**Introduction to Sustainability**

**Action to Enhance Sustainability**

**Grading Criteria**

**Examples of Previous Student Projects on Enhancing Sustainability**

The action you will conduct this semester is worth 20% of you grade, so do take some care in planning how you will carry it out, and following through on the timetable you set for yourself.

Grading Criteria

In determining your final grade I will weigh various criteria, the most important of which are described briefly in the following bullets:

* Quality of written final report: Please **carefully read and follow the instructions** provided in the paper “Notes on Content of Final Report,” which you can download as a file under the folder “Action to Enhance Sustainability” at the eLearning course website.

* Time allotted on action: For maximum credit, you should invest 10 hours of work on your action during the semester.
* Impact of action: As described in “Notes on Content of Final Report,” you are required to quantify, to the extent feasible, the tangible implications of your action. For example, if you reduce your automobile driving, you could estimate how many gallons of gasoline/tons of CO2 you saved; if you conduct a recycling project, you could estimate how much energy and CO2 you saved by recycling aluminum cans and plastic bottles. There is no explicit requirement for how much gasoline or how many cans/bottles you save, which will be somewhat restricted by the 10-hour time frame of the project. But, obviously, projects that stand out because of their high impacts will likely receive the highest grades.
* Individual actions versus actions influencing other people: Projects may vary in scope, from those that affect you as an individual alone to those that affect several or more persons. Your grade will not depend directly on how many people you influence. You can receive an excellent grade for an individual project depending on its quality, and how significantly it influenced your thinking about personal choices that enhance sustainability in your life. As an example, students in previous semesters chose to lower their meat consumption and prepared vegetarian meals. This was an excellent project because of its originality, and the experience it provided for the students to explore the switch to a more healthy, sustainable diet.

On the other hand, projects that influence more than one person are valuable because of the multiplier effect - they have the potential to not only enhance sustainability in your life but in others as well. Hence, I will look favorably on projects that reach out to others. As an example, students in previous semesters have started recycling campaigns in their apartments involving their roommates, and even including participants from other apartments in their complex. They received excellent grades because they encouraged other students to recycle who previously had no interest in doing so. Moreover, the quantity of items recycled is many times more than recycling as an individual.

As an example involving even more people, one student established a recycling program at the day care center where she worked. In addition to setting up recycling bins, collecting the recyclables and taking them to a recycling center, she wrote lesson plans and taught the children about recycling. This was a truly exceptional project, not only because she initiated a recycling program where previously none had existed, but also because it instilled the value of recycling in children at an age when values are most likely to be adopted into adult behavior patterns.

Examples of Previous Student Projects on Enhancing Sustainability

1. Reduce driving/gasoline use: walk, bike, and/or carpool; do car maintenance – tune carburetor, adjust tire pressure – to improve gas mileage of car.

2. Eat more sustainably: change your diet by reducing meat consumption/cooking own vegetarian meals; buy more organic/local food; grow your own garden; compost food wastes.

3. Recycle more: Establish recycling campaign in house/apartment/dormitory/sorority/place of work; set up bins for sorting aluminum cans, plastic bottles, glass, paper; collect used cell phones/chargers; collect recycled stuff and deposit at recycling center..

4. Reuse more: Reuse bottles, other commodities as an alternative to disposal and buying new ones. Students reused water bottles; used coffee mugs rather than paper cups, silverware/dishes rather than paper plates and plastic utensils. {Note: reuse is generally a far better alternative than recycling with regard to enhancing sustainability.}

5. Improve energy/resource efficiency in your home: replace inefficient lights; seal cracks/leaks in insulation; turn off lights/computers/appliances when not in use; plant trees [shade in summer/wind protection in winter]; install low-flow shower heads/faucets; build and install a solar heater in your home.