

College of Charleston QEP Focus Group Report

Summary and Methods: The Office for Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning conducted a series of 5 student focus groups to collect data on student perceptions of the QEP, *Sustainability Literacy as a Bridge to Addressing 21st Century Problems*, including knowledge of sustainability initiatives and opportunities available for students and their opinions on how sustainability could be integrated into the student curricular and co-curricular experience. Five focus group sessions were held between 11/13/15 and 11/19/15. Three focus groups were available to the general student population to participate in, and two focus groups were held with specific groups of students including current Office of Sustainability interns and members of the Student Government Association and the Graduate Student Association. The dates and times for each focus group are:

- 11/13/15 at 1:00 pm (Office of Sustainability Interns)
- 11/17/15 at 2:00 pm (General Session)
- 11/18/15 at 1:00 pm (General Session)
- 11/18/15 at 2:00 pm (Student Government Association & Graduate Student Association)
- 11/19/15 at 3:00 pm (General Session)

Marketing and information about the focus groups were distributed through emails including an email from the President's Office and the Student Activities weekly email; each of these was sent to every student currently enrolled at the College. Additional marketing included information slides on TVs in campus buildings such as Addlestone Library, Maybank Hall, the Tate Center, and the Stern Student Center. Ashlyn Hochschild, the Internship and Student Coordinator for the Office of Sustainability, and representatives from the student organization Alliance for Planet Earth were also contacted about the focus groups in order to reach students familiar with the topic of sustainability.

Total Number of Participants for all Focus Groups: 29

Groups (Group Population in Parenthesis): 3 General Sessions (4), (2), & (9) respectively, 1 Student Leadership: GSA & SGA (7), 1 Office of Sustainability Interns (6)

Majors & Programs Represented: Biology, Business Administration, Astro Physics, Communication, Political Science, Elementary Education, English, International Studies, Physics, Urban Studies, Psychology, Public Health, Studio Art, MA Communication, MBA, MPA, MES

Key Takeaways

1. Though connections to other topics were made, many students largely view sustainability in terms of resource use, "being green," or in terms of physical processes such as recycling or composting.
2. Students typically struggled to connect sustainability principles to coursework.

3. QEP topic may have potential to generate campus pride amongst students.
4. Awareness of sustainability and sustainability opportunities on campus was generally higher in students who were Office of Sustainability interns or have previously taken a sustainability course.

Question Specific Notes/Takeaways

When prompted with additional categories, most participants tended to agree that a diverse range of topics were related to sustainability despite not listing these topics in the original prompt. Though some participants didn't see how certain topics connected to sustainability.

What do you know about sustainability initiatives and opportunities at the College?

Participants were often aware of some sustainability related initiatives or opportunities on campus. Outside of Office of Sustainability related projects and events, these were often related to physical processes such as recycling or composting on campus. Items mentioned included:

- Events
- Composting in the dining halls
- Facilities such as water bottle refill stations and recycling bins
- Eclectic Student Project Committee grants
- Bike Share Program

How can we best reach students?

- While some participants maintained that emails or listservs were not the best option of reaching students due to the fact that they received so many, emails were listed by many participants as an effective form of student outreach.
 - Our efforts to secure focus group participants reflects this as “via email” was the most frequent response participants gave for hearing about the focus group.
- Social media, peer-to-peer interactions such as classroom visits and word-of-mouth were other frequently mentioned avenues to reach the highest number of students.
- Flyers were seen as ineffective by participants due to the likelihood that they get posted over quickly by other event flyers.
- Some non-traditional options that were mentioned by participants include flyers in napkin holders in the dining halls as well as flyers in bathroom stalls.

How easily do you see sustainability and sustainability principles fitting into your major?

Some participants were able to connect sustainability into their majors or graduate programs through curricular components such as a concentration or focus in sustainability. Other suggestions were non-curricular such as reducing the amount of paper used in classes. Examples include:

- Sustainability can relate to every major was a common response
- Sustainability MBA concentration or focus

- Sustainability Urban Studies concentration
- Studio Art: can do art to communicate sustainability
- Students involved in MES program, environmental studies minor, and marine biology saw sustainability as a natural fit into their programs

What skills are important to you as you enter the workforce? Common skills named by participants that are important to them as they enter the workforce included:

