Redesigning Arizona State University: A focus on sustainability

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Everyone can help find sustainability solutions

Volcanologists are asked:

• Are eruption frequencies increasing? Adaptation

• Did Pinatubo cause global cooling? Variable climate

• How to convey what has not yet been experienced? Overcoming public apathy
Every institution can also contribute

- Complex problems require multidisciplinary solutions
- Each region and discipline has its own examples
- Start locally to address global problems
- Sustainability solutions need input from all departments
- How can administrators facilitate such participation?
ASU, like every university, has had a unique path:

- **1970s-80s**: CES
- **1996**: CAP-LTER
- **1999 (2005)**: IGERT(s)
- **2002**: M. Crow to ASU
- **2004**: Temozon retreat
- **2005**: J. Wrigley gift; GIOS; Decision Theater; CAS-ASU JCUS
- **2006**: Decision Center for a Desert City; EPA SMART Center; John Browne BP visit; CAS-ASU JCUS; School of Sustainability
- **2007**: Chief Sustainability Office
Prioritizing sustainability tests institutional flexibility

- Where should sustainability be housed?
- How to create an identity for a school of “shared” faculty?
- How to re-distribute resources (lines, raises, T.A.s)?
- How to balance fundamental and applied research?
- What is healthy inter- and intra-institutional competition?
Why are we encouraged that experiment will work?

• Context: 14 schools launched at ASU in past 4 years
• Interdisciplinarity emphasized in internal reward system
• Builds on experience of five NSF IGERTs
• Based on input from world’s leading sustainability experts
• Regional planning relying increasingly on ASU input
• Industrial partners looking for these kinds of graduates
• Students very enthusiastic about existing courses