CSR in Education

A globalized economy and the privatization of higher education institutions have transformed the nature of academia. Adopting a business-like approach which emphasizes a strategic CSR framework is key to survival in this increasingly competitive arena. It does not appear as a surprise to see universities and colleges discover the opportunity to move the focus beyond the classroom into their own institutional operations. Universities, as the centers of knowledge generation and sharing, perform a very important role in addressing the world’s socio-economic and environmental issues by promoting sustainable solutions.
Cultivating Values

How business schools can plant the seeds of change

By Layal Hasrouni - Beirut

Earlier this year, an article titled “Occupy Our Business Schools” was published in Bloomberg’s Businessweek addressing growing concerns about the lack of ‘social consciousness’ in capitalism and the role of business schools.

The authors pointed to the inadequacy of business schools in teaching students to think about all aspects of business practices in terms of their social and ethical implications. By relegating corporate social responsibility (CSR) education as an elective or optional track of studies, “Business schools don’t act as if CSR were an integral part of accounting, finance, marketing, and so on,” the authors state.

In this article, Responsible Business looks at what business schools in Lebanon and around the world are doing to address social and environmental issues and whether the schools walk the talk with CSR initiatives of their own.

As the hottest topic on the academic auction block, the integration of CSR in the curriculum of business schools, even among those considered top tier, is relatively recent. While schools may have offered a mandatory business ethics course or two, it was not until the Enron bankruptcy scandal in 2001 that attention was drawn to the values being taught to students. Six years later, the underlying causes of the global financial collapse of 2007 and the ensuing debate about the ethics of Wall Street further propelled the concept of CSR onto the main stage.

Many of the top CSR programs can be found in U.S. business schools. The Aspen Institute’s ‘Beyond the Grey Pinstripes’, ranks business schools based on their social, ethical, and environmental content rather than traditional variables of scoring, providing an annual list of the Universities leading the way in sustainable business education. The top ten schools making the cut all offered student’s hands-on experience in sustainable business practices while allowing them to develop ideas and projects that can have real-world impact.

One school consistently in the top three on the Aspen Institutes list is California’s Stanford University. The school offers the Center for Social Innovation which has been combining research, education, and action to make a real impact on the world’s toughest sustainability issues since 1999. The problems the Center addresses include fixing public schools, ending extreme poverty through capacity building, and addressing conservations issues. The school also boasts the Emmett interdisciplinary program in Environment and Resources as part of their educational offerings. The program allows business students to work on solving environmental and sustainability problems with a focus on bio-design innovation and extreme affordability.

Although NYU’s Stern School of Business was not included in the 2011-2012 ranking, the program offers a social impact track which incorporates CSR to ‘make connections between business and society by learning and doing.’ The school also offers the Social Impact Initiative which provides 8 options for students to work with a program trying to make
social change. At the graduate level, students can participate in the Social Impact Internship Fund (SIIF) which provides a financial stipend of up to $10,000 to support first-year MBA students who wish to complete a summer internship at a non-profit organization, a for-profit social enterprise, or who want to start their own social ventures.

**Progressive Model**

As a leader in CSR research, England’s Cranfield University is home to the Doughty Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility headed by Professor David Grayson. The center aims to, “empower current and future managers with the knowledge, skills, and desire to lead responsible, sustainably managed organizations,” while engaging with the private and public sectors to promote sustainable business practices in their organizations.

Grayson is also a part of a collaborative effort between the World Business School Council of Sustainable Business (WBSCSB), the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative (GRLI), and the U.N. backed Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) which brings together experts in various fields to determine the role of business in creating a sustainable future. As Grayson explains to Responsible Business, “The solutions put forward by the business school academics are radical and far-reaching; and cover research, teaching and practice; and how academia inter-relates with business, Civil Society and governments.”

One portion of the project is dedicated to management education where scholars are invited to share their thoughts on how re-conceptualize business management education; to work towards developing a paradigm which moves away from 20th century methodologies into a progressive model that produces responsible business leaders who are able to think contextually while integrating ethics and knowledge into their decision-making process.

The purpose of 50+20 is to foster debate among business educators and practitioners. “I would like to see the faculty of each of the more than 13,000 business schools pushed to hold a faculty discussion about the report and the proposed changes in management education: to discuss the analysis and proposals for change - and explore collective responses,” states Grayson.
Responding to Trends

CSR education is also beginning to gain momentum in the Middle East as business schools begin to recognize the importance of including the concept in their curricula. The spectrum of integration of CSR in the business school programs in Lebanese universities ranges from including a section about social and environmental sustainability in a required business ethics course to offering a multi-faceted approach which is aimed at making sustainability a natural part of the thought process of business students.