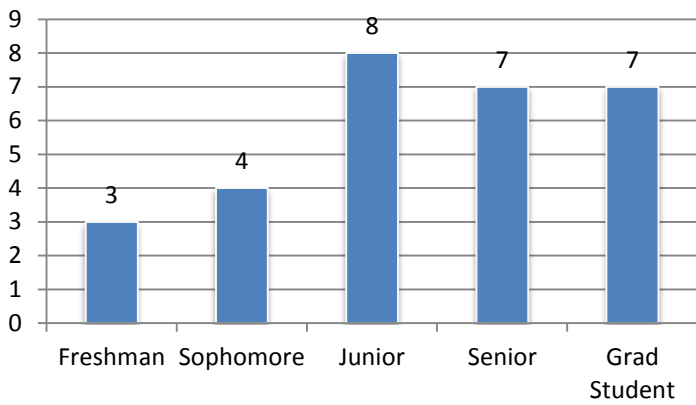
- Critical thinking
- Communication and public speaking
- Leadership
- Technical skills like Microsoft Excel
- Collaboration
- Networking.

How would you incorporate these skills into your major or the general curriculum?

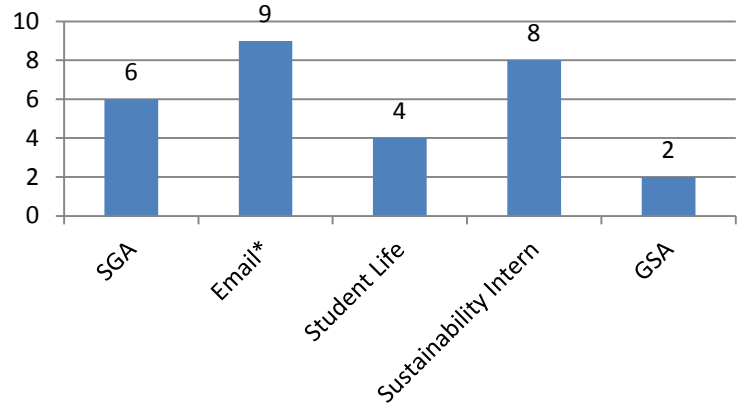
Participants frequently mentioned professional opportunities and workshops were available at the College through non-academic offices but attendance was low due to other time commitments and lack of interest.

How do you feel that the College is doing in building those skills? Participant responses were mixed. Opinions varied by major, program, and the type of extra-curricular participation of the participant.

Breakdown of Focus Group Participants by Year



How Participants Heard About Focus Group



*Email category includes email from the President's Office and Student Activities email

Word Cloud of Participant Responses to "What comes to mind when you think of sustainability?"



Focus Group Session Notes

QEP Student Focus Group: Sustainability Interns

Date: 11/13/15

Time: 1:00 pm

Moderator: Aaron Holly

Note taker(s): Josh Bloodworth, Cara Dombroski

Students Present: 6

Students were given a survey to begin. Questionnaire asked 4 questions. Based on the responses to the 4th question (List 2-3 things that come to mind when you think of sustainability), students were asked to discuss those answers.

1. Mindfulness – mindful of others; being an active listener (a lot of people don't realize that these are connected to sustainability); more mindful of what we do; we need to be more aware of how one action affects the next
2. Systems thinking – how systems work with and against each other
3. Conservation – Explained how conservation is somewhat interchangeable with sustainability; preserve what we have
4. Mindfulness - determine why people are doing what they are doing; workshops on mindfulness;
5. Holistic thinking – everything works together; parts of a whole
6. Long-term thinking – the need to plan further out; continue over a longer period (institutions need to think about this)
7. Equality/Social Justice – important to value all members; need to create value for all members of society
8. Mindful – being aware; think actions through; where things go
9. Cyclical – closing the loop; reuse
10. Equality/Fairness/Justice – this does not always come to mind with sustainability; social sustainability is a huge part; stray away from exploitation
11. Mindfulness –
12. Conservation – core concept; conserving what we have; how it impacts environment/people; conserve for the future
13. Community – not individualistic; impacts community
14. Community -
15. Systems -
16. Social Justice -
17. Equality – not individualistic

Q2: Based on the student's experiences in the Sustainability Office, they were asked what they knew about sustainability initiatives and opportunities at the College.

