



Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability submission for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2012

1. Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability (ACTS) is a non-profit member based organisation representing higher and further education institutions within Australia and New Zealand. ACTS aims to inspire, promote and support change towards best practice sustainability within the operations, curriculum and research of the tertiary education sector. ACTS seeks to build community and business partnerships at the local, regional and international level, in order to bring together a network of people for positive engagement, capacity building and change.
2. As an NGO operating within the Asia Pacific region, ACTS was involved in drafting the statements submitted by *Major Groups and Stakeholders Asia Pacific*, as well as *Asia Pacific NGOs* and we therefore strongly endorse and support both.
3. We believe that the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio+20) provides a critical and timely platform for governments at the highest level to secure renewed political commitment and action for sustainable development. Since 1992 the ecological crisis has worsened, whilst income and social inequalities have escalated even as high economic growth took place in several countries. Not enough has been done to achieve the paradigm shift required to change current unsustainable trends and we urgently call on governments to act on change towards sustainable development, rather than continue to debate the issue further.
4. The Rio+20 Conference should therefore honestly and openly appraise the implementation of the sustainable development commitments and action plans, and identify the gaps and obstacles, to ensure the transformation and integration of the economic, social and ecological dimensions. This needs to take place at the local, national, regional and international levels.
5. In moving towards sustainable development that also incorporates the inter-generational dimension, the critical role that tertiary education plays in achieving a long-term and sustainable shift needs to be galvanised. Recognising that changes in social values and practices are necessary in addition to technical solutions, there should be a focus on ensuring educational structures provide appropriate and relevant sustainability related skills and knowledge to achieve long term change within society and economy. Furthermore, there must be recognition and promotion of indigenous and local knowledge systems and their interface with more formalised knowledge systems.

6. The role that tertiary education can, should and does play in achieving sustainable development has often gone unrecognized and/or under represented. Since 1992, it has become clear that tertiary education institutions play a number of critical roles, including those summarized below:
 - They provide relevant and critical education to our future government, business, industry, education and community leaders. By integrating sustainable development into curriculum, skills training and student development, tertiary education will equip the future with people who have the knowledge and capacity to positively impact the global economic and educational systems and programs, to eradicate poverty and improve access to education for all;
 - They are critical homes for the research that provides sustainable solutions to the complex problems of development. Indeed, Secretary Ban Ki-moon pointed out in his call for the world's academic community to find solutions to global hunger, water shortages, and energy issues, "the academic community can help us connect the dots";
 - They serve as the "test beds" for examining the context in which innovative sustainability practices are executed. As these institutions implement a variety of context-specific sustainability practices through education and operations, they demonstrate the viability of these practices and provide models for sustainable development;
 - They facilitate engagement of groups at the community level through building and maintaining strong links to government, business and civil society, as part of the core business of learning and teaching and as part of research; and
 - They provide the opportunity for cross fertilization of knowledge and understanding through hosting students from the international community, who then transfer learnings into their own areas for the benefit of all.
7. These roles of tertiary institutions should be recognised while also acknowledging that:
 - There is need to strengthen the holistic integration of environmental, social and economical dimensions of sustainable development;
 - Through promoting sustainable societies it is essential to ensure gender equality, democracy, and human rights;
 - The importance of peoples' participation, particularly of youth, women and indigenous peoples, and providing for their empowerment and relevant, functional education to support inclusive sustainable development, is most readily done through the tertiary education system; and
 - There have been communities that have developed numerous solutions to sustainable development challenges in spite of a lack of leadership and support from high levels of government. These initiatives need to be fully recognized, supported and celebrated with a view to link, upscale and maintain efforts.
8. It is the fundamental role of tertiary education to innovate and be an open source of new technologies for the benefit and wellbeing of the global community. We therefore propose that tertiary education institutions need to be more open and transparent with regards to the sharing of information with the global community for the common good towards sustainable development.
9. Open sharing of information and innovation cannot be accomplished without the support and backing of business and government. We therefore request business and government to provide more substantial financial and in kind support to see such endeavours come to fruition.