The fervor towards introducing CSR as a formal concept at business schools has resulted in a shifting paradigm about what role businesses and business people play in society. As Dr. Said Elfakhani, dean of the School of Business at the Lebanese American University (LAU), explains, “...there is somehow an accusation between what we teach in business schools and the practice of graduates when they graduate and become officers in their companies.” This accusation has changed the way business schools are conceptualizing their role as educators of tomorrow’s business leaders.

“CSR has become an integral part of business practice. It is no longer a luxury that businesses can choose to take part in, but rather a necessity that should be institutionalized at the core of the strategy of any business,” expressed Dima Jamali, Professor at The American University of Beirut’s (AUB) Olayan School of Business (OSB).

In a similar sentiment, Abdel-Maoula Chaar, Professor at the adjacent Ecoles Superieure des Affaires (ESA), explained his school’s motivation in integrating CSR into their curriculum. “I think it is necessary that businessmen realize that business is not only about making money. And, it’s not only about maximizing profit.”

The decision to introduce CSR into the curriculum is not always based on calculated attempts to keep up with academic trends. Professor at L’Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth, Leonel Mattar, explained a personal motivation in introducing sustainable business practices to the department. “I am very sensitive to the environment, to social responsibility, to human beings, to all our problems,” he explains, “I teach sustainable development in general and for Lebanon. I try to discuss with my students about CSR and about how they can improve their way of doing business…”

Sowing the Land

Currently, the majority of CSR knowledge is based on the experiences of American and European corporations. There is an emerging demand for research on how the theories and implementation of CSR applies to corporations operating within a Middle Eastern context.

AUB’s Dr. Jamali explains the University’s role stating, “AUB is one of the few universities in the Middle East that has engaged in systematic academic regional research pertaining to CSR, which has translated into a number of pioneering publications to the dynamics and changing practice of CSR in our region.” Aside from the current research efforts, the University plans to establish a Center of Excellence in CSR, which will be committed to the education and institutionalization of CSR in Lebanon and the region.

Approaching the research from a pure business school perspective, ESA’s Dr. Chaar is also working to develop a case study center intended to gather information. He believes that, while they can be complimentary to each other, the role of a business school is different than that of University. “A University, eventually, will spread knowledge. A business school is much more geared on immediate efficiency. So, eventually we are spreading the same knowledge but we are trying to communicate the knowledge that our students will be able to use immediately,” he explains.

At Balamand University, Elie Menassa is leading the research on CSR. His most recent publication deals with the social disclosures of Lebanese commercial banks. MBA students are also increasingly producing a significant amount of CSR research at the University. “Two years ago, nobody used to talk about corporate social responsibility. Now, of twenty proposals,
Unwavering Support for Youth Education

I know that, in order to realize my ambitions, I have to pursue university studies. To do so, I need the support of the people who believe in my potential.

With Byblos Bank, let’s acknowledge the power of education. Let’s be prepared for tomorrow.
I will see two to three about CSR and this is quite an improvement,” states Menassa.

A piqued interest in the development of CSR within the network of Jesuit business schools prompted Lionel Mattar at the University of Saint Joseph to devise a survey for his colleagues in 25 universities around the world. “I was trying to understand how they conceive CSR, how they perceive sustainable development, what is the future of CSR in their countries?” Matar explained. The survey will be distributed in around three months and Matar hopes to publish the results in the Journal of Management for Global Sustainability.

Notre Dame University (NDU) is home to the Water Energy and Environment Research Center and is currently developing the Lebanese Center for Societal Research, both of which aim to get a better understanding of the social and environmental issues strongly impacting Lebanon. The research from these centers can then be applied in the classroom to stimulate CSR strategy development.

**Going to Market**

University partnerships with the private sector can expose students to the challenges of developing and implementing CSR initiatives in the real world. This exposure can also enrich the learning experience in the classroom as students gain better insight about the material being taught. While none of the Universities in Lebanon have programs which team students up with corporate CSR departments for training, some schools have started to develop relationships with key players in the private sector.

Dr. Said Elfakhani LAU’s Business School Dean explains, “We haven’t reached that level yet, but I think we are coming to that point…We are the largest business school in the country, we’ll have a massive number of interns going to the market, we need a partner in the corporate sector to accept to take volunteers to come…but it takes some social responsibility action from companies to take approximately 700-800 students every year.”

