



District Academic Senate Sustainability Institute

Spring, 2016 Newsletter

April 27, 2016

Volume 2, Number 1

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• Resources for teaching Environmental Science and Environmental Studies

In a time of rising textbook prices and rising costs of higher education across the board, professors and students look to alternatives to the overpriced textbooks that we order and buy. A recent addition to the “open source” approach to learning materials shows how a very good textbook can be made available for free to students anywhere. Tom Theis and Jonathan Tomkin (eds.) have done just that in their bringing together a collection of chapters authored by twenty-eight scholars in different areas of environmental science and environmental studies. The book is called “[Sustainability: A Comprehensive Foundation](#)” and it is aimed at first and second year college students.

The beauty of the book is in its embrace of scientific research and well as social science research. The eleven chapters cover such topics as public policy, climate change, environmental economics, energy, the biosphere, and ethics. There are ample color images and graphics to illustrate both scientific data and conceptual systems. There are 600 pages of text, photos and charts, and a glossary of terms. The book compares well to some many of the textbooks we use already.

According to their [website](#)...With “Sustainability: A Comprehensive Foundation”, first and second-year college students are introduced to this expanding new field, comprehensively exploring the essential concepts from every branch of knowledge – including engineering and the applied arts, natural and social sciences, and the humanities. As sustainability is a multi-disciplinary area of study, the text is the product of multiple authors drawn from the diverse faculty of the University of Illinois: each

chapter is written by a recognized expert in the field.” It is certainly an alternative worth consideration. My students pay 120USD for a similar book.

• The LABC Sustainability Summit

This Friday, April 29, the [Los Angeles Business Council](#) is hosting its tenth [Sustainability Summit](#) at the Getty Center. Business and finance are well represented in the program, which starts at 7am and ends at 2pm. Senator Kevin de Leon will provide a keynote speech and attendees (at 175USD) will hear from energy and technology companies, key people in higher learning, and representatives of local government. There are opportunities for networking and lunch is provided. There is still time to [register!](#)

• EcoAdvocates at LAVC, TreePeople and Arbor Day



Students at Valley College’s organization, EcoAdvocates, are having a very busy year this spring taking on the huge task of caring for the ample and diverse tree collection that characterizes the campus as one of the greenest (where vegetation is concerned). In late March students worked with famed environmental org, [TreePeople](#) to replace mulch, pick weeds, remove debris and take care of young tulip trees on the Fulton entrance side of the campus. The well-attended event attracted



Our logo: The District learning tree is embedded in the “triple bottom line” of sustainable development: social justice, political equality and environmental sustainability. The SI endorses this approach to environmental education.



DAS Sustainability Institute

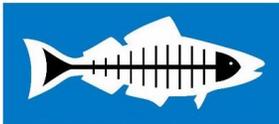
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students from many classes who learned to use [TreeMapLA](#) to inventory trees. This simple website (and [mobile app](#)) lets individuals upload information about trees anywhere in Los Angeles. This includes species names, size and health of the trees. EcoAdvocates president, Adrian Covarrubias, says that the task of inventorying the over 1200 trees on campus would take time and needs support from faculty and students. It is integral to EcoAdvocates co-hosting of Arbor Day on April 28. The event includes artwork, free lunch (no such thing) and live music and will be held in Monarch Hall from 9am to 2pm.

- **House bill considers creating a national park including LA County beaches.**



Heal the Bay

[Heal the Bay](#) is announcing plans by two LA area Congress members to bring the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (which includes Malibu beaches)

together with the County's miles of sandy beaches (as far south as San Pedro) into a new national park.