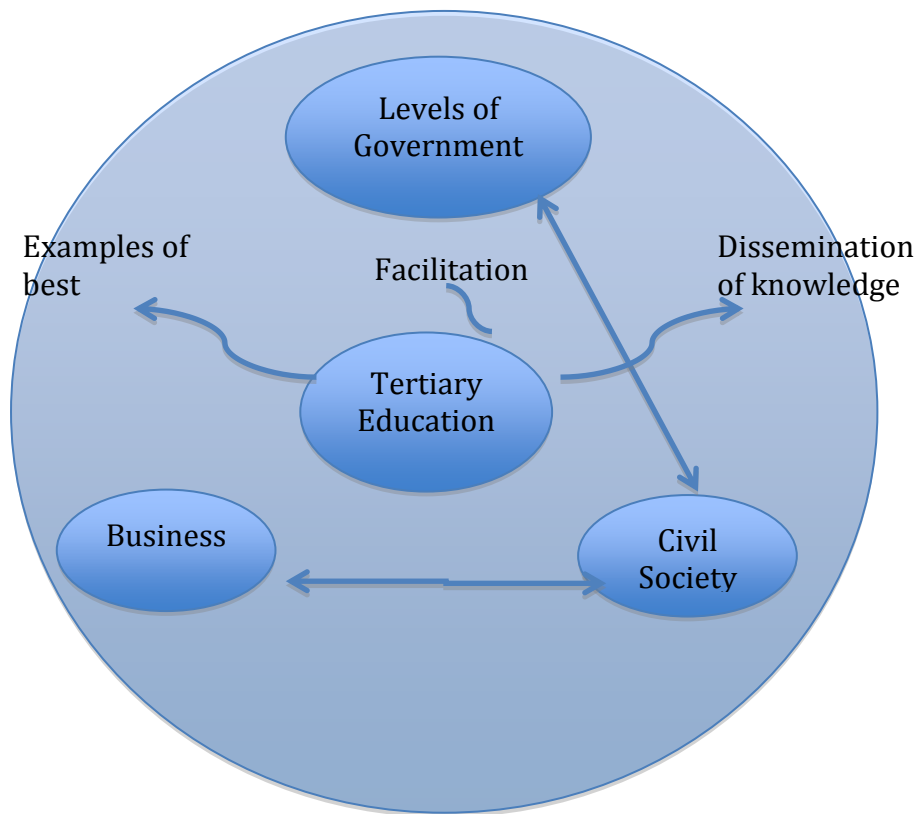
10. Below are summarized the key issues, challenges and courses of action that have been identified and affirmed in the ACTS annual conference.

Issues, Challenges and Ways Forward

On Tertiary Education sector contributions to the Zero Draft document and subsequent implementation

11. We believe that the language that is used within the Zero Draft document and any subsequent documents must be directive and commitment-oriented to avoid any misunderstanding or 'ways out' from implementing the intention of the document and in order to achieve the paradigm shift required to move beyond rhetoric to action towards sustainable development.
12. We strongly feel that the role of tertiary education should be prominent throughout the Zero Draft document and any subsequent documents in order for the intent of Rio and Rio + 20 to be realised. The role of tertiary education should therefore not be relegated to inclusion as an ad hoc after thought.
13. We further believe that relevant and appropriate education at all levels is essential, as is support from pillars of society such as government and business. The recognition that informal learning processes are just as important as formal learning processes is essential, particularly to empower and encompass the marginalised youth, women and indigenous groups in society. These two approaches to learning can be used in conjunction to ensure the most beneficial outcomes at a variety of levels and learning. Education for all is an important cornerstone of civilisation, whether provided through formal or informal means.
14. Community engagement is part of the core business of higher and further education. We therefore believe that tertiary education institutions are in a strong position to facilitate the partnerships between government, business and civil society (including individuals and community groups) at the community level, as part of the implementation of goals and objectives associated with Rio + 20 outcomes (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Implementation for Change Model



15. We submit that tertiary education be recognised as playing a significant role in the Zero Draft document and in its subsequent implementation to achieving the commitments of Rio and Rio + 20 and in particular, as summarised below:

- Tertiary institutions, business/industry groups and governments alike should provide resources and funding to facilitate the fundamental shift to embed sustainability in the curriculum, research, and operations of tertiary education. The development of tools, resources and appropriate professional development for academics and institutional leaders are required for this fundamental shift in our collective approach to sustainable development to be successful
- Each tertiary institution within developed countries should partner and work with a tertiary institution from a developing country, for the purpose and mutual benefit of research, knowledge and resource exchange. Each institution should make this partnership explicit through registering on a dedicated page, coordinated by the apex body discussed further below
- Every tertiary institution should commit to sharing and learning from one another in the spirit of international partnership and long-term global societal benefit. As importantly, institutions should commit to working more closely with local community and business to facilitate dialogue, capacity building and change at the local level.

