

**Activating Sustainability:
Is Corporate Greening for Real and Can it Stop Global Warming?
October 28, 2008**

Audience Comments

- This event was excellent. I really enjoyed the mix of speakers. Please hold the event next year. The international element was valuable.
- The market and demand is already changing - Toyota Prius being a good example. This change has been brought on without government intervention and it's an increasing trend. Like the computer industry that rose in the 70's, 80's and 90's, green energy will come from David, not Goliath. – *Dan Sullivan BC MBA '09*
- Investing in secondary education will promote students' interests in environmental protection by doing the following:
 - Global awareness: How Can Business Influence Energy Transformation in China, India, Russia, etc.?
 - Business Leadership: Where is Voice of Business Leaders in this Space?
- We had a discussion on sustainability and corporate greening, yet the food and beverages that were served used plastics and products that did not outwardly appear as recycled goods. Additionally, there was only a trash bin and no option to recycle the plastic cups and plates. If we are talking about sustainability we need to be “doing” it as well. – *Nicole Gooft*
- To realize the sense of urgency of the global warming crisis. Get government and businesses involved with infrastructure while we reduce our own carbon footprint.
- Making the environmental movement profitable. Only then will there be universal acceptance. I believe this is the responsibility of the environmentalists.
- Educating the public that there actually is a problem and action is imperative. I feel this is an ideal role for the institution of BC and other research organizations, and I applaud the professor, Charlie Derber, for tackling this issue.
- I would love to see a much greater focus on reducing consumption rather than changing consumption. Only this will solve the climate issues. I also believe that it is extremely important not to forget developing nations in our quest for climate change. They pose the greatest opportunity for addressing climate change proactively, but can only do so with the support of the international community to industrialize in an environmentally friendly way.
- There needs to be governmental intervention for funding green economy initiatives, such that the means, capital and training for green industries are funded and supported in order to create new jobs and support sustainability.
- Initiating a grass roots demand called “Green Economy Solution” and run it for a 100 days as the solution to both the financial and climate crises.
- Tax carbon.

- Get businesses and the public to understand that the climate crisis is a greater risk than the financial one, and that solutions can be targeted to solve both.
- Change the focus to stable and sustainable growth, rather than unlimited growth, and use genuine progress indicators.
- The idea of the American Dream needs to change. It doesn't have to be reduced, but it has to evolve into something that isn't just about consumption. The American Dream needs to incorporate sustainability. We need to think not only about our own well-being, but the well-being of the future generations of humanity. Part of the solution to the climate problem has to come at this individual level. – *Chris Soeller BC '11*
- In order to achieve corporate sustainability and combat the issue of global climate change, there must be a change in the culture of the workers, and this change will likely only come from a need to comply with government regulations designed to address these issues and facilitate changes in corporate sustainability.
- I think that it's important to pursue cultural change that includes education, and changes and the consequences in our own lifestyles. Education is key. Also, preventing oil companies from green washing and clouding the minds of the American people. – *Joseph P. DeCarte, Jr. BC '09*
- Change comes from both top down and bottom up. Change has its foundation in values. The value of sustainability is that of a caretaker. Everyone needs to adopt the mindset of taking care of the earth rather than exploiting it. The American dream needs modification for the sake of the earth. The Chinese word for crisis is made up of two characters. The first is danger, the second is opportunity. Our local government has not voiced its role in sustainability. Also, it would have been nice to have had a female perspective on the sustainability topic. There are two great quotes I want to share:
 - 1) "A problem is never solved by the same level of thinking that caused it." *Albert Einstein*
 - 2) "When the people lead, the leaders will follow." *Unknown*
- Transparency of corporations + Government incentives for corporations + invest in green collar jobs = when? It needs to happen now.
- We need to use our purchasing power to support companies that are practicing sustainability. We also to evaluate our lifestyle so that each of us becomes more efficient.
- Next steps: Prohibit the production/manufacturing of paper goods that contain less than "x" percent of recycled material. "X" will grow over time; perhaps we can start it at 15%?
- There should be more attention on CSR and educate people through the media. People should start demanding more action from the government and corporate world, and become drivers of change toward sustainability. Since this change will impose change in their lifestyle they should be well informed and educated about it.

- The Boston College President should join the Presidential Climate Commitment (a higher education movement toward carbon neutrality on college campuses).
- Put a price on carbon. Decouple electricity production from sales and distribute. Make economic investments in renewable resources.
- What can be done?
 - Impose a federal vehicle gas tax keeping floor price of \$3/gallon. The proceeds would go to clean energy training and infrastructure investment.
 - Privatize closed access federal highways.
 - Public investment in commercial and passenger rail transit with a focus on high population areas.
 - Public investment in Wi-Fi technology in cities.
 - Public investment in math/science – focus on charter schools.

Questions

- The world is faced with a multitude of global issues today. Global poverty, aids, diseases such as a new wave of drug resistant TB (tuberculosis), etc. How do issues such as these take the stage with environmental sustainability?
- Where does the buck stop ultimately? Where does government, corporate and educational institutions responsibility lie in not only encouraging a global shift, but also collaborating across borders and continents?
- America has an interesting government landscape. How is the Federal government working to encourage change at state levels? For example, other states are leading the charge in setting an example, such as California. Why are there not more states adopting the same positive change? – *Nicole Goott*
- Can corporations invest in labor training programs at the high school level? Particularly in impoverished areas?
- How can we encourage the political and social will to support a tax increase on oil and gas, and a carbon tax on energy and manufacturing costs?
- Are large corporations more likely to intentionally and methodically divide themselves into regionally-focused smaller businesses as energy and resources costs soar or to simply cease, desist and dissolve? If the former, which ones are planning on it already?
- How can this current economic environment be utilized to rethink the way financial institution's impact on the environment?
- How do you reconcile the needs of politicians, such as raising money from corporations, and the needs of corporations (i.e. making profits to satisfy shareholders) in an attempt to take meaningful action to bring about sustained change in the public? In other words, how do you break the control of special interests?