

Green Business Education

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Research from the Beyond Grey Pinstripes, a project of the Aspen Institute and World Resources Institute, finds that traditional business schools are doing more to expose their students to ideas of social and environmental stewardship. And members of the Co-op America Business Network are leading the way in bringing these issues into academia.

Beyond the Grey Pinstripes surveys hundreds of business-school programs and identifies schools and faculty that are “devoting the deepest attention to social impact and environmental management as well as those that are beginning to weave together this triple bottom line.” The top schools in its ranking include a significant amount of social environmental content in their courses, and also boast more extensive faculty research and more numerous student activities related to social and environmental issues.

For those interested in the field of green business, several MBA programs focused on sustainability have been created in recent years: Bainbridge Graduate Institute’s MBA in Sustainable Business, New College of California’s Green MBA, and Presidio World College’s MBA in Sustainable Management.

“At a time in history when major businesses and governments recognize the need to behave in more sustainable ways and to manage with emotional intelligence and presence, there is a growing need for managers who have been specifically trained in each of these emerging disciplines,” explains Hunter Lovins, a faculty member at Presidio World College.

New Green Economics Textbook: Neva Goodwin, one of the authors of the new textbook *Microeconomics in Context*, notes that it’s also important for undergraduates to be introduced to ideas about business’s relationship to humans and the environment. “Every year in this country about 1.4 million students take an introductory economics course, and for most of them this will be their only exposure to the field,” Goodwin explains. “Ideas gained there about how the economy works and which economic issues are important are formative for life-long thinking.” Goodwin’s textbook helps students look at economics through a wider lens, factoring in variables such as human well-being, ecological balance, and economic activities of actors such as nonprofits and governments.

Green Business Workshops: For those with limited time, the Social Venture Institutes offered throughout the year by the Social Venture Network provide socially responsible business leaders and nonprofits with opportunities to share experiences and receive advice from leading green entrepreneurs; upcoming 2005 events are in June, September, and November. In a similar vein, the Co-op America Business Network’s Green Business Conference brings a wide range of green business visionaries together each year to connect with and learn from one another while strategizing about how to build the green marketplace; this year’s conference will be November 1–4 in San Francisco.

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