On Green Economy in the Context of Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development

16. We firmly believe that current prevailing economic models promote unsustainable consumption and production patterns, facilitate grossly inequitable economic systems that fail to eradicate poverty, assist exploitation of natural resources towards the verge of extinction, and need to be replaced by sustainable economies in the community, local, national, regional and international spheres.
17. We have concerns about the term 'green economy', and indeed, striving towards a 'green economy' as it leaves the current economic system open to 'greenwashing' without fundamentally changing a system that is significantly contributing to unsustainable practices.
18. The use of jargonistic titles such as 'green' to describe the economy only confuses the matter and the outcomes that need to be reached in order to realise sustainable development by ignoring the social dimension. We therefore propose that the approach is based on fully integrated sustainable economies, the key attributes of which promote and encapsulate:
 - Cultural change towards sustainable development from the bottom-up, moving towards less unnecessary consumption;
 - Sustainable production and consumption patterns, ensuring social and environmental wellbeing in that process;
 - Decent work and livelihoods, ensuring that social benefits are distributed equitably among all peoples;
 - The upholding of social justice, human rights, equity, and gender equality;
 - Allows and supports the achievement of economic sufficiency;
 - Safeguarding animal welfare and protection of ecosystems; and
 - Regulation of financial markets, holding firms accountable for the social and environmental impacts of their operations.
19. We further question the use of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measurement for growth and instead believe a more appropriate index be used, one which is based on people's wellbeing, inclusiveness, social equity, human rights, gender equality, decent work, biodiversity and ecological footprint.
20. We present that tertiary education institutions can play a significant role in developing the methodologies required to measure progress towards sustainable economies and indeed, sustainable development. Through our core business, we have the capacity to question terminology and measurement of non-economic factors, bearing in mind our reluctance to inappropriately value the environment.
21. We believe that technological fixes alone will not solve environmental problems that are consequences of social and economic factors. Fundamental issues such as assessment of the potential impacts of new and untested technologies (e.g., geo-engineering, ocean fertilization, etc.) before they are released in the environment and deployed commercially must be addressed in the development and transfer of technologies.
22. We present that tertiary education has a significant role to play in ensuring the issue of assessment of potential impacts is addressed. Through our research we have the capacity to question current technologies, and innovate and appropriately assess future technologies prior to release, and importantly, to continue monitoring and evaluation once technologies are in place.

23. We further present that tertiary education can play a significant role in achieving sustainable economies in an accelerated timeframe through embedding sustainability across curriculum and by enabling it to be delivered through relevant learning and teaching practices that are based on best knowledge, unbiased and distanced commercial conflicts of interest to ensure the current skills and knowledge gap does not exist into the future.
24. We believe that stronger partnerships among governments, civil society organisations, private businesses and stakeholder groups must be established for promoting sustainable economies. Such partnerships need to be within frameworks of accountability and transparency including regulation. In line with this, tertiary education institutions and other stakeholder groups are enjoined to support good practice case studies and promote dissemination of information on such good practices for promoting sustainable economies in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

On the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD)

25. We believe it is necessary to build a strong apex body on sustainable development that works at the global level and can integrate the work of disparate multilateral bodies currently working on each of the three dimensions of sustainable development. This apex body needs to include the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation to ensure ALL dimensions of sustainable development are considered, and those with the ability to influence change are involved in decision-making processes. Options to be explored include transforming the Commission on Sustainable Development into a Council on Sustainable Development, or establishing a UN Organization on Sustainable Development. The unifying mandate of this body should be the promotion of sustainable development as a fundamental right of all.
26. We further believe it is essential to immediately establish a broad inclusive multi-stakeholder consultative body or network which is tasked with supporting the apex body through provision of information to assist in realising outcomes and monitoring the implementation of commitments and actions since 1992. Such a body should be participatory, democratic, and have an integral multi-stakeholder character that accords civil society with equal rights and equal voice as those of governments.
27. At the regional level, corresponding sustainable development bodies should be established. Sub-regional analogues could also be created where size and diversity of the region warrant it, such as in the Asia-Pacific.
28. At the national level, governments must establish multi-stakeholder councils for sustainable development (NCSOs) where absent, and strengthen them where already existing. NCSOs must coordinate planning, policy making, issues resolution, and reporting to the corresponding sub-regional/regional and global sustainable development bodies to ensure vertical coherence from implementation levels to the global level.
29. To be effective, the national sustainable development councils should be (a) organized at highest possible level, i.e., chaired by the Head of State/Government; (b) lodged with an appropriate coordinating body such Office of the Prime Minister or highest level elected represented body; (c) composed of relevant ministries and major groups/stakeholders including local authorities; and (d) institutionally stable by virtue of a strong legal mandate and endowed with a dedicated budget.