AUB’s interaction with the private sector is exemplified in the Mikati CSR Speaker Series which has been inviting leading professionals in the region to share their views and insights about CSR since 2009. Invited speakers have included representatives from Aramex, the ILO, and Cisco Systems among others.

**Impacting the Landscape**

Partnerships between business schools and NGOs can stimulate interest in social and environmental issues among students while exposing them to ‘real-world’ problems. This can stimulate the

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### NDU Sustainability Project 2012-2015

Since 2010, Notre Dame University (NDU) has engaged as partner from the Arab region in the Tempus project: Reorient University Curricula to Address Sustainability (RUCAS), along with European partners (University of Crete and the University of Athens in Greece, Dublin City University in Ireland, Stockholm University in Sweden, University of Padova in Italy, and the University of Bordeaux 3 in France. Other partners from the Arab region that are involved in RUCAS include Université La Sagesse - Lebanon, Suez Canal University and Heliopolis University for Sustainable Development - Egypt, and from Jordan the Hashemite University and the University of Jordan).

- The University has already implemented the revised curricula in four areas of study (Social sciences, natural & applied sciences, engineering, and education), to fulfill the following project’s objectives:
  - Support the development of of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the higher education sector in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon.
  - Build capacity amongst university staff to embed ESD in curricula and pedagogy.
  - Review and revise undergraduate curricula to address ESD in line with Bologna and Lisbon processes.
  - Assist the coordination and dissemination of ESD policy, research, curriculum reform and practice relating to ESD in the partner institutions that are expected to function as role models in the region.

The final report is due in October 2013.
classroom experience by helping students put CSR theories and implementation plans into perspective.

A proposal was recently approved at the business school in LAU which requires all business students to fulfill a semester of volunteer work with a local NGO through the ‘Outreach’ program on campus. “We are going to make a concerted effort between the school of business and Outreach to organize, on a yearly basis, campaigns for business students to volunteer with NGOs on specific projects and the school of business can offer between 10,000 and 12,000 hours of volunteer work a year,” stated Dean Elfakhani.

Currently, AUB students are exposed to NGOs through conferences and seminars with plans to further the relationship. “AUB is in close touch with various NGOs and there are definitely plans to collaborate with the nonprofit sector in taking CSR forward. NGOs certainly bring their own flavor or understanding of CSR issues on the ground,” explained Dr. Jamali.

Partnerships with NGOs have not yet developed in other universities in Lebanon though many professors expressed a desire to do so in the near future. “Several plans have been set for discussion on this subject”, stated USEK’s Dean Dr. Nehme Azoury, “We are eager to announce our reciprocal membership agreements with the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME, an initiative to inspire responsible management education, research and though leadership) and Institut International D’Audit Social (IAS, an association which seeks to design and implement new approaches in the ‘social’ field for decision makers).

ESA’s Chaar confessed that the school is currently ‘flirting with two NGOs to be able to work together and address problems that they have…it’s easy for us because we are non-profitable. As long as we are breaking even, we can go in any direction.”

In March 2012, the Coca Cola Foundation introduced the ‘Rip-
responsible Business
July - September 2012

Examples of Happiness’ program in partnership with Injaz Al-Arab and the Jordan Career Education Foundation. The program helps students identify and implement projects which will have a positive impact on their communities. The campaign took place in Universities across the Middle East, with AUB and LAU representing the Lebanese participants.

AUB also sponsors the annual International Biodiversity Day at AUB (IBDAA) where students have a chance to showcase their creativity and talent in a variety of approaches to address how to conserve, practice sustainability, and raise awareness about biodiversity issues. In 2010, IBDAA hosted around 300 students.

Walking the Talk

An added dimension to teaching CSR in universities is having a campus-wide CSR policy. The intellectual, social, and physical resources a university can offer its local surroundings have the potential of engaging students in an area where most of their day is spent.

In 2010, the Université Saint-Ésprit De Kaslik launched the ‘Let’s Go Green for a Sustainable Future! Towards a Carbon Neutral University” with the goal of being the first carbon-neutral, resource efficient, zero emissions, internationally certified educational institution in Lebanon, which they hope to reach by 2025.

AUB has two main centers that fulfill their commitment maintaining a healthy relationship with their environment; the Neighborhood Initiative and the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS). The Neighborhood Initiative is headed by Cynthia Myntti who explained that the conception of the initiative in 2007 was a result of a conversation with then President John Waterbury. “I was a student here in the 70’s before the civil war and I was really struck by how the University had become isolated….So, President Waterbury and I conceived of the idea to engage the University in neighborhood issues.” The Initiative’s activities fall under three main categories: urban environment, community and well-being, and preserving the diversity of Ras Beirut.