- Diverse office (Sustainability office)

- Planet Earth
- CofC Farm and Garden
- Bike Share Program
- Sustainability Greek Initiative (a lot of involvement)
 - Getting the Greek Chairs to do and think more along the lines of sustainability
 - Group Chair program
 - They can take information back to their Chapters
 - Maybe provide more workshops to these groups
- Coastal Conservation League
 - Highly involved
- Zero Waste Workshops
- Did not know about Sustainability Office (got connected with study abroad participants)
 - Once I became involved, was surprised had not heard about it before
- Social Media Marketing Coordinator
- Garden Initiative Coordinator
 - 13 apprentices connect with opportunities on campus, to provide workshops, etc.
 - Wanted to add a Social justice/community side
- Transportation initiative: bike share program
- Hard to get the word out about events, programs, etc.
- 50 different majors as interns (do not have to be environmental studies major)
- Espec E-collective (sustainable change on campus)
 - Help students apply and review project proposal
- Outreach
- Interdisciplinary

Q2.5: Do you have ideas to reach students?

- Social media (Facebook)
- Emails (student activities emails)
- Physical space (signs)
- Logos above water fill stations
- Friend groups (Circle-K); Zero Waste by 2025
- Talking
- Social media
- Greek Life (chair program); if you have a fellow member in fraternity or sorority life you will be more likely to join
- Alliance for Planet Earth (knew people in group)
- Word of mouth
- Human connection (class visits)
- Peer involvement
- See you as a person, told people about what we were doing

Q2.55: What works better for advertisements, coming from students or administrators?

- Yes students are better, connection is higher
- Big advantage for students to advertise (student run office)
- Both, rule maker (fact of life)

Q4: What skills are important as you move into the workforce?

- Cooperation with others (work with people from diverse backgrounds)
- Leadership roles (not stereo-typical) - leading your community; influence
- Know thyself (OOS helped)
 - Know your strengths and weaknesses
- Leadership is huge
- Appreciation of diversity – interdisciplinary nature of Sustainability
- Communication skills – public speaking
- Knowing thyself, feeling confident
- OOS challenges you – how to be innovative and creative
- Real life skills – after college workshop; capstone
- Professionalism – can be professional and yourself (can go together)
- Communication – network with people; actually talk to them

Q7: What types of programs or courses would you like to see brought to the college to help with these (sustainability) skills?

- Having it as an FYE – like social justice
- Course with all of the main topics of sustainability – introduction
- Fieldtrips into community – trip to the landfill
- More than eco-stuff
- Providing resources
- Show that it is applicable to majors
- Business about collecting compost
- Make sustainable changes in your business
- Companies need to be more ethical
- FYE Speaker on Sustainability
- Zero waste – landfill
- Better educate students coming in
- Explain the process of becoming sustainable
- More workshops (maybe mandatory)
- Opening workshops to other groups – clubs and organizations, athletic teams
- Branch out to other offices
- Intern to work with each department (representative to each class)
- Want to see the college as a whole become more close-knit

Q9: Theme from one to One. What do you associate with that phrase?

- From an individual mindset to thinking for the community
- Making the college a community (from ourselves to one with the college)
- Communication
- Change mindset
- Giving to a larger purpose
- Break down barriers between the systems
- Everyone working together for one goal
- Hope – hard to get things done on your own, it is easier with more people

Q10: How easily could you see these principles being integrated into majors?

- Public Health and Communications – easy fit
 - Health food, consumption issue, where is your food coming from
 - BS in Public Health reaches out to the office for interns
- Marine Biology – conservation
 - People should care, job to study environment, etc.
- International Studies/Political Science
 - Policy side, institutional changes and mindset
 - International connections, globalization
 - How the world works and how people work together
- Physics
 - Technology side – face problems related to sustainability
 - Atmosphere research, how we impact the environment
- Studio Art
 - Can do art to communicate sustainability
 - Difficult to be sustainable as an artist, because materials are not always eco-friendly
 - Use natural materials to make art
- Marine Biology
- Business advocate (need to hire sustainability officers)

Last Comments:

- Give student space to make things better
- Balance between fear and inspiration
- Give students the power to make improvements

QEP Student Focus Group: General Session

Date: 11/17/15

Time: 2:00 pm

Moderator: Aaron Holly

Note taker(s): Josh Bloodworth, Cara Dombroski

Students Present: (4)

Q1: Students were given a survey to begin. Questionnaire asked 4 questions. Based on the responses to the 4th question (List 2-3 things that come to mind when you think of sustainability), students were asked to discuss those answers.

18. Resource use
19. Long-term thinking
20. Efficiency
21. Lasting
22. Sociological/economic
23. Maintaining lifestyles – long-term
24. Recycling
25. Waste reduction
26. Saving energy
27. Energy and land efficiency – college related, college programs

Q1A: What experiences relate these topics to sustainability for you?