30. Local authorities are closest to the ground and directly serve the people. They must be given appropriate responsibility and be involved in decision-making that concerns sustainable development.
31. We strongly assert that it is essential for the apex body and governments to recognize the existing efforts of communities and NGOs such as ACTS in promoting sustainable development at the national and local levels. Recognition needs to be accompanied by support, with the provision of platforms to mainstream and link these efforts to have more sustained impacts on development.
32. The above proposals are initial steps to start fundamental changes that are necessary to meet the challenges of the 21st century and ensure a sustainable global civilisation in the centuries beyond. In the long term this may include updating the Charter of the UN.

ACTS would particularly like to thank and acknowledge the contributions of the following people without whom this document would not be possible:

Leanne Denby

Danielle Rostan-Herbert

Carlene Kirvan

Corey Peterson

Audette Benson

Cathy Horan

Brett Sharman

Jennifer Klippel

Stephen Derrick

Aaron Magner

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GUNi's INPUT FOR RIO+20

Input on UNCSO Compilation Document

1. **Expectations of Outcome: What are the expectations for the outcome of Rio+20, and what are the concrete proposals in this regard, including views on a possible structure of the Outcome document?**

In the Outcome Document, two key aspects for the construction of sustainable development should appear: the role of knowledge and its use, and the role of education in the construction of a sustainable future for humanity and the planet:

- **The Role of Knowledge:**

We are on the verge of a change in the model of civilization, which cannot be constructed from the old paradigms of a system which has already met its limits. Sustainability involves the development of a new culture that attributes a different kind of value to knowledge and that questions the assumptions on which we are sustaining the comprehension of the world and the human dynamics in it.

The major contribution of higher education to sustainability is the co-creation of pertinent knowledge for the understanding of reality, and of doing it with anticipation so as to play a proactive and committed role in the transformation and positive change of societies.

The role of higher education as agents of social transformation and how its visions and actions could be re-oriented towards a new understanding of knowledge, broadening the scope of the use of knowledge in society to facilitate the emergence of better and positive contributions to global human coexistence.

Renew thought for society: break the conformity of thought by proactively criticizing the world of ideas. Transform the paradigms and beliefs established in social, economic and political systems, how we organize our community and how this is reflected in our education systems.

Analyze the ethical, social and environmental implications of the advance of knowledge: Increase the resources invested in analyzing the impact of science and technology and augment the capacity to absorb their expansion, in all aspects of human life.

- **El papel de la educación:**

Education is the key for change: sustainable development is a learning process, a way how people is prepared to live and to understand the world they live in.

Rethink how we prosper, specially how we do it collectively and then we have to reconsider how we are educating and for what purpose. Now is the moment to widen the scope of education and research in society and to move beyond creating socio-economic wellbeing towards the transformation of society as a whole and the creation of a sustainable global community.

2. Comments on Existing Proposals: What are the comments, if any, on existing proposals: e.g. a green economy roadmap, framework for action, sustainable development goals, a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development, or others?

HEIs can contribute to a green economy and to sustainable development goals by providing the lessons learnt by its research, through the training of the professionals of the future, and by introducing technological advances.

▪ **Research**

Experiences and lessons learned: provide solutions through research and through higher education experiences on sustainable development.

Democratize access to knowledge and research: provide open access to expert knowledge, making it as useful as it can be for international organizations, UN system, governments, civil associations and citizenry. Move to the idea of socially relevant knowledge as human heritage.

Networking and research for local needs and global challenges: Cooperation and co-creation of knowledge and technology. Local needs require local proposals in global frameworks, and global challenges require global solutions that are locally acceptable. However, global solutions can come from local experience and vice versa. Explore how to link scientific research and political decision making related to collective well-being.

