

Penn State Sustainability Video - Discussion Guide

This guide is one of many resources the Sustainability Institute has put together to support unit level strategic planning. The discussion guide helps create a productive, creative group discussion following a viewing of the Penn State Sustainability Video produced by Penn State Public Media in February 2013. The viewing and discussion is meant to be an orientation and warm-up to the topic of sustainability. Other planning tools will build on this discussion to identify mission-relevant opportunities in your unit.

The Challenge

In the video, we hear about several drivers of the sustainability challenge: energy, water, population, finite resources, human consumption, and human rights concerns.

Some questions to consider:

1. How do the various challenges mentioned (energy, human rights, water, overconsumption, etc) impact Penn State and your unit? If you could rank them, which issue would be most important to address? Why?

We Are. . .Already Doing A lot

In virtually every area, Penn State is already engaged with sustainability: teaching, research, outreach and operations. We are a large \$4.5 billion organization that educates 96,000 students, operates over 1,700 buildings, and has over half a million living alumni. We can—and do—make a real impact.

The video mentions steps that Penn State is already taking. In your view, what are the most important steps Penn State should be taking towards sustainability?

The Great Social Cause of Their Generation and the Living Lab

The video presents two key ideas: first, for our students, sustainability is the primary challenge and opportunity of their generation and second, that the “living lab” is a powerful mechanism for facing this challenge head on. The Living Laboratory concept embraces campus grounds, regional ecosystems, and local communities as assets for learning and experimentation in the advancement of sustainability. The concept is based on the premise that building capacity to understand, practice, and lead others in a new way of decision-making requires an immersive learning experience that dissolves the boundaries of classrooms, campuses, and communities.

What are some ways your unit is uniquely capable of engaging with this “great social cause” and contributing to the living lab for sustainability?

Done? We suggest one of the following tools next: Sustainability Strategic Plan or Opportunity Finder.
www.sustainability.psu.edu/strategic-planning

Penn State Sustainability Video URL: <http://tinyurl.com/PSUsustainabilityVideo>