- Undergrad university situated in open forest space (Maine University of New England)
 - If the college was expanding, had to expand into existing buildings
- Sustainability Class (eye opening) – understanding that being green may not be enough
 - Explains complex systems (class called sustainability – poli. Sci.)
- Coming from UNC Asheville – Charleston was a shock, because of lack of sustainable measures. They are not green. It was second nature in NC. Realized not everybody lives that way
- Trial run with hand dryers through sustainability office (they worked to measure options). Confusing because they still have both options: paper towel vs. dryer

Q1B: What comes to mind when you think of the following, as it relates to sustainability?

- Alternative transportation – Yes
- Social Justice – Yes (not sure how it is related)
 - Globally – how second world countries are pushing to be first world countries and the ideal image that success goes hand-in-hand with materialism
 - India – transportation plan they are working on
 - Things are unsustainable because we are using “slaves” around the world to get us inexpensive products; This is not sustainable

- People do not know how much a bar of soap really costs.
 - Supply Chain – what does the items actually cost? Trading cost in production to save cost on sales
 - Environmental costs
 - Our consumerism is not sustainable – when do we get out of the hole we are in?
 - It is hard to just start buying the more expensive items
 - Maybe trading or barter system would work
 - We are caught in a system that was handed to us; it's hard to get out
 - It is not financial sustainable for an individual
- Community Engagement – Yes, absolutely
 - Social capital is underestimated
 - Individualism is currently valued, but we need to switch to a more connected mentality (dependability)
 - Asheville (city on the same wave length)
 - Helps to have a community that is engaged
 - Japanese culture promotes cleanliness
- Financial Sustainability – retaining enrollment rates

Q2: Based on the student's experiences in the Sustainability Office, what do you know about sustainability initiatives and opportunities at the College?

- Hand dryers in bathrooms
- Sustainability is still new, but it is growing
- Only one sustainability class, new one to be added
- Sustainability office
- Fisher has gotten the President to back the sustainability movement
- Possible creation of an interdisciplinary hub
 - To create a supportive community for all programs to promote sustainability
- Challenge: intertwined with the City of Charleston, the city is not necessarily green or reducing waste
 - We need to combine forces with the city
- Sustainability office – giveaways
- Recycling here is uniform – this promotes usability because people are familiar with the system
- We can still be better – (ex. Compost) City Bistro, outside of Stern Student Center
 - Compost piles are tricky because they are easily compromised; need education to do it properly; (maybe in the sustainability office)
- Idea: an IDK bucket for items near current recyclables
- CofC has an agreement with CARTA
- Parking passes are expensive, which induces more people to bike/bus to campus.
- Not safe biking to campus; Not a bike friendly campus/city
 - Not enough bike storage
 - No bike pump station/fix-it station on campus
 - Difficult to build stuff on campus because City of Charleston is historic

- City is working on bike lanes
- Lack of safety (people don't know the rules)
- Ideas to increase sustainability:
 - Stickers to inform people of green measures
 - Days for the college to recycle hard to recycle materials (CofC has a battery station)
 - Hybrid busses
 - Bike fix-it stations
 - Increase awareness
- Need transparency and more education on sustainability

Q4: How easily could you see these principles being integrated into majors?

- Fits into every program – should be in every program
- Even MES does not have a sustainability class
- Lack of education around sustainability – it's part of every part of life (personal, management, financial, community, country, world)
- Chemistry labs have different receptacles, how do we get rid of certain chemicals
 - Some labs do not specify what can be disposed of

Q4A: Any ideas of how the college can incorporate sustainability into the campus?

- Dorms
- Sororities recycle but fraternities do not
- Need to get the leaders to be involved, so they will spread the ideas (make it a cultural norm)
- Event to raise awareness
 - Make it a competition
- We need to empower students; this gives them an identity
- Good to have a research division
- Light bulb program, offer incentive to change to LED light bulbs
- Bike accidents are terrible, the college needs to become more biker friendly

Q5: What skills are important to you as you enter the workforce?

- Don't know; have not entered the workforce
- Interactions
- Recognize cost-benefit analysis; efficient use of resources
- Focus on quality of details, and understand how it will impact on a large scale
- Prioritizing

Q6: Ways to incorporate these skills into your major or the general curriculum?

- Lab manuals – directions for how to dispose of chemicals

- Class at the college for staff
- Career center is always sending emails about how to improve skills
- Incentive program (swipe into events)
- Skill building class (1 credit class)

Q6A: How can the college increase the likelihood of student participation?