▪ **Training and development of professionals that can lead the shift towards sustainability**

Go beyond educating professionals to educating citizens: The mission of higher education is to prepare critical professionals, with ethical awareness and civic commitment. Know how to contribute to the common good through professional practice. Educate for glocality, democracy, citizenship, intercultural dialogue and relations, peace building, sustainability, global social justice and a deep understanding of life's dynamics. Make links with previous levels of education.

Introduce complexity, uncertainty and transdisciplinarity in the training and in research, towards a holistic vision of reality. Link different areas of knowledge in order to understand complex issues and find solutions to the great problems in the local and global context.

▪ **Technology**

Incorporate sustainability in the creation of technology: shift paradigms from individual competitiveness, economic profitability and a short-term focus to the collective, with social and human benefits and sustainable in the long term.

3. Views on Implementation: What are the views on implementation and on how to close the implementation gap, which relevant actors are envisaged as being involved (Governments, specific Major Groups, UN system, IFIs, etc.)

It is necessary to shorten the time in which knowledge reaches society. The democratization of knowledge and education must bring better decisions and actions based on a suitable use of knowledge.

The access to education and specially to higher education is an indicator of human development and there is a co-relation between education and the eradication of poverty (source: GUNI Reports on Higher Education in the World).

4. Implementation Tools and Timelines: What specific cooperation mechanisms, partnership arrangements or other implementation tools are envisaged and what is the relevant time frame for the proposed decisions to be reached and actioned to be implemented?

Open up to society: proactive engagement in dialogue with citizens and the rest of social, cultural and economic stakeholders. Create a true knowledge-based society through engagement with society as a whole. Provide a plurality of expert advice in dealing with green economy, poverty and the sustainable development goals.

The creation of real partnerships for the co-creation of knowledge and answers to problems and to co-create visions for the future. Partnerships between higher education institutions (at all levels or scales), partnerships with the community stakeholders, and partnerships with governments, NGOs, civil associations, etc.

Become cosmopolitan centres of global culture: build bridges between different cultures and sources of knowledge. Knowledge is no longer produced exclusively by and consumed within universities. Instead, their task should be to connect different kinds of knowledge, forging links between knowledge and citizenship.

Input on Role of Tertiary Education

1. Role of Tertiary Education: Please describe why the role of tertiary education institutions' in global sustainable development is central to Rio+20 discussions and Outcomes document.

HEIs can play a significant role in building a sustainable paradigm. They may help in facing local and global challenges, facilitating society to answer major global challenges. Their vision and action could be reinforced with a role review towards the creation and distribution of socially relevant knowledge in education and research and in the relationship with communities. They can support, and even anticipate, ways for action to play a proactive and committed role in rebuilt societies.

Higher education can prepare people to handle complex realities in a simple way and they should integrate emotional abilities with instrumental and knowledge related abilities. They can train people to learn to learn; to fully understand uncertainty and change; to handle a vast and complex universe of data from many sources and of many different natures; and to discriminate between information, knowledge and wisdom. They can train people to

understand what we are, what we are like and how to be, both as individuals and as a group, and to manage their own education and development throughout life. It is an education based on the development of the individual. It is about learning to be, to know, to do, to live together and to transform oneself and society. All this implies personal, family and societal well-being; respecting and searching for knowledge and wisdom; engagement in productive work and recreation; social justice and cohesion; inter-cultural and international co-operation and peace; food security; active citizenship; futures thinking; responsible lifestyles; sharing of resources; and adaptability.



'UN Rio+20 Conference Position Paper'

We are living in a transition period of the greatest risk and uncertainty ever experienced in the human history. Earth's climate change, the destruction of natural ecosystem, together with the changing world economic geography and the deepening gap between the rich and the poor are the causes of amplifying anxiety.

The most critical problem of these is the intensifying vulnerability of terrestrial ecosystem, which threatens the survival of mankind and their future. At the heart of the problem lies the sustainability crisis – the climate crisis, the environmental crisis, the resource crisis, and the energy crisis, over which mankind has limited control. To save earth and mankind from the present crisis, we need a fundamental change in economic and social lifestyle comparable to the early industrial revolution, which we can call “the sustainability revolution”.

Sustainability revolution should start at the university, a hall of the leading intellectuals and where future leaders are nurtured. Governments and businesses are tied up with short-term economic recovery and growth, so they are not ready to address the serious global crises in a macroscopic, holistic, and systematic manner.

Once we recognize the seriousness of the sustainability crisis, we become sympathetic to the need for change and will start to search for ways to solve the problem. To spread this movement globally as well as locally, we should start a political, economic, social, and cultural reformation movement throughout the world based on the sustainability criteria.

