



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

## **Doctor of Philosophy**

**David M. Iwaniec**

Will defend his dissertation

### **Crafting Sustainability Visions - Integrating Visioning Practice, Research, and Education**

#### **Abstract**

Sustainability visioning (i.e., the construction of sustainable future states) is considered an important component of sustainability research, for instance, in transformational sustainability science or in planning for urban sustainability. Visioning frees sustainability research from the dominant focus on analyzing problem constellations and opens it towards positive contributions to social innovation and transformation. Calls are repeatedly made for visions that can guide us towards sustainable futures. Scattered across a broad range of fields (i.e. business, non-government organization, land-use management, natural resource management, sustainability science, urban and regional planning) are an abundance of visioning studies. However, among the few evaluative studies in the literature there are apparent deficits in both the research and practice of visioning that curtails our expectations and prospects of realizing process-based and product-derived outcomes. These deficits suggests that calls instead should focus on the development of applied and theoretical understanding of crafting sustainability visions, enhancing the rigor and robustness of visioning methodology, and on integrating practice, research, and education for collaborative sustainability visioning.

From an analysis of prominent visioning and sustainability visioning studies in the literature, this dissertation articulates what is sustainability visioning and synthesizes a conceptual framework for criteria-based design and evaluation of sustainability visioning studies. While current visioning methodologies comply with some of these guidelines, none adhere to all of them. From this research, a novel sustainability visioning methodology is designed to address this gap to craft visions that are shared, systemic, principles-based, action-oriented, relevant, and creative (i.e. SPARC visioning methodology) and evaluated across all quality criteria.

Empirical studies were conducted to test and apply the conceptual and methodological frameworks — with an emphasis on enhancing the rigor and robustness in real world visioning processes for urban planning and teaching sustainability competencies. In-depth descriptions of the collaborative visioning studies demonstrate tangible outcomes for: (a) implementing the above sustainability visioning methodology, including evaluative procedures; (b) adopting meaningful interactive engagement procedures; (c) integrating advanced analytical modeling, sustainability appraisal, and creativity enhancing procedures; and (d) developing perspective and methodological capacity for long-range sustainability planning.

Tuesday, November 19, 2013

2:00 pm

Brick Yard Orchid House, Decision Theater, Rm. 188

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Arnim Wiek (Chair)

Dr. Daniel Childers

Dr. Tim Lant