- Need to offer programs at multiple times of the day
- Make workshops/programs available as webinars
- Not a priority for many students
 - Class or workshop
- Offer course credit
- Find ways to get grant money
 - Students are not going to pay for this
- Extra cord for graduation if you took a certain amount of classes, increase buy-in
- Volunteer hours

Final comment:

- Long-term vision is needed; College needs to convert now to save money later.
- Students are not going to pay extra

QEP Student Focus Group: General Session

Date: 11/18/15

Time: 1:00 pm

Moderator: Josh Bloodworth

Note taker(s): Aaron Holly, Cara Dombroski

Students Present: (2)

Q1: Students were given a survey to begin. Questionnaire asked 4 questions. Based on the responses to the 4th question (List 2-3 things that come to mind when you think of sustainability), students were asked to discuss those answers.

- Renewable systems – creating systems that can renew themselves
- Not producing waste
- Community connections – people working together is a big part of sustainability
- Green cities
- Bike share programs and sustainable transportation such as the College Bike Share Program
- Sustainable agriculture

Q1A: Do you associate the following with sustainability and if so, why?

- Energy
 - Definitely, to be more sustainable is to be more efficient; energy is a huge component of that
 - Yes, but most of our energy isn't sustainable right now; need to re-evaluate how to make sustainable energy
- Alternative transit
 - Yes, it's important and it involves more than just bikes; involves reevaluating our current public transportation system to include strategies that encourages people to use transit and improve access to get cars off of the road
- Social Justice
 - Yes, this definitely relates –similar to what was mentioned earlier with community connections
 - Environmental Issues really affect minority groups so this is really important

Q2: Based on your responses, what do you know about sustainability initiatives and opportunities at the College?

- Need to promote current initiatives to generate more awareness in general
 - Bike Share
 - Zero Waste Initiative – zero waste by 2025 (goal of the college)

- 71% Oceanic Conservation and awareness initiative
- Events
 - Social justice coffee hour – creating awareness about social justice and social injustice
- Interns working with groups of students outside of the Office
- Water bottle refill stations
- ESPC Grants – students can apply for grants to implement sustainability initiatives on campus
- APE (alliance for planet earth)
- Sustainability partnership with Aramark
- Biology club – beach sweeps and plastic bag collection
- Center for Civic Engagements
- Keep Charleston Beautiful – beach sweeps and reoccurring service events
- OOS and CCE collaborations since they're related
- Alternative Break trip reaches out to environmental studies minor

Q2.1: Talk about outreach initiatives, how do you reach out to students? What kind of feedback do you get and what do you find useful?

- Events – greenbag lunch series that focuses on different topics related to sustainability
 - One about sustainable seafood; approximately 40 people attended
 - Event open to the public but mainly attended by students
- Presenting to a public health class about sustainability issues
- Emails
- Social media
- Flyers
- Email listserves – struggling with events on weekends
- Zero waste events and workers and volunteers from Sustainability Office
 - Charleston Affair is now zero waste

Q4: How easily do you see sustainability and sustainability principles fitting into your major?

- Sustainable planning and sustainable cities
 - Infrastructure – new technologies (pervious payments/pervious surfaces to help storm water management)
 - Sustainability concentration in Urban Studies
- Spanish Minor
 - Interest in sustainable agriculture practices in Latin America
- Sustainability can be tied into every major
- Business major
 - Consumer behavior plays a big part in what we study and knowing what the consumer wants plays into how we market; if more people knew about sustainability it would change buying habits of consumers
 - Educating consumers about sustainability would affect business and people studying business

- Awareness and marketing are key

Why do you think sustainability is applicable to all majors?

- We all live on the earth and understanding that cause and effect relationship is key
 - Everything that happens on the earth impacts you and vice versa
- We live in a global world
 - Our actions affect the world as well as us

Q5: What skills are important to you as you enter the workforce?

- Communication skills – communicating in person – folds into working with groups and community partners/collaborating
- Leadership and opportunities for leadership
- World awareness and knowledge (national and international issues)
- Keeping up with technology
- Creativity
 - Very employable skill – innovating is a step beyond implementing ideas

Q7: How do you feel the College is doing in building those skills?

- Average – not horrible, but not exceptional
 - When touring another school one had a program that made students take a wide variety of courses that related science and creativity – for example anatomy students taking figure drawing class – another way to study the human body that encouraged creativity
- Depends on the major
- Some majors are more interdisciplinary than others
- Gen. Eds. help somewhat
- It's hard to find the perfect balance
 - Some students are interested in taking the easiest classes
 - Some test out of gen. eds. via AP tests or IB credits

Q8: What types of programs or courses do you want to see brought to the campus to help in this process?