The formal education so far was influenced by the early industrial revolution and was framed to fit mass production and mass consumption. The coming age would not allow us to continue the hitherto spending spree lifestyle where consumption was a virtue. New era requires a paradigm shift from the growth-oriented paradigm to the sustainability-oriented paradigm, which cares for the ecological vulnerability of the nature.

Concepts such as green economy or green growth are still based on growth-oriented paradigm and are deficient to save the earth and mankind from the crisis at hand. Therefore, following the 1992 Rio Declaration, we need to systemize and sophisticate the sustainability paradigm based on the triple bottom line. In line with this, education contents and methods to link the sustainability paradigm to the real world should be researched and taught at the tertiary education.

We hereby declare that sustainability to be the main value for mankind to jointly pursue and tertiary education should play a pioneering role to transmit this value to future leaders and to save the earth from the sustainability crisis. For this, we ask to the UNCSD the following missions:

1. UNCSD evaluates the UNESCO-led DESD (Decade of Education for Sustainable Development) program, and newly starts a research and education program to overcome the upcoming sustainability crisis.
2. To this end, we suggest the UN Secretary General's Office to form a task force to prepare a vision for new value and social, economic systems commensurate with the sustainability crisis era.



AASHE Input for the Compilation Document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (Rio+20)

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) is an institutional member NGO representing more than 850 colleges and universities (primarily in the United States of America and Canada). During the AASHE 2011 Conference, a meeting was held to gather input for the UNCSD2012 Compilation Document. Also, for more than one month, AASHE provide opportunities for members to provide input via a webform on the AASHE website. From these various inputs, AASHE has compiled the following recommendations for UNCSD.

Regarding the “expectations for the outcome of Rio+20: The outcomes document must recognize the critical role that tertiary education plays in sustainable development. During the past two decades it has become clear that tertiary education has been essential in discovering both problems and solutions related to sustainable development. Through tertiary education’s research functions we better understand how what we do currently is not sustainable and what we must do to create a global sustainable society. Furthermore, the outcomes document should specifically recognize the role that tertiary education plays in providing learning opportunities for both professionals and for citizens in contributing to sustainable development. In addition, the outcomes document should recognize the role that tertiary education plays in serving as a testing site for new technologies and that tertiary education facilities can and do model what can be done at larger scale throughout society with respect to sustainable development. Indeed, how tertiary education facilities address issues of water and energy can be drivers of change throughout their communities and nations. Finally, the outcomes document should urge support for tertiary education efforts that provide opportunities through research, education, and example to both advance sustainable development and to eradicate poverty.

With respect to comments on existing proposals, specifically a green economy: AASHE has witnessed the important role that tertiary education can play in training technicians and professionals to create and work in the green economy. Only with adequate access to tertiary education can the workforce required by a green economy be prepared for facing the uncertainty of the future and develop the creativity needed to solve the many complex and inter-related problems we face in sustainable development. Furthermore, the critical research that is needed to develop the various technologies of a green economy will necessarily be based in tertiary education’s research capacity. Tertiary education will need to be engaged in the advancement of sustainable development. Without this engagement (and support) there will be little chance in creating any economy that is capable of eradicating poverty while reducing global environmental impacts. In particular, it will be important that the education of all stakeholder be advanced to the greatest degree possible but especially the education of young women who will be required to play a significant and equal role in solving the problems of our unsustainable development and growth.

With regards to implementation and closing the implementation gap: AASHE supports strong language urging nations to charge their tertiary education system with providing society with graduates who are well trained in the skills needed for creating a globally sustainable society and to focus funding on research at those institutions on those areas that will contribute to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. Furthermore, AASHE supports strong

language that recognizes the need for academic programs to work in more integrated ways to make contributions to solving the complex problems of society. It is important that the outcomes document charges the nations to provide regular reports on their progress with respect to education for sustainable development in both education and training and in research and its dissemination. Finally, the tertiary education institutions themselves should be charged with reporting their progress towards creating a sustainable society within their own practices including reporting on their efforts and impacts on the eradication of poverty. Regular accountability by nations and their tertiary education institutions will be needed to ensure progress in ESD.

