



Strategic Sustainability Consulting (SSC) President Jennifer Woofter worked with the University of Vermont (UVM) to deliver real-world Corporate Sustainability Training that meets the demands of today's business environment. Jennifer brought a wealth of insight and tangible experiences to the table in order to build a unique curriculum focused on sustainable principles and practices.

The Challenge

The need for a sustainability-trained workforce has never been higher. At the same time, employers are finding it difficult to fill sustainability-related jobs because candidates lack practical training and experience. Too many higher education programs focus on the theory of sustainability at the expense of the practical sustainability challenges and opportunities facing today's companies. UVM wanted to develop a sustainability program that helped to fill the void in practical, skills-based sustainability training. Curriculum had to be grounded in solid theory with a real-world focus from the corporate world. UVM said, "To meet this new demand, a need for personnel to develop an expertise in the best practices and strategies of sustainability has emerged. Today's organizations need trained subject matter experts to transform their standard operating practices in the proper direction."

The Solution

To meet this emerging education requirement, UVM worked with SSC to create a training program for business professionals as well as those who wish to specialize as sustainability experts of the future. Sustainability training had to be developed as a robust, global online program so individuals could participate even if they work full time. Jennifer Woofter outlined curriculum elements in the three-course certificate, identified subject matter experts, and delivered selected lectures on sustainability strategy development. "The most important aspect of the program," said Woofter, "was to present a real-world view of sustainability. Companies struggle with making sustainability profitable, dealing with trade-offs, and making tough decisions about what action and metrics to choose. I wanted students to feel confident walking into an organization and talking about the sustainability options on the table."

The Results

UVM online sustainability certificate programs provide a flexible way for today's organizations and busy professionals to learn the latest in sustainable operations models and maximize their current sustainability skills. Individual lectures are taught by industry experts with wide-ranging knowledge in campus and corporate sustainability. The interactive teaching platform creates a dynamic learning experience, enhanced by a combination of collaborative online classroom tools and instructor-led discussions delivered via streaming video. Courses, taken individually or as part of a certificate, focus on three different aspects of sustainability:

1. Principles & Strategies for Sustainability – practical aspects of developing a corporate sustainability strategy, engaging employees and stakeholders, and tracking and communicating sustainability performance
2. Sustainable Operations – applicability of a variety of sustainability subjects such as energy and climate, waste, water, green building, health and safety, transportation and logistics
3. Sustainability Best Practices & Implementation –advanced topics like carbon accounting, green supply chain management, sustainable product design, sustainable agriculture, and biomimicry

As students become trained sustainability experts, they are well-equipped to integrate sustainability into a company's bottom line. Student Rebecca LeBlanc said, "The program opened my eyes to how I could evolve into a knowledgeable sustainability professional who could walk into a company and add value from day one. Prior to taking the initial course I was floundering and wondering where my past 30 years of experience as a project manager would fit. After completing two of the three courses in the program, I confidently led two different life cycle assessments."

To learn more about the program visit <http://learn.uvm.edu/sustainability/> or UVM's Continuing Education website at www.universityofvermontonline.com.