Leading the Way Towards Sustainability:  
The Taylor's Lakeside Campus Approach

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Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to elaborate the various strategic sustainable plans that are developed in the design and management of a modern private institution of higher learning (IHL) in Malaysia. The study is intended to capture some of the principles of sustainability that is well adopted in the design and management of this lakeside eco-campus. The study highlights the successful design of the IHL including the “green” You Hotel, that has taken consideration of the eco-sustainability concept and the incorporation of the IHL’s Sustainability Action Plan in teaching, research, community engagement, healthy campus and corporate greening. The IHL’s two community-engagement initiative is also highlighted in this paper. In conclusion, the IHL’s approach for rolling out a systemic adoption of the principles and practices of education for sustainable development is timely and essential in the current era of climate change uncertainties.

1. Introduction

The concept of sustainability has become the buzzword of late. All industries are trying to associate themselves in trying to be seen as doing good for the environment. The higher education sector has also joined the bandwagon by trying to label their campus as “eco” [1], “green” [2],[3], “environmentally friendly”[4], “responsible” [5], “sustainable” [6] and the list can go on and on. For the purpose of this paper, the concept “sustainable” will be used to encompass the above terms. Nonetheless, there is a lack of holistic approach in trying to understand and adopt this sustainable concept as a campus lifestyle. Subsequently, this lifestyle will take these students further when they graduate and take their productive place as leaders in the global community.

Sustainable development has been variously defined over the past decade, WTO’s original definition was first introduced in 1987 via the Brundland Report [6]. The definition, “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, may be fetched today. How do we put this macro definition into practice in a real campus environment?

Even since 2002, governments across the globe have made firm commitments to address critical issues that affect the sustainable development, mainly water, energy, health, agriculture, and biodiversity (WEHAB) – and climate change, unbalanced production and consumption and overpopulation [9].

Thus, institutions of higher learning (IHL) have a key role in the transformational and capacity-building that is required to tailor the future graduates. IHLs have to become agents of change that promote development which is ecologically, socially and economically sustainable. It is essential for IHLs to break away from the tactics of rhetoric and to act with determination.

IHL planners, architects, and facilities managers can play a critical role in promoting environmental responsibility by developing a sustainable and green campus.

Some of the organisational ingredients or building blocks of an effective campus sustainable programme [3] include: (a) obtaining top level support from the leadership of the IHL; (b) focus on facilities with assistance from the facilities management team; (c) organise a sustainable awareness programme to change the understanding and culture of the campus; (d) different strokes for different folks as the outreach for any programme must be audience specific; (e) establish and institutionalize sustainable policies and authorize actions to achieve compliance; (f) go for the gold and do not pick the cherries where significant sources of energy waste should be identified and targeted as priorities for campus conservation efforts; (g) overcome financial disincentives and provide incentives; (h) exercise choice and buy green power; (i) design right (and green) in the first place; and (j) document benefits and celebrate success.

Hence, the main aim of this case study is to understand and share the various strategic plans that were developed and being developed in the design and management of a private IHL in Malaysia to make the campus sustainable and eco-friendly.

2. Project Approach

IHLs have broad impacts on the world around them, both negative and positive. The activities pursued by IHLs can create a variety of adverse environmental
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