the Strolling of the Heifers festival to create a Slow Living Summit. This regional conference with the theme of "Common Interests, Common Solutions, Common Good" focused on topics of social and economic sustainability with the goal of exploring ways to build healthy, thriving local economies while encouraging, mentoring and supporting a new generation of activists, entrepreneurs and engaged citizens. Sessions in Food and Agriculture, Energy and Resources, Economy and Business, Education for Sustainability, and Quality of Life alternated with plenary sessions featuring author and environmental activist Bill McKibben, Gary Hirshberg of Stonyfield Farm, Slow Food USA president Josh Viertel, Sustainable South Bronx founder Majora Carter, Vermont Secretary of Agriculture Chuck Ross, and Gardener's

Supply Founder and CEO Will Raap.

The conference also included presentations by the ten finalists of the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation's Food/Farm Business Plan Competition to potential investors, followed by the presentation of Competition awards.

The Leaders in Sustainability Speaker Series

This monthly speaker series takes place on Friday evenings when the MBA program is in residence. Here are highlights:

Mark McElroy, founder of the Center for Sustainable Organizations - *Sustainability Management: The Trouble It's In and How to Fix It*

Bob Barton, CEO of Catalyst Financial Group - *Promoting Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy*

Deborah Leipziger, author and consultant - *Emerging Trends in Corporate Responsibility*.

Don McCormick, president of Carbon Harvest Energy - *Building Deeply Sustainable Food and Energy Systems Through Integration*

Screening of Peter Byck's documentary, *Carbon Nation*

Dr. Janaki Natarajan, professor of Culture Theories and Practice at SIT Graduate Institute - *Origins of our ideas about sustainability and green business: Reflections on history, culture and national struggles*

MBA in Managing for Sustainability students - *Frontline of Sustainability: The Toleza Farm, Malawi, Africa*

Chuck Bennett, VP of Earth & Community Care at Aveda Corporation - *A 30-year Journey in Green Leadership*

Lisa Lorimer, former CEO of Vermont Bread Company - *Dealing with Tough Stuff*

Dr. Chris Martenson, ChrisMartenson.com - *Convergence: Can the Economy As We Know It Survive Resource Depletion?*

Ron Nahser, Managing Director for CORPORANTES, Inc. - *What is the "Good Life" in a Finite World? U.S. and China in an Age of Ecological Crisis*

John Abrams, Cofounder and CEO of South Mountain Company - *Sharing Ownership of the Future*

Beyond SRI: The Future of Socially Responsible Investing

The Marlboro MBA in Managing for Sustainability and Sea Change Media collaborated in December 2009 to present a panel discussion on the future of socially responsible investing. The panelists included prominent members of the SRI community who both contributed to its founding and are actively shaping its future. The event was recorded and posted on youtube for sharing with a broader audience. In addition, a consensus paper documenting ideas and conclusions from the discussion was issued after the event.

Moderator

- Anders Ferguson, VERIS Wealth Partners

Panelists

- Peter Kinder: Founding President, KLD Research & Analytics
- Cary Krosinsky: North American Vice President, Trucost; Co-Editor, *Sustainable Investing*; Adjunct Professor, Columbia University
- Terry Mollner: Founding Board Member, Calvert Social Investment Funds; Board Member, Ben & Jerry's; Chair, Stakeholders Capital; President, Trusteeship Institute
- Kermit "KC" Burton: Deputy Director, Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility

The Center for Creative Solutions

In 2006, Marlboro College established the Center for Creative Solutions (CCS). The Center was formed to demonstrate how the creative thinking and collaboration of designers, planners, creative arts practitioners, and other professionals could address the challenging problems faced by communities and towns across the United States. This year CCS will explore Windham Foundation's vision of a sustainable campus at their Brattleboro Retreat Farm location. Students in the CCS retreat will look at the following questions:

- Is the Windham Foundation vision or another sustainable solution at the Retreat Farm feasible?
- In what ways can the Retreat Farm food campus create productive synergies with local agriculture and sustainable living movements?
- What would a green and sustainable Retreat Farm look like?

In an 8-day retreat participants will push the limits of design thinking, reframe critical issues, and communicate new ideas.

Business Circle

The Marlboro MBA invites businesses throughout southern Vermont to join our Business Circle. The Business Circle is an informal network of businesses in our region which benefit from the work done by students in classroom-based field projects, and from corporate trainings offered by MBA faculty. Business leaders also share their expertise with students as guest speakers and mentors. In the future the Marlboro MBA plans to co-host quarterly business circle meetings with the Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR).

Plans for the Future

We are in the process of refining our curriculum, building our alumni network and exploring ways to collaborate more with regional businesses. We are also organizing an environmental advisory committee to conduct a baseline sustainability assessment of the Graduate School building, and then develop short and long-term recommendations.