



Sustainability Education Fellows Program

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Background and Need for the Fellows Program

There are several individuals working on sustainability projects at various educational institutions throughout the country. Too often, they are isolated and disconnected from each other within each campus and across campuses. *Additionally, they are often disconnected from national and international sustainability initiatives. To strengthen educational based sustainability projects, these individuals need colleagues and mentors to connect with, assist them with their questions, and nurture their leadership skills.*

Fellows will be encouraged to:

- Improve the collection and analysis of sustainability related data,
- Foster and strengthen the value of sustainability efforts by the academic disciplinary associations and their members,
- Promote interdisciplinary and cross functional collaborations on sustainability education, and
- Develop training and pedagogical support for future fellows.

On the national level, people are needed to work:

- On national disciplinary association level projects;
- As conference presenters and institutional catalysts;
- As mentors and facilitators.

Logistics

Fellows would be sponsored by their disciplinary association in collaboration with DANS. The disciplinary associations can customize the criteria for being a fellow, but it would be somewhat like the following.

Criteria:

- Must apply to be a fellow;
- Must be employed by an educational institution
- Must have certain level of experience doing sustainability work (e.g. 3 years);
- Must have demonstrated success with sustainability efforts (please list examples in application);
- Must be available to talk to others that have questions for, on average, one hour per week;

- Must be willing to help on national projects in sustainability (minimum commitment 4-5 hours per week).

The Fellows designation would not come with funds. It would provide status and recognition to the accepted applicants *and be formally recognized by DANS and the sponsoring disciplinary association. The terms would be for two years with renewal possible by filing a renewal application. With such a structure, the numbers of fellows would continue to grow, helping to increase the number of mentors and volunteer hours for national projects. The renewal application could be denied by the sponsoring association and DANS if the fellow is not meeting his/her commitments for mentoring and national work.*

The DANS website would host a Sustainability Fellows page. Each DANS member association would then list their fellows on this page. This would facilitate individuals, particularly those on campuses, searching to find Fellows within their own area of responsibility (or within their own association), find Fellows in their own geographic area, as well as across associations and institutions. [There will also be a cross link to Higher Education Sustainability Fellows in the areas of campus operations, administration and campus activities. This is a similar fellows program being offered by the Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium (www.heasc.net).]

To start with a healthy and strong group of Fellows, each participating disciplinary association would identify and invite *up to* 3 candidates to be the first Fellows. The goal would be 2 - 3 fellows for each participating association for the first round.

Benefits

There is a group of experienced sustainability practitioners in various sectors of the academic community whose knowledge is of great value to their colleagues, however currently there is no well-known center where these individuals can be found. There is also a need to foster and incentivize the development of more sustainability experts in all facets of education. This Sustainability Fellows program will have the benefits of:

- Bringing expert practitioners together nationally so they are accessible to others looking for advice, speakers, mentors, etc.;
- Creating a space where expert practitioners (i.e. fellows) can collaborate, identify synergies between their efforts, and learn to better work across association boundaries;
- Providing credentials to incentivize practitioners to engage beyond their organization, bring the needed experience and expertise to national associations in an organized way.

Closing

In closing, the Sustainability Education Fellows program will create a progressive climate for academic professionals that encourage collaboration, innovation, and forward thinking for sustainability in formal education.

More broadly, the Fellows program will create a committed group of change agents to help drive sustainability projects in conjunction with DANS and the DANS member associations. This fellows program will develop a stronger critical mass to serve the DANS goals. The fellows will help formal education include sustainability education in multiple disciplines and create a more sustainable society.