"The bill, introduced by South Bay Democratic Reps. Ted Lieu and Maxine Waters, would initiate a sweeping, yearslong scientific study of the potential effects on residents, wildlife, public trails and access to beaches and other recreational areas if the southern Los Angeles County coast is added to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

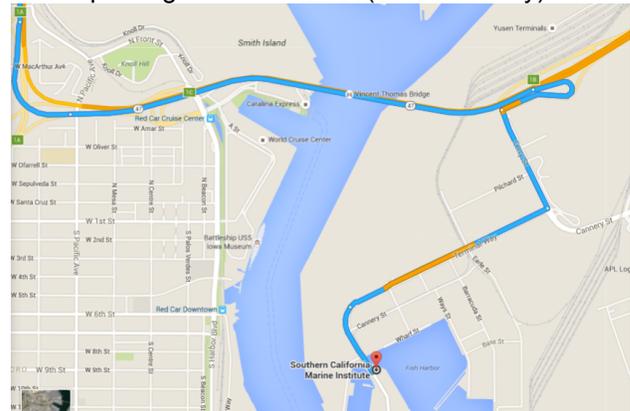
The Ballona Wetlands in Playa del Rey would be included, along with beaches from Santa Monica to San Pedro." (Daily Breeze)



- **SCMI tours coming up in May**

The SI has compiled a mailing list from every campus that will be used to invite faculty to shape the advisory committee for District use of the [Southern California Marine Institute](#) on Terminal Island. We are arranging for a facility tour and will come up with some dates.

GETTING TO SCMI FROM THE 110 HARBOR FREEWAY Take the 110 Harbor freeway south towards San Pedro. Exit at Rt. 47, the Vincent Thomas Bridge. Cross the bridge and exit at Ferry Street (the first exit coming down off the bridge), and turn left (onto Ferry) at the signal. Turn right onto Terminal Way (second signal). After one signal and two stop signs, the road curves left and becomes Seaside Avenue. After the curve, you'll see water on the left, after which SCMI is the first building, a tan two-story with a reddish fence along the street. Public parking is on the street (east side only).



- **Interview with David Beaulieu on the founding of the SI and its trajectory.**

When did the DAS first consider creating a Sustainability Institute?

We started in the summer of 2007. I had just gone downtown to serve as the DAS president, and I wanted to see if we couldn't take the Board's interest in sustainability in terms of our building projects, which were in full swing at that time, and expand that to our curriculum and our every day practices on the campuses. I knew some colleagues, like Don Gauthier and John Grimmer, who were also very interested in this, but wasn't sure what reaction I would get. We called our first meeting that October, and we had a very large turnout, in part due to all the interest in alternative energy and the prospect of federal funding.



What was the thinking about what it could do for the nine campus system?

We were always interested in changing the thinking of our colleagues and students—in raising their consciousness about the environment. We were very ambitious! We assumed our work would involve curricular change, adding an environmental dimension to as many courses as possible, all across the curriculum. In addition, we wanted to see changes in the practices on campuses, in terms of recycling and water management, et al.

Of all the items on the agenda for sustainability, what has been the one to resonate the most with faculty?

I'm not sure, to be honest. Climate change has certainly been the main topic of our discussions over the years.

In the time the SI has been active, we have also seen a rise in major environmental problems such as the drought and climate change impacts. How can community colleges confront these challenges inside and outside the campus? Can we make a difference?

We're just one piece of the puzzle, of course, but it's incumbent on us to do our part in educating the residents of Los Angeles to the dangers of climate change and the essential need for more action by all government agencies as well as corporations. There has been a great deal of progress in recent years, with the state of California leading the nation in many respects, but our work remains crucial. It's shocking still to see the extent to which climate change is not part of the national dialogue (look at the current presidential campaigns). We need to do everything we can to counter that denial.

The SI is not fully funded but has been able to see some projects come to fruition. What kind of support is needed to broaden and animate the SI's activities?

It's a great pity that the SI still is not funded in a substantial way. We thought we were close last year, but we didn't get the Board support we were hoping for. We should have at least two full-time faculty members working on the SI, guiding faculty, building connections, putting conferences together. All we have now is your own work at .5. We have had some successes, such as our participation in the SCMI, but those need to be developed. Honestly, I think the SI is just getting started. Hopefully, substantial funding will start this year. The chancellor has expressed his support, and we know there are interested Board members.

Now that you have retired and have time to dedicate to your own intellectual pursuits, what has brought you the most satisfaction?

I have lots of interests, actually. I'm reading philosophy again (it was my first major) and continuing to work on French. I've also gone back to Spanish, after a long absence. But environmental issues remain a paramount concern of mine. They always will be.



The once grand "Bunya Bunya" at Valley College. It was removed for a new Administration Building.