



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Sustainability Solutions (MSUS)

Meghan Marrin

Will present her Master's Culminating Experience Project

Certifications as a Pathway to Sustainable Festivals and Events

Abstract

Events and festivals have traditionally produced a high number of negative impacts. The greatest impacts come from emissions due to attendee and staff travel, as well as the transportation of festival and event staging equipment. Single use products for catering and camping and recreation create large amounts of waste, and events can damage host sites that local taxpayers must pay for. There are often missed opportunities to contribute to the local economy because events typically outsource their staff and vendors.

Some festivals actively reduce impacts through hiring local staff and vendors, promoting efforts and including attendees through gamification activations. They utilize campground donation bins, host waste bin design contests, distribute recycling rewards for opportunities to upgrade tickets, and promote carpooling.

Green certifications are great tool for both attendees to distinguish festivals as sustainable, and for festival management teams to highlight their festivals efforts. Certifications also give events a competitive advantage against others by enhancing their image. Events and festivals generally are operating more sustainably and are interested in obtaining green certifications; however, they don't typically know which certifications exist and which will fit them best based on their values. Currently there is no list or guide in existence to assist them in their search, and researching certifications is very time consuming.

To assist an interested event or festival management team in deciding which certification is best for which company based on their values, I have designed a decision-making tool. This tool coupled with a sustainable management guide could push the event and festival industry towards operating sustainably long term.

Friday, May 1, 2020

1:10 p.m.

Zoom Meeting (link will be provided to registrants)

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Sustainability Solutions (MSUS)

Abby Johnson

Will present her Master's Culminating Experience Project

Oui Nous Pouvons: Subverting the Single Story of Sustainable Development

Abstract

Effective sustainability communication is essential to the successful creation, implementation and maintenance of effective sustainability solutions. As journalists are often the intermediary between sustainability scientists or practitioners and the general public, they have a responsibility to learn how to tell these stories in a way that motivates audiences to design and support more substantive solutions. My project is an experiment in this kind of sustainability storytelling.

As a Peace Corps Volunteer in Togo, I saw firsthand the harm that ineffective storytelling can do. There, the dominant narrative of sustainable development – as something Northern citizens do in the South – has had a dampening effect on grassroots development efforts. In an effort to combat this narrative, I created a short-form documentary that follows the stories of one exemplary Togolese changemaker who successfully developed his own solutions to sustainability challenges in his community. The film was published online in both English and French; shared with staff, Volunteers and local counterparts of Peace Corps Togo; and modified into a shorter video profile for distribution via WhatsApp, the primary social media platform in Togo.

Focus groups organized to evaluate audience responses to the film indicated that it effectively elicits feelings of hope and inspiration in viewers, as well as an increased motivation to address problems in viewers' local communities. Participants also noted that its emphasis on local-led solutions counteracted Western development myths. This early feedback supports a growing body of evidence that solutions journalism more effectively spurs behavior change than its problem-centric counterpart. It also suggests that shifting the focus of development narratives from foreign to local leaders can also shift audience's perceived agency.

Friday, May 1, 2020

1:30 p.m.

Zoom Meeting (link will be provided to registrants)

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Sustainability Solutions (MSUS)

Hanna Layton

Will present her Master's Culminating Experience Project

Epic-Cure to Crisis Mitigation

Abstract

The original intent of the project was to attempt to mitigate the complex sustainability issue of systematic food waste via creating a guide that would educate users how to create a food saving organization that prevents edible food from ending up in landfills. The guide was going to be based on a nonprofit organization my family and I founded called Epic Cure, that has activated programs that serve to relieve community food insecurity, encourage community connectedness, support environmental health, and empower youth with entrepreneurial opportunity. The development of the guide was going to be based on my personal experience developing and running the organization, as well as my understanding of sustainable systems and frameworks. However, the original scope and plan of this project has shifted considerably since the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. I have decided to put the guide on hold so that I can step into a space of agency via working in real time, to adapt my organization so that we can continue to operate when we are most needed. This shift is a response to the health and economic crisis that continues to unfold daily. In order to sustain the wellbeing of communities, the adaptation of a food aid service in the time of the crisis is an imminent need.

I look at this project not just as an immediate relief service project, but an opportunity to observe the fragility of the globalized and capitalistic systems that the U.S. society is dependent on. It is an opportunity to see the systematic weaknesses that are normally hidden or overlooked. For my organization, it is an opportunity to think not just about the short term sustainability of our community, but about what we can develop so that after when things begin to normalize, we can reach a better than before state, rather than a business as usual state.

Friday, May 1, 2020

1:50 p.m.

Zoom Meeting (link will be provided to registrants)

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Sustainability Solutions (MSUS)

Nick Shivka

Will present his Master's Culminating Experience Project

Together We Brew – Sustainable Beverage Business Incubator

Abstract

Together We Brew is a sustainable beverage business incubator that empowers its participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to own and operate a sustainable beverage business that is a strong player in Phoenix's local food economy. The incubator program coaches participants in capacity and skill building modules that are in line with what is necessary for a viable food business start-up including product development, site selection, fundraising and budgeting, business plan creation, and co-operative business training. At the end of the incubator program, participants will have developed the knowledge, skills, and connections necessary to start their business.

Such employee-owned food businesses with a foundation in sustainability are a response to large corporations with long, complex supply chains that maximize profits, use low-wage labor, ignore the seasonality of produce, and mass-produce highly processed foods. Economic policies provide millions in tax incentives to such corporations, driving out local competition and reducing options for employment, food and services. If left unchecked these corporations will continue contributing to urban heat, climate change, negative health impacts, and more. Actors across various sectors must collaborate towards solutions that bring balance to the food economy and one way is to reinvent and re-localize beverage production. Many of the beverages that are brought into Arizona can just as easily be grown or processed here and made healthier, bringing benefits for workers, the community, and the environment. That's what *Together We Brew* stands for.

Friday, May 1, 2020

Zoom Meeting (link will be provided to registrants)

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Sustainability Solutions (MSUS)

Nicholas Napoda

Will present his Master's Culminating Experience Project

The Phoenix Zoo: From Visit to Action

Abstract

Zoos are popular community assets which, while offering family entertainment, are also uniquely positioned to influence our care and concern for other species and the environment. Zoos can be venues for visitors to explore our human-nature relationships and cultivate values with which we navigate our lives—instrumental in determining the legacy we pass on to future generations. While zoos are coming under increasing pressure to adapt in modern society, the Phoenix Zoo has successfully established itself within professional communities as a conservation leader. However, despite a strong focus on the animals, the Phoenix Zoo is challenged to engage its audience in its mission or to share the extent of its conservation activities. An entertainment-based experience results in risks of visitor engagement, long term financial security, and misalignments in mission and execution. My project uses an organizational approach to sustainability to understand the Zoo's critical challenges and find opportunities to exploit strategic alignments between the Zoo's core values and sustainable outcomes. My analysis shows that conservation and visitation remain largely siloed within the Phoenix Zoo, with educational and interpretive opportunities either poorly represented or locked behind a paywall or group-based access structure. Using case-study examples as guidance, this project produced a change strategy that explores multiple solutions to overcome these roadblocks and expand Zoo's development of educational and emotional interpretive learning pathways for guests. This not only expands the Zoo's influence by affecting individual growth towards environmentally responsible behavior, but also grow critical, long-term member and donor revenue for the Zoo, ensuring for a financially stable future for the organization to pursue its mission.

Friday, May 1, 2020

2:30 p.m.

Zoom Meeting (link will be provided to registrants)

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.