- Everyone take intro to environmental studies; Participant taking it currently out of interest
- Peer Facilitator-honors engaged – every student has to do 1 year of outside community service
 - Expand to the students at large – requirement to show that students have been regularly involved in the community or on campus
- Stigma against CofC hosted events amongst students
 - “uncool” – even though there are a lot or really interesting events held on campus
 - Required events to foster learning and community
 - The city of Charleston spreads students out into their own corners or cliques
 - We don't have campus pride we have city pride

Thoughts on how to generate community and campus pride?

- It would have to be a student initiative - Student initiative to create campus community and campus pride
- Difficult to find a solution – The city of Charleston plays a part in that
 - Sports or some other unifying initiative

Q10: What do you associate with the theme “From one to One”?

- Connected – I am connected to you who are connected to them
- Individual to the larger group
- You individually are part of this one unity
- Implies transition – it’s a process, an action rather than an end result

Q11: How sustainable is CofC?

- Not very sustainable
 - I think the college tries, we have composting in City Bistro
 - Definitely an effort but overall it’s not widespread
- Sustainability is a work in progress
 - Composting in City Bistro uses a lot of water which is wasteful
 - Continual process
 - I’ve seen improvement from my freshman year to my senior year but there is still a lot to be done

Recap:

- Alternative transportation isn’t very well supported
 - Bike share program isn’t where it could be
 - Street and sidewalk networks are not conducive to biking
 - CARTA is free for students but I’ve never used it
 - CARTA is slow
 - Getting around Charleston can be hard sometimes, I usually just walk
- Excited about Vegan/Vegetarian Dining Hall

QEP Student Focus Group: SGA & GSA

Date: 11/18/15

Time: 2:00 pm

Moderator: Aaron Holly

Note taker(s): Josh Bloodworth, Cara Dombroski

Students Present: (7)

Q1: Students were given a survey to begin. Questionnaire asked 4 questions. Based on the responses to the 4th question (List 2-3 things that come to mind when you think of sustainability), students were asked to discuss those answers.

28. Reduce Carbon Footprint: less showers, recycling, conserving,
29. Recycle
30. Prepare for the future , not just short term solutions
31. Corporation Standpoint – business that doesn't negatively affect community
 - a. Whole Food is a sustainable company that tries to improve the environment around it.
32. Recycling
33. Global Warming
34. Long-lasting and beneficial
35. Zero Waste initiatives
36. Recycle/Compost
37. Use current resources and finding ways to make resources last

Q1A: What comes to mind when you think of the following, as it relates to sustainability?

- Social Justice: Yes
 - For something to be sustainable it must be just to the people
 - Over population, but what can be do
 - Immigration
 - Sustain = more than 1
- Community Engagement: Yes
 - Community Garden
 - Industrial sustainability – businesses must incorporate everyone
 - General Awareness amongst the public to promote sustainability
- Food Procurement: Yes
 - We love to eat.
 - On campus it is hard to get food late night
 - Farm to School - Boeing is getting involved.

Q2: Based on the student's experiences in the Sustainability Office, what do you know about sustainability initiatives and opportunities at the College?

- Dept. of Sustainability
 - Can get grants/funding if you have a sustainability idea
 - Bike share program
- Paper plates – we can compost them and other items
- Higdon Leadership program did a compost event (Zero waste)
- Office of Sustainability
 - Events and workshops (social justice)
- Bike Share program
- City Bistro compost
 - Water river
- SGA – working toward waste free bathroom (paper towels)
 - Zero waste by 2025

Q4: How easily could you see these principles being integrated into majors?

- Many of the examples are not always applicable to graduate students because grad students are not always on campus.
 - Not in the dining halls
- Whole Foods in downtown areas – business that supports sustainability
- We wonder how many people know about the sustainability efforts on campus
- FYE Courses - could use these to get the word out
- COMM/Poli Sci – free trade,
 - Geology class - what is sustainability
- Solar panel studies – not always allowed in downtown

Q4A: How can we best reach students?

- Not by emails, we get too many
- “cooler” ideas for younger people
- Cistern Yard
- Radio Ads (Cistern)
- Social Media (Facebook/Instagram/Twitter)
- No flyer – get posted over quickly
- Professors/Directors can use word of mouth
- TV notifications in Tate
- Art Exhibits – more eye catching
- Napkin Holder – use the messages on the back
- Bathroom stall door – notifications
- Word of Mouth
- Incentives (extra credit)
- Surveys

Q3: Describe activities you are involved in that relate to sustainability or could become related to sustainability?