With respect to specific cooperation mechanisms: AASHE exists to facilitate cooperation among tertiary institutions with respect to sustainable development. The United Nations should provide support for similar collaborative efforts in other countries and should assist in the formation of an umbrella organization that respects the individual differences of the various national and multi-national organizations while providing opportunities for international sharing of sustainable development knowledge. Furthermore, nations should be urged to develop specific funding for exchange programs for both students and instructors that are focused on furthering understanding of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. Finally, support should be provided to tertiary institutions that make efforts to disseminate their findings to the larger public through community demonstration project and other similar activities.

Perhaps most important is the position that AASHE takes with respect to the importance of tertiary education in sustainable development. It has been clear that in the past two decades, tertiary education has made great progress in addressing issues related to sustainable development. Only through the efforts of tertiary education do we understand the complexity of global climate change. Because, as Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said, “the academic community can help us connect the dots” it is imperative that the critical role of tertiary education in sustainable development be explicitly and regularly recognized in the outcomes document from UNCSD 2012.

Paul Rowland,
Executive Director
AASHE



Input for the Compilation Document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20, 2012

The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC) is the sustainability alliance for the United Kingdom. Established in 1996 the EAUC comprises 312 UK universities and colleges plus another 160 governmental, professional and support organisations and private companies.

Our vision is a university, college and learning and skills sector where the principles and values of environmental, economic and social sustainability are embedded.

Our mission is to lead, inspire and equip Members and stakeholders with a shared vision, knowledge and the tools they need to embed sustainability within curriculum and operations.

To develop a position to inform the Rio +20 submission, in October 2011 the EAUC conducted a survey of its members. We had a very significant response reflecting the aspiration (and frustration) from within the TE sector to play a more significant part in leading change. In addition to the survey a consultation event was held at the University of Exeter. I am grateful to EAUC Board Member Harriet Sjerps Jones at the University of Exeter for leading the EAUC response.

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Why the critical role of Tertiary Education Institutions to Global Sustainable Development must be central to Rio+20 discussions

The role that tertiary education can, should and does play in achieving sustainable development has often gone unrecognized and/or under represented. In the past two decades, it has become clear that tertiary education institutions:

- Provide relevant and critical education to our future government, business, industry, education and community leaders. By integrating sustainable development into curriculum, skills training and student development, tertiary education will equip the future with people who have the ethical principles, knowledge and capacity to positively impact the global economic and educational systems, to eradicate poverty and improve access to education for all;
- Are critical homes for the research that provides sustainable solutions to the complex problems of development. Indeed, Secretary Ban Ki-moon pointed out in his call for the world's academic community to find solutions to global hunger, water shortages, and energy issues, "the academic community can help us connect the dots"; and
- Serve as the "test beds" for examining the context in which innovative sustainability practices are executed. As these institutions implement a variety of context-specific sustainability practices through education and operations, they demonstrate the viability of these practices and provide models for sustainable development.

However, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is still not being supported at the national level. This is the conclusion of the UNESCO first report on the DESD (2009). International frameworks such as the UN DESD and UNFCCC have presented ESD models but these have not been implemented or supported by national agencies particularly in further and higher education.

In light of this, it is recommended that:

- Tertiary institutions and governments alike should provide resources and funding to facilitate the fundamental shift to embed sustainability in the curriculum, research, and operations of tertiary education. The development of tools, resources and appropriate professional development for academics and institutional leaders are required for this fundamental shift in our collective approach to sustainable development to be successful;
- Each tertiary institution within developed countries should partner and work with a tertiary institution from a developing country, for the purpose and mutual benefit of research, knowledge and resource exchange. Each institution should make this partnership explicit through registering on a dedicated UNCSD page, though we do have concerns that this could become a meaningless window-dressing exercise.
- Every tertiary institution should commit to sharing and learning from one another in the spirit of international partnership and long-term global societal benefit.
- Tertiary institutions will act as a locus for catalytic research, learning and action for a transition towards a 'Green Economy'. We are divided over the use of the words 'green economy' or 'green growth' as to many of us this still emphasises economy and growth, and could neglect the importance of social value like social capital and community participation.
- The EAUC would like to see Rio Plus 20 provide incentives and governance frameworks to

ensure that the role of education and learning for sustainability is understood by national agencies and supported through grants and other incentives particularly within FE and HE.

- Actions and implementation frameworks are being identified for Climate Change, Biodiversity, MDGS and similar thematic areas. ESD should have a similar set of actions and implementation framework which identifies what constitutes progress in ESD in TE (amongst other sectors).

Iain Patton

Chief Executive, EAUC