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Oliver Balch, Latin America Editor
10 Nov 07

Older buildings more difficult to make green

Exxon Mobil: A proud oil giant comes to the climate change policy table

ExxonMobil is confused about climate transparency

Business, human rights and the UN: John Ruggie – the story so far

Greening campuses

Academics are increasingly teaching sustainability, but how sustainable are the actual academies in which they teach? Greener and greener, argues Lea Kosnik, in this assessment of US higher education institutions.

The number of sustainable initiatives on campus more than doubled (from 250 to 629) between 2005 and 2006, according to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.
Green construction leads the way, with energy minimisation and water consumption now consistently on deans’ blueprint plans. Three-quarters of universities, for example, now consider the benchmark Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards in all new builds. Other innovations cited in this short paper include student recycling competitions, campus wind turbines and energy-saving “Vending Miser” vending machines.

What’s motivating the shift though? Positive media attention and increased donations are certainly playing a role. So too student pressure.

But do these initiatives pass a benefit-cost test? Funnily enough, the academics have yet to turn their mind to this one. Anecdotal evidence remains equivocal. Middlebury College, for example, is set to open an $11 million biomass plant in 2008. It plans to replace fuel oil for wood chips, only wood chips turn out to be in short supply. Dare we ask how many PhDs it takes to change a light bulb?


Campus news

The co-ordinating committee of the Principles for Responsible Management Education – a new United National Global Compact initiative aimed at promoting corporate responsibility in business schools – announced its intention to engage 150 institutions before the end of 2008. Also on the cards is a set of good practices for implementing and reporting on the Principles.

The California-based Presidio School of Management is launching a new executive programme in sustainable management. Run in conjunction with US law firm Hanson Bridgett, the ten-month course is designed for senior-level managers, executives and entrepreneurs.

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