Sustainability Studies at Roosevelt University
Re-envisioning Education in the Urban Environment

Michael A. Bryson and Carl A. Zimring
Wild Things: A Chicago Wilderness Conference
University of IL at Chicago / 5 March 2011
Snapshot of a Metropolitan University

- Campuses: downtown Chicago, suburban Schaumburg, online
- 6 colleges
  - Professional Studies
  - Arts & Sciences
  - Performing Arts
  - Business
  - Education
  - Pharmacy
- Level II comprehensive institution, established 1945
- 7,300 students (4,200 undergrad)
- Racial and geographic diversity
- Social justice-centered mission

RU’s Wabash Building, which will be Chicago’s first LEED-certified skyscraper (expected completion 2012)
Greening the University: A Three-fold Process

Launching Sustainability Studies

Greening the Physical Campus

Making Community Connections
In a Sustainable Future:

Environmental resources are conserved for both future human generations as well as non-human biota.

Economic development occurs not at the expense of the natural environment, but in a way to mitigate ecological costs and impacts.

Equity – social, economic, and environmental justice – governs the process of sustainable development.

The green roof of Chicago’s City Hall (source: City of Chicago)
Sustainability Studies at RU

- **Engages public policy** concerns surrounding consumption, energy usage, and viable economic growth;
- **Fosters environmental literacy** through interdisciplinary work in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities;
- **Explores social justice** issues on a range of fronts, including environmental justice, resource allocation, urban development, and social equity;
- **Positions Roosevelt University as a leader** on issues of sustainability, one of the critical issues of the 21st century.
**SUST Program Features**

**Interdisciplinary Content**

- Deep knowledge about pressing contemporary environmental issues
- Thorough grounding in the liberal arts and sciences
- Cutting-edge environmental focus

**Complementary Fields**

- **Professional double-majors:**
  - Organizational Leadership
  - Hospitality Management
  - Commerce and Enterprise
  - Criminal Justice
  - Paralegal studies

- **Science minors:**
  - Biology
  - Chemistry
  - Environmental science
  - Math
Core Courses
- SUST 210 Sustainable Future
- SUST 220 Water
- SUST 230 Food
- SUST 240 Waste

Advanced Courses
- SUST 310 Energy and Climate Change
- SUