Development of the learning outcomes for sustainability at Illinois

The learning outcomes for campus sustainability coursework were developed by the Sustainability Education Task Force, a committee of faculty, staff and students from diverse units across campus, which was appointed by the Chancellor and Provost. The learning outcomes were drafted to be:

• Succinct with minimal technical jargon
• Directed at all university students regardless of major
• Meaningful to prospective students and their families
• Aligned with the campus mission for sustainability, including a focus on interconnections of food/water/energy
• Containing the essentials for sustainability
• Upbeat and compelling to people of diverse viewpoints

The following outcomes are offered with the primary intent of being a useful resource in enhancing campus course offerings related to sustainability. They are provided in the spirit of advancing sustainability to students at the University of Illinois and should not be viewed as an inclusive or final perspective on learning outcomes for sustainability. We seek comments from students, parents, faculty, staff, and the wider public about these learning outcomes. The campus Office of Sustainability has ongoing efforts to improve sustainability education and understand ways in which faculty have integrated sustainability into their courses. Comments may be sent to sustainability@illinois.edu.

Learning outcomes for sustainability (What every Illinois undergraduate should know)

The campus vision for sustainability is founded on a simple principle that the future of human societies depends upon the health of the world's environment and ecosystems. The vision embraces the goals of environmental, social, and economic vitality with the understanding that the needs of the present be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The University of Illinois will integrate its sustainability vision across the curriculum, such that, whatever their chosen discipline, each student will graduate with the following competencies:

Sustainability in day-to-day life

• Students will learn ways in which natural resources are used to produce what they consume, such as the food they eat, the water they drink, and the energy they use.
• Students will understand ways in which their lifestyle and well-being are interconnected with those of diverse producers and consumers around the world, including impoverished communities.

Sustainability knowledge and skills

• Students will learn core concepts of ecology and develop skills relevant to their chosen field to provide a basis for environmental sustainability.
• Students will learn to think holistically about sustainability using perspectives across multiple disciplines.

Sustainability as Personal Vision

• Students will understand relationships between global environmental and economic trends and their impact on diverse cultures and communities.
Students will develop an integrated vision for sustainability that embraces their personal lives, professions, local communities, and the world-at-large.