

Sustainable Business

Sustainable business practices aim to build profitability and economic stability while being mindful of the environment and promoting local communities. By using materials and/or operations that are less harmful to the environment, not only does the local community and physical environment benefit, but the company employing sustainable business practices can benefit too: for example, by saving expenses from not having to handle potentially harmful raw materials and/or byproducts, or by possibly creating a superior product. Sustainable business practices embrace such concepts as *biomimicry* (studying nature and then imitating or adapting it to solve human problems), recycling, a “triple-bottom line” mindset (measuring success by not only traditional “bottom line” benchmark of economic profit, but also evaluating social justice and environmental “profit”), and whole-system thinking. Sustainable business programs attract socially and environmentally conscious students with an interest in business and a desire to help others acquire an understanding of the natural world’s role in our lives.

299

Typical Courses:

- > Principles of Accounting
- > Principles of Management
- > Principles of Marketing
- > Financial Management
- > Ethics and the Ecology of Commerce
- > Cases in Sustainable Business
- > Spreadsheets
- > Microeconomics
- > Introduction to Environmental Studies
- > Environmental Chemistry
- > Industrial Ecology
- > Environmental Business Management
- > Sustainable Energy Systems
- > Environmental Regulatory Compliance
- > Environmental Economics and Policy

Potential Employers:

- > Energy industry
- > Manufacturing industry

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- > Service industry
- > Nonprofit organizations
- > Government agencies
- > Virtually any business

Available At:

Aquinas College (Grand Rapids, MI)

616/632-8900

tuethmat@aquinas.edu

www.aquinas.edu/sb

Degrees available: Certificate, bachelor's degree, master's degree

Arizona State University (Tempe, AZ)

480-727-6963

<http://schoolofsustainability.asu.edu/degrees/index.php>

Degrees available: Bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, doctorate

Catawba College (Salisbury, NC)

704/637-4110

www.catawba.edu/academic/sustainablebusiness/majors.asp

Degrees available: Bachelor's degree

Missouri Southern State University (Joplin, MO)

417/625-9341

www.mssu.edu/ecconomics

Degrees available: Certificate (ecconomics)

300

For More Information:

Center for Sustainability at Aquinas College

www.centerforsustainability.org

Lowell Center for Sustainable Production

<http://sustainableproduction.org>

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development

www.wbcd.org

Interview: Matthew Tueth

Dr. Matthew Tueth, Professor and Sustainable Business Department Chairman at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, discussed his program with the editors of *They Teach That in College!*

Q. What is sustainable business?

A. Sustainable business (SB) is a strategy for making and distributing goods and services in a way that simultaneously

increases long-term profits, the health of the natural world, and human community health. Since August 2003, Aquinas College has offered a bachelor of science degree in sustainable business, a minor in sustainable business, and a six-course certificate in sustainable business.

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- Q.** What type of internship opportunities are provided by your program?
- A.** Each student working toward a B.S. in sustainable business is required to complete an internship. A requirement of the internship is to engage the interning student in activities that allow them to apply SB theory to practical business situations. Internships may be arranged outside the West Michigan region.
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- Q.** What classes should high school students take to prepare for study in this major?
- A.** High school students intending to major in sustainable business should take classes in conventional business, environmental studies, environmental science, chemistry, biology, and physics.
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- Q.** Where do sustainable business graduates find employment?
- A.** Sustainable business graduates are employed in virtually every business sector and type—energy, manufacturing, service; private businesses, non-profits, and government; small, medium, and large-sized businesses. The broad application of SB practices and principles may surprise the typical student.
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- Q.** How will the field of sustainable business change in the future?
- A.** Sustainable business will increase exponentially as more businesses learn about the competitive advantage that it provides as it produces long-term value for the community, the natural world, and for business itself. SB decreases production costs while delivering these benefits.