Identifying Sustainability Courses and Programs at Kankakee Community College

Developed by: Campus Sustainability Advisory Committee

**Sustainability:** “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland Commission Report, United Nations, 1987). Sustainability encompasses the intertwined ideals of viable economies, equity and justice, and ecological integrity.

**The imperative of sustainability** is driven by “Our vision is to see higher education take a leadership role in preparing students and employees to achieve a just and sustainable society. The campus itself would serve as a model of sustainability, with curriculum and operations reflecting an integrative approach to learning and practice….All sectors [will] work collaboratively to advance sustainability, and the content and context of learning would reflect a focus on systemic, interdisciplinary thinking with respect to human health, ethics, future generations, and planetary stewardship,” (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education).

“The right standard for both assessment and accountability at the college level is students’ demonstrated ability to apply their learning to complex, unscripted problems in the context of their advanced studies,” (College for the new Global Century, National leadership Council for Liberal Education and America’s Promise—LEAP—2007).

“The sustainability agenda offers an especially important and challenging set of Big Questions [that provide the resources, the challenges, and the opportunities for application that can undergird a meaningful education]. Students care about these questions. They want to become active contributors to solving environmental problems. They want to study in places that share their concern and take sustainability seriously. They themselves want to be taken seriously as well. They are embracing sustainability for all of these reasons. – Judith Ramaley, president of Winona State University, *Sustainability: A vehicle for learning how to respond to the challenges of the 21st century, 2011, quoted in Sustainability Literacy: A Quality Enhancement Plan proposal, 2011, Texas Women’s University.*

**Student Learning Objectives in Sustainability: The Big Questions**

- **Interconnectedness and Interdependence**
  - Students develop knowledge of the interconnections and interdependency of ecological, social, and economic systems.
  - Students demonstrate understanding of how the health of these systems determines the sustainability of natural and human communities at local, regional, national, and global levels.
  - Students demonstrate the ability to analyze real-world challenges to environmental systems from a holistic perspective and formulate practical sustainable solutions.
● The Natural and Built Environment
  o Students engage in inquiry and systems thinking and use information gained through learning experiences in, about, and for the environment to understand the structure, components, and processes of natural and human-built environments.

● Sustainability and Civic Responsibility
  o Students develop and apply the knowledge, perspective, vision, skills, and habits of mind necessary to make personal and collective decisions and take actions that promote sustainability.
  o Students evolve and implement an ethical perspective of an interconnected world in which we each are part.
  o Students demonstrate an understanding of how decision-making encompassing sustainability creates solutions for current and emerging social-environmental issues.

● Sustainability and Future Employment
  o Students develop technical skills that are necessary to pursue a career in sustainability.
  o Students are able to identify where their chosen field of study and sustainability are connected.

Sustainability-Focused vs. Sustainability-Related Courses and Programs
If a course meets at least ONE of the Student Learning Objectives above it can be identified as a Sustainability-Related course. If a course meets FIVE or more of the learning objectives, it can be identified as a Sustainability-Focused course.

Sustainability-Focused courses and programs: Concentrate on the concept of sustainability, including its social, economic, and environmental dimensions, or examine an issue or topic using sustainability as a lens.
Sustainability-Related courses and programs: Incorporate sustainability as a distinct course component or module, or concentrate on a single sustainability principle or issue.

A list of Sustainability courses and programs offered at Kankakee Community College, identified by faculty and deans using these guidelines can be found on the Sustainability website (www.kcc.edu/sustainability).

1 Adapted from Washington State K-12 Integrated Environmental and Sustainability Education Learning Standards