

# Sustainable

Free organic oatmeal cookies, a reception at a New York City loft showcasing the work of artists committed to saving the planet, and a day-long carbon neutral seminar headlined by the sixth man to walk on the moon, astronaut Edgar Mitchell, Ph.D., are a few of the creative ways Fordham students, faculty and alumni are promoting sustainability and socially responsible business practices on and off campus.

Humanism and social justice are at the core of the University's Jesuit mission, making its increasing focus on sustainability a natural progression to the needs of the times and the human family. "There is a strong correlation between Jesuit teachings and decision-making in business," said Steven Colletta, a 2001 graduate of the Gabelli School of Business and vice president at Sciame Construction, who credits his Fordham education for encouraging students to use their education to "do the right thing."

Colletta is among scores of Fordham business alumni who are implementing innovative ideas and technologies in the global workforce to preserve the earth's resources. "Sustainable construction cuts waste and improves the world," he said. One of the most notable projects Colletta worked on is the nine-story, 175,000 square-foot academic building at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art located in downtown Manhattan at



# Older Minds

By  
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41 Cooper Square. Colletta oversaw construction from inception to completion of the first academic building in New York City to achieve LEED Platinum status, the U.S. Green Building Council's certification system.

"It was a great experience to create a sustainable building in an urban environment," Colletta said. "The end result is a tribute to the owner, architects [Morphosis and Gruzen Samton Architects] and contractor, a team that was completely aligned to the project goals."

The building's green design and construction features include radiant heating and cooling ceiling panels to increase energy efficiency; a building "skin" that reduces heat radiation in the summer and insulates the interior in winter; a full atrium to maximize natural light; a green roof that captures rainwater; and a cogeneration plant. Developed at a cost of \$150 million, much of the structure was created using recycled materials.

"Sustainability is creating new business opportunities in construction, an industry that cuts across so many fields—finance, marketing, public relations, technology and the building trades," Colletta said.

In business courses such as Principles of Management, Social Entrepreneurship and Leadership in the 21st Century, Michael Pirson, Ph.D., emphasizes how businesses can be "change agents" in an era when the global society is facing critical challenges—poverty, climate change and threats to natural resources. He also brings home the point that businesses can be socially responsible and profitable at the same time. "It is possible to do good while doing well," he added.

Students in Pirson's Social Entrepreneurship class choose a social issue and come up with ideas for businesses that address the issue and generate revenue. "I teach the class like a laboratory," Pirson said. "People



come in with their ideas and use them as their class project.” The course begins with students examining theory and case studies, and concludes with the creation of individual business plans. Pirson, who earned his doctorate at the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, brings hands-on, global experience to the classroom, having worked in international management consulting for many years and launching several social enterprises supporting economic development.

Sustainability is a priority among Fordham’s business faculty, administrators, students and alumni who are investigating its impact on global business and participating in new initiatives to respect the environment and contribute to the human society.

The Gabelli School, for example, participates in the United Nations Global Compact. This strategic policy aligns the international community and business world to embrace and promote universally accepted principles in human rights and environmental responsibility. It is the largest corporate citizenship and sustainability initiative in the world, with more than 4,700 participants and stakeholders from more than 130 countries.

Business faculty, administrators and students are also among 26 members of the Fordham community appointed to the University Sustainability Committee. Established in 2008 by Fordham University President Joseph M. McShane, S.J., and chaired by Marco Valera, vice

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president of facilities management, this group is dedicated to improving Fordham's "green" report card.

Frank Werner, Ph.D., and James Stoner, Ph.D., are among many business faculty members who teach sustainable development and socially and environmentally responsible corporate practices, and routinely publish research on these topics. The duo have collaborated on many research projects and publications over the past two decades, and currently teach courses such as Finance and Global Sustainability, Managing the Business Risks of Climate Change, The Arts and Global Sustainability, Spiritual and Religious Contributions to Global Sustainability, and Developing the Sustainability Mindset. Both educators have shared their perspectives in several co-authored papers and books and at industry and academic conferences.

In 2010, Sharon Livesey, J.D., inaugurated Communicating and Managing for Global Sustainability, a GBA course that serves as a foundation for students wishing to pursue a global sustainability degree designation. The course exposes students to readings on business social and environmental responsibility and case studies that demonstrate evolving practices of sustainable development.

"Examples include Seventh Generation, which had to address a customer communication challenge when there was a glitch in their supply chain, and TerraCycle, which had to deal with issues of growth and continual product innovation," Livesey said. "We also studied Coastwide Laboratories, a conventional industrial supply company that developed into a green products provider using an integrated production/distribution structure that gave them a competitive advantage."

Students learned how healthy eating, ecologically responsible farming and community building can be married with business principles to innovate new forms of business structure and practice from a guest lecturer who consults with businesses on these areas. The class also explored a model of microfinancing based on worker wage remittances and combing resources of NGOs, academics and community participants to develop and support local projects in the Philippines.

Livesey, whose primary research interest is in the relationship between business and the natural environment, has received recognition for her research on business partnerships with environmental NGOs. Currently, she is investigating climate change and corporate responsibility, assisted in her research by Catherine Migueis, a Boyle Scholar at the Gabelli School of Business.

James Weichert, who recently earned his M.B.A. at Fordham's Graduate School of Business Administration, dedicated himself to raising awareness of sustainability on campus through his involvement in Fordham's chapter of Net Impact, an international nonprofit that aims to use business to improve the world. As its outgoing president, Weichert set his sights on increasing active participation among 200-plus members of the club.

"Some of the events we held included a screening of *Tapped: the Movie*, concerning the business practices of the bottled water industry, and the 2010 UrbanGoGreen Expo, which brought together sustainable businesses in New York City and attracted an audience of more than 400 students, educators and professionals," Weichert said. "In both cases, these events created a dialogue on campus that is ongoing."

Held in October 2010 at Pope Auditorium, the daylong UrbanGoGreen Expo, themed "Greening the Culture," featured a concert, an eco-fashion show and a green economy business panel focusing on topics such as green careers and effective strategies for personal and environmental sustainability.

"Sustainability is an important topic for me because I see it as a strategic requirement for all future business leaders," said Weichert, who is pursuing a career in business intelligence. "The emerging nature of sustainability is not linear, and each of us will discover his or her own voice as we re-enter the business world." While he doesn't expect to tackle sustainable challenges immediately upon re-entering the workforce, Weichert hopes that his knowledge and interest in the field will be of service over time.

He adds, however, that some recent graduates are already employing sustainable practices in the field. One example is a former Net Impact president who is employed in the General Services Administration of the federal government and is implementing a sustainable blueprint.

"In his first position after graduating, he is already addressing the issues of a resource-constrained world," Weichert said. "Other alumni are working in venture capital and sustainable investing, and serving on sustainable task forces in their companies."

Weichert says that he is pleased he chose Fordham over other business schools in New York City, "specifically because of its ethical stance and its focus on sustainability. Both of these issues will be defining characteristics of the emerging business landscape."

—*Claire Curry is managing editor of Fordham Business.*