The Initiative has undertaken projects addressing the congestion in the area. One of the Initiatives more interesting projects dubbed, The University for Seniors’ is a program for older people based on...
هديّة هالسّنة لكل السّنة

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the concept of pure learning. “It’s not like an adult education program where a paid instructor comes and gives a course and people leave. It’s really about becoming a member of an organization and then everyone has something to contribute,” expressed Myntti.

AUB’s CCECS is focused on developing a culture of service and civic leadership at AUB. With the aim of exposing students, staff, and faculty to civic and social issues in the region, the center has initiated activities such as an annual volunteering fair, a mission to help blind citizens living in the area, and conservation activities among many others.

Similarly, LAU’s ‘Outreach’ program has the stated purpose to ‘bridge the gap between LAU and the communities around it. It encourages and empowers students to reach out and become agents of constructive change in their society.’ Some of the programs most recent activities include the annual NGO fair, the Model United Nations for middle and high school students, and the LAU Youth Leadership programs which targets students aged 12-14 to develop their leadership skills.

Balamand University is working with Sasaki Associates Consulting Firm to plan and design a sustainable campus. Some changes already in place are the solar powered water heaters in the dormitory buildings, a campus-wide water filtering system, and initiatives to cut down on pollution.

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**2011-2012 MBA Rankings**

149 schools submitted information to the Beyond Grey Pinstripes* survey, and after being analyzed and scored, 100 were ranked in the Aspen Global 100. The top ten schools of this ranking are displayed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Rank</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rank in Relevant Coursework</th>
<th>Rank in Student Exposure</th>
<th>Rank in Faculty Research</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Stanford Graduate School of Business</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Schulich School of Business, York University</td>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>IE Business School</td>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mendoza College of Business, University of Notre Dame</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yale School of Management</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Ross School of Business, University of Michigan</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management, Cornell University</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kenan-Flagler Business School, University of North Carolina</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Beyond Grey Pinstripes is a research survey and alternative ranking of business schools that spotlights innovative full-time MBA programs leading the way in the integration of issues concerning social and environmental stewardship into the curriculum. These schools are preparing students for the reality of tomorrow’s markets by equipping them with the social, environmental, ethical and economic perspectives required for business success in a competitive and fast changing world.
At Antonine University, the recent launch of the recycling awareness campaign in partnership with Cimenterie Nationale and T.E.R.R.E. Liban partnered the university with the private and NGO sectors. The recycling program is part of a wider strategy towards environmental protection which includes water and energy conservation measures. In 2011, the University underwent an energy audit in association with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Students in the above named programs have the opportunity to volunteer their time and provide manpower which allows them to develop sustainable management skills while applying their classroom knowledge in the ‘real-world’. But none of the programs are partnered with the business school to take advantage of the development and implementation knowledge students may provide.

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**Reaping What You Sow**

Enhancing the curricula of business schools will not only result in the development of more conscious and aware business leaders, it will also upgrade the status of the university. As competition for enrollment gets more heated, universities must seek the edge that distinguishes them from their competition. Offering CSR as an integral part of a business school education, one that allows students to make an impact while still in school can set a school apart while making a much needed difference within the society it operates.

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**Sustainability Ratings in Education**

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) is helping to create a brighter future of opportunity for all by advancing sustainability in higher education. By creating a diverse community engaged in sharing ideas and promising practices, AASHE provides administrators, faculty, staff and students, as well as the business that serve them, with: thought leadership and essential knowledge resources; outstanding opportunities for professional development; and a unique framework for demonstrating the value and competitive edge created by sustainability initiatives.

AASHE defines sustainability in an inclusive way, encompassing human and ecological health, social justice, secure livelihoods, and a better world for all generations.

**Their activities are designed to:**

- Make sustainable practices the norm within higher education
- Facilitate institutional efforts to integrate sustainability into teaching, research, operations, and public engagement
- Disseminate knowledge and best practices and promote resource sharing
- Support all sectors of campus in achieving sustainability goals
- Increase collaboration among individuals, institutions, and external partners to speed the adoption of sustainability practices
- Influence education policy so that sustainability is a focus at local, state and national levels

The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™ (STARS) is a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance. STARS® was developed by AASHE.

