



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

## **Master of Sustainability Solutions (MSUS)**

### **Salomi Pradhan**

Will present her Master's Applied Project

#### **STERN PRODUCE: Developing sustainability metrics for "ARIZONA FRESH TOGETHER" local food program**

##### **Abstract**

Local food systems are now facing a new set of intersecting economic, social and environmental challenges. Recurrent socio-economic and biophysical changes put the sustainability of food systems at risk. There is an urgent need to develop knowledge-based tools or metrics to assess and monitor food sustainability and to identify pathways for food security and resource conservation.

Stern Produce is a small scale, family owned business that has been serving our local Arizona community for a 100 years now since 1917. Essentially, it is a food distribution company that conducts wholesale supply of agricultural farm produce, dairy products and meat. Their mission is to supply the freshest fruits, vegetables and specialty food products with a first-class customer delivery experience. Recently, it has embraced the responsibility to conduct business in a manner that fosters societal resilience, invests in community wellness and environmental health. In order to do so, Stern has introduced an exclusive local food program in their organization named as the Arizona Fresh Together (AFT) program. The AFT program is intended to serve as a sourcing platform for the local restaurants and retail stores to procure sustainable food from our valley based local organic growers.

This project, in partnership with Stern Produce's Sustainability Manager, aimed to identify core comprehensive sustainability metrics to develop sustainability baseline indicators and assess the impacts of these indicators on the three tenets of sustainability: economy, environment and society, in addition to human health and wellness. By formulating these metrics, Stern Produce acknowledges the significance of transparency in their business operations and changing their business model towards a triple bottom line orientation. Based on the findings, the

project assisted Stern in identifying the intervention points and facilitated cross departmental engagement in the AFT program in order to encourage value added business operations.

Friday, December 1, 2017  
11:00 a.m.  
Wrigley Hall, 481

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.



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## **Master of Sustainability Solutions (MSUS)**

**Caitlin Burwell**

Will present her Master's Applied Project

### **Sustainable Purchasing Policy Elements That Relate to Implementation Success**

#### **Abstract**

Sustainable purchasing has become an increasingly salient way by which local governments can decrease their resource consumption, while also addressing broader climate action goals. Successfully implemented sustainable purchasing policies have the potential to reduce consumption and waste, expand green purchasing markets, and catalyze spillover benefits such as financial savings. Furthermore, city-level actions have become increasingly significant as the federal government ceases critical climate research and pulls out of collaborative climate deals (i.e. The Paris Climate Accord). Using data from the Sustainable Purchasing Research Initiative at Arizona State University's Center for Organization Research and Design, as well as qualitative policy analyses, the author investigates the elements of a city's sustainable purchasing policy (SPP) that are related to its implementation success. Furthermore, the author compares these initial findings to the case study of Phoenix, AZ where she explores whether these elements are also present in the City of Phoenix's sustainable purchasing policy. The author finds that six key policy elements are generally associated with higher SPP implementation success rates – mandatory requirements, accountability, multi-level governance, vendor requirements, advocacy, and continual improvement. While additional policy elements undoubtedly play a role in the successful implementation of a SPP, the author concludes cities that incorporate these specific elements are better positioned for successful and sustainable implementation. Conclusions further show that the City of Phoenix's 2007 SPP contained only two of these policy elements. As a result of this project and the author's work with the City, the 2017 revised SPP incorporates all six policy elements.

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## **Master of Sustainability Solutions (MSUS)**

### **James Sponsler**

Will present his Master's Applied Project

### **Recycling, Composting, and Sustainability Education at Expeditors International in Phoenix**

#### **Abstract**

This project explored the potential effectiveness of sustainable initiative programs in a typical office setting. The project area was focused on the Arizona offices of Expeditors International, a global, Fortune 500, third-party logistics company. The goal of the project was to set up recycling and composting services as well as create a culture of sustainability through educational materials distributed through various means to the employees. Throughout the project, it was discovered that there can be many barriers to effective implementation of sustainable initiatives, such as resistance to change and possible negative feelings towards sustainability projects in general. However, this project also highlighted that with a reasonable amount of effort and a strong logic behind the why, it is possible to shift the behaviors of normal office workers. There was little to no sustainability knowledge or initiatives present before this project in Expeditors' Phoenix office. However, this project showed that using small improvements and occasional reminders of the value of being sustainable, behavior can be altered for the better. Despite the obstacles and challenges that are present in every office setting, this project has provided evidence that similar initiatives are very possible and can have a large impact for a company and for the planet.

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