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Topic: Greening Objectives

Consider this question:

What makes a place a good educational environment? One would want to consider how effectively campus space is utilized for instruction, for independent study, for reflection, for cultural and recreational activities, for club and organizational activities, for activities that promote physical well-being including exercise and nutrition.

Classrooms:

- Consider furnishing and materials used: how environmentally friendly are they?
- Would it, for instance be more cost-effective to use tile rather than carpeting on classroom floors?
- Should pressboard be used for classroom furniture?
- What about lighting, cooling, heating?
- Are they adequate, insufficient, too much?
- Should each classroom be fitted with a thermostat?
- What is the impact of these choices on energy consumption, fossil fuel utilization, and cost of operation?
- Would alternative sources be more effective or appropriate?

Parking:

- Consider the green places that have been traded for parking spaces.
- Consider the energy usage represented by the vehicles routinely parked on campus.
- Consider the pollution cost (ecological impact) of all these vehicles.
- To what extent would public transport represent a viable alternative transport?
- What about non-motorized bicycles as an alternative to driving?
- Consider the choice of motor vehicles. On what basis is choice made between a sub-compact, compact, large car, pick-up, or SUV – need or fashion?
- What additional costs in fossil fuel consumption, environmental pollution, and health degradation are incurred by these choices?

Nutritional Habits:

Consider the options – bringing meals prepared at home; going to the cafeteria and choosing from among the following: salad bar, deli, restaurant, fast food; using the vending machines on campus; eating off campus. Consider the choice of beverages – water (bottled or from a fountain); sodas, fruit juices; tea; coffee.

- How well are nutritional needs served by these choices?
- How cost effective are they?
- What kind of trash is generated as a result of the choices made?
- How biodegradable are the products?
- May they be recycled?
- What provisions are made for their recycling on campus?
- What is the environmental impact of litter?

- What impact does it have on the quality of our lives?
- To what extent do we accept responsibility for litter?

Other Health related Matters:

- What are the advantages of using the stairs rather than the elevator?
- What use is made of the gymnasium? The swimming pool? The track and sport field?
- At what rate does one walk around campus?
- Should the entire campus be a no smoking zone?
- What changes in any of these areas would be beneficial to the environment, to each other, and to ourselves?

Assignment:

Take some time for thoughtful reflection. How is your own behavior reflected here? Choose any one area where you feel you could make a positive change or have a positive impact. Write a typed, one page plan for implementing that change.