- Teaching Fellows program (101 students)
 - Committee structure
 - Can defiantly work with sustainability principles
- SGA – Initiatives
 - Co-op with Farming Plot on plantation
 - Money from SGA to go to conferences and bring back sustainable ideas
 - Umbrella rentals
- Higdon Leadership program – can hone leadership roles and make us smart leaders with a sustainable focus
- GSA can get more involved
 - Through fundraising

Q4: Sustainability in your major?

- MBA focuses on sustainable models
- Marine Biology
- Communication currently does not, but could easily have a part
- Try to make classes, etc. more electronic than paper
 - Sciences use a lot of paper
 - Offer preferences between electronic and paper (given the option)

Q5: What skills are important to you as you enter the workforce?

- Technological literacy (possibly tie to sustainability)
- MS Excel – computer tools (software)
 - Highly useful in many fields
- Leadership
 - Confidence, should be confident when going into the workforce
- Networking - communicating with other people
 - Ask for what you want
 - We need to invite leaders from the community – make event more one-on-one
- More diversity
- Hone students into better leaders
- Teamwork
 - We do group projects in class
- Networking for internships and jobs

Q7: How do you feel the college is doing at building those skills?

- Completely different between graduates and undergraduates
 - Graduate work forces you to draw more on work experiences

- You get out what you put in
- Leaders on campus get a golden key
- Leadership roles are not necessarily in the classroom
- There may be a learning curve.
- Student leaders have responsibilities to a student constituent base.
- It's about getting involved, if you don't you might miss out on opportunities.
- Sometimes it's about whom you know not what you know.
- Leadership roles force you to be in contact with multiple people across multiple organizations.

Q7A: Institution Level Programs?

- Computer science should be a core requirement.
 - Excel courses
- Each dept. needs to teach courses on computer technology
- Gen ed or programs? Gen. ed courses seem better.
- FYSE for after college life not just for college life
- Honors college (beyond George St.)

Q10: one to One?

- Teacher to student
- Individual to unity (person to class to major to college)
- Becoming natural to think about sustainability
- Continuous to sustainability
 - Visual impact not vocal impact.

QEP Student Focus Group: General Session

Date: 11/19/15

Time: 3:00 pm

Moderator: Josh Bloodworth

Note taker(s): Aaron Holly, Cara Dombroski

Students Present: (9)

Q1: Students were given a survey to begin. Questionnaire asked 4 questions. Based on the responses to the 4th question (List 2-3 things that come to mind when you think of sustainability), students were asked to discuss those answers.

- Reducing Waste
- Closed loop systems
- Community engagement and involvement
 - Helping students understand why and how we want to do this
 - Educating students is important
- Clean energy and clean water
- Creating awareness for these issues
- Creating a long-term sustainable environment
 - make sure water levels don't continue to rise so Charleston can exist in 100 years
- Impacting climate change
- Minimizing waste
- Aligning values with actions
- Green/sustainable energy
- Compost/recycling
- Biking everywhere – reducing carbon emissions
- Transdisciplinary/interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving – getting out of thought silos
- Eco-literate citizenship
- Preserving environment
- Hippie-tree huggers
- Multi-layered – (more to it than people think)
- Community issues
- Office of Sustainability Water bottles

Q1A: Do you associate the following with sustainability and if so, why?

- Alternative transit
 - Yes, creating awareness around social costs of driving (harms of fossil fuels)
 - Driving is one of our biggest day-to-day contributions to air pollution
 - Buying a lot of cars – consumerism (we love our cars)

- Urban space and urban form plays a role – we don't have the population density to really support public transit
 - CARTA is free for students
- Food
 - Yes, Sustainable restaurants in Charleston (Five Loaves, FIG) – local food and local farms
 - Asking questions about where your food comes from
 - This is an issue with a lot of depth
 - Food waste in addition to food procurement and food sourcing

Q2: Based on your responses, what do you know about sustainability initiatives and opportunities at the College?

- Recycling bins around campus buildings and dining halls – improved signing
- Compost bins
 - I'd like to see more of those
- Compost in dining halls and at grounds department
- Water bottle refill stations
- DIY workshops
 - OOS & students for social innovation
- MES Degree at Graduate level – environmental studies minor & some sustainability classes
 - Although these are just aspects of sustainability
 - Internships for credit through environmental studies minor
- Dr. Fisher's sustainability classes
- Student Green fee – ESPC funds
- Bike Share Program
- Events – recent clothing drive

Q3: Describe any activities that you are currently involved in that relate to sustainability including: Events, co-curricular activities, etc.