**STARS is designed to:**

- Provide a framework for understanding sustainability in all sectors of higher education.
- Enable meaningful comparisons over time and across institutions using a common set of measurements developed with broad participation from the campus sustainability community.
- Create incentives for continual improvement toward sustainability.
- Facilitate information sharing about higher education sustainability practices and performance.
- Build a stronger, more diverse campus sustainability community.
The role of CSR as a subject in MBA programs is rapidly evolving and most business schools today are providing CSR courses and training to ambitious students. Many studies have shown that MBA graduates become socially motivated when they embark into the corporate world and believe that working for a responsible company that adheres to its social programs and proves strength in its CSR-activities is just as important as the salary this graduate seeks.

Some contend that if business schools ingrained the ideals of CSR values in their programs, then the world would not have grown frustrated with the perceived greed and lack of consideration of CSR in business. MBA programs are increasingly beginning to look into ways to create sustainable enterprises based on a business model that covers social, cultural and environmental responsibility, in addition to profitability.

The economic crisis has in fact influenced the trend for business schools to include teaching on corporate and social responsibility, community development, social entrepreneurship and socially responsible investment.

Students studying business are likely to come across the concepts of CSR in their programs especially given the impact of the global recession. It has now become evident that the role of CSR on post-graduate degrees is rapidly evolving as a result of the economic difficulties over the last five years.

By Deena Musharbash - Dubai

The University of Dubai (UD), which is helping to cultivate the next generation of ethical business leaders through its CSR practices and teaching programmes.

University of Dubai

Founded in 1997, UD offers a range of business and information technology related undergraduate and graduate courses, as well as internships and professional education courses. Already, hundreds of students have graduated from its programs. Currently, nearly 60% of students are male and 40% are female, while the percentage of UAE nationals enrolled has increased from 24% in 2001 to 37%, which is the highest rate amongst private institutions of higher education in the Emirates.

The University was established by Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry back in 1997 to help encourage entrepreneurship and raise job skills among the emirate’s youth, which is aligned with its objectives of supporting the development of business and creating a favourable business environment. The non-profit business organisation continues to offer its support to this day by providing UD with a campus area in its head office, transport buses for staff and students, and administrative assistance – amounting to around AED 4 million ($1.1 million) per year. Beyond this, Dubai Chamber has provided scholarships to some 100 UD students as part of their Sheikh Mak-
tourn Scholarship Program and regularly sends CSR practitioners to be guest speakers in UD courses. Currently Dubai Chamber is also building a new campus for the University in Dubai’s Academic City, which will meet international green building standards and serve as an example for all universities in the region.

Preparing for Employment

Eng. Hamad Buamim, Director General, Dubai Chamber, states that the Chamber recommends that all universities and educational establishments incorporate sustainability into their curriculums in order to better prepare students for employment today.

“Sustainability and corporate social responsibility are increasingly important issues for companies to address and employees need to be able to demonstrate awareness in order to get the job they want in the organisation they want. This applies for working professionals at all levels – from engineers working on green buildings, to marketing executives promoting their company’s responsible practices, or finance directors accounting for the environmental and social impacts of their businesses,” H.E. Buamim says.

“CSR is no longer a niche subject that is the responsibility of just one department. Sustainability is a major concern across an entire organisation and it is important that our students today learn this in order to meet the challenge of creating truly sustainable and responsible businesses,” he said.

Meeting best international standards is central to UD’s objectives and it is one of the few business schools around the world, alongside Harvard Business School University of California in Los Angeles and Stanford University, to be accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) for its College of Business Administration.

In April 2008 the University became one of the few educational organisations in the world, and the first in the Middle East, to sign up to the UN Principals for Responsible Management. As part of this, UD has integrated CSR into all core courses in the College of Business Administration and the College of Information Technology. All business students are required to take a course called ‘Business & Society’, which underlines the value of sound ethics in an attempt to create a positive impact on any part of the community that may be affected by a company’s actions.

Environmental Credentials

Meanwhile, UD is making real progress in terms of environmental protection and recently won second place in Dubai Electric & Water Authority’s ‘Conservation Award – For a Better Tomorrow’. The University was commended for its efforts to reduce energy and water consumption by 23% and 9% during a three-month period. At the same time UD’s Environmental Club was recognised for its efforts to raise awareness by organising clean-up days and encouraging students and faculty to walk, bike, car pool or take public transport to class during Earth Day. Furthermore, the university’s MBA program is housed in one of the greenest buildings in our region, the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s head office which became the 1st LEED Existing Building in the Arab world back in 2009.
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, reporting on progress to all our stakeholders and exchanging effective practices with other academic institutions:

**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.