- DIY work shop group (Students for social innovation)
- MBA mentor program – (Stuart Williams: Be Earth Foundation)
 - How can companies and industries minimize their carbon footprints while still making a profit
 - It would be nice if this was more incorporated into the MBA program
- Not necessarily involved in any official groups or activities but individually I recycle and I make my friends recycle

Is there anything that you're involved in that you think could or should have aspects of sustainability incorporated into them?

- Aspects of sustainability in more courses- MBA operations course for example

- Political Science major in undergrad and every class I had could have sustainability incorporated into it
- CAB events – we recycle as much as we can but we can do more
 - Potential for zero-waste Cougar-Polooza
- Caterings role here at the College should be advertised more and it could be explained how they can help make events zero waste.

Q4: How easily do you see sustainability and sustainability principles fitting into your major?

- Sustainability MBA concentration or focus
 - This is done at other schools and could attract students here to the MBA program
- Use less paper in English classes
- Should be relevant in every major
 - Majors don't matter
 - As sustainability becomes a bigger world issue understanding sustainability will matter
 - It increases your value
 - Being sustainability literate makes you stand out and helps you “pop off the page”
 - Some companies have Chief Sustainability Officers

Q5: What skills are important to you as you enter the workforce?

- Critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Working for companies that reflect your beliefs and values
- Systems thinking
 - Being able to understand the externalities or external costs of your actions
- Communication skills
 - Being able to communicate complex ideas to the public effectively
- Being adept at reinventing yourself – being able to adapt
 - Being secure in who you are is a big part of this – having confidence
- Developing a sense of place
 - Developing a connection to Charleston
 - Things have more value when you develop a connection – things become more real

Q6: How would you like these skills to be integrated into your major or the general curriculum?

- Classes don't reflect what you do in the work place
 - For example in some MBA classes we're learning to do things by hand or by calculator that's normally done on Excel and could be accomplished more quickly by a computer program
 - Education level is having trouble keeping up with technology
 - Closing this gap and integrating real life scenarios into programs
- More public speaking in every major
 - Communicating ideas matters
- More interdisciplinary classes and majors

- Helps people to think across disciplines
- Offer interdisciplinary classes but didn't mandate them
- Transdisciplinary capstone course – write a research report from different majors on joint research project
- Professional development classes

Why don't students make time for the professional development opportunities currently offered on campus?

- Students are involved in lots of other things
- Course credit would force students to make time for these classes
- Students may not understand the value of these opportunities
- Students may get more out of these opportunities if they're not mandatory
 - Making these mandatory doesn't mean students will take lessons away
 - Students are much more likely to be engaged if they show interest voluntarily

Q7: How do you feel the College is doing in building those skills?

- Excellent job of offering it
- Growing dichotomy between honors college and other students – and the opportunities available to each group
 - Honors students seem to be afforded more internships and research opportunities
 - Honors students may be looking for these opportunities more than the average student
 - Opportunities “stacked” towards honors students due to marketing of opportunities
 - Different experience for different majors – astrophysics major found plenty of opportunities within major

Q10: What do you associate with the theme “From one to One”?

- Individualistic mindset to the mindset of the community

Q11: How sustainable is CofC? How is the College doing at integrating sustainability into its operations?

- Not that sustainable at the moment
 - OOS is separated from campus – a lot of students don't know it exists and some faculty I've spoken to feel like they don't have as much access as they would like
- Haven't seen sustainability initiatives or progress advertised
- We are making progress
 - OOS is reaching people – people are seeing them
- Seen more in 4 months at CofC about sustainability than the previous 18 years
- Limited due to location
 - Downtown Charleston – hard to make things consistent across campus
- OOS has managed to achieve low hanging fruit

- Major issues haven't been tackled – “systemic issues that have yet to be addressed”
- Superficial vs. Deeper issues

How can the College do better? How do we get students to buy in?

- Put up some facts and numbers around recycling bins
 - Create awareness and let the people know the College has a zero waste goal
- Create awareness around these issues
- Photos or pictures of unsustainable things (similar to cigarette ads or climate changes ads on Vancouver gas pumps)
- Social media
- No easy way to navigate college websites
- Competitions
- The college needs to be more transparent about all issues – transparency
- Integrating OOS into other departments so the departments understand what's going on
- Aspects of sustainability in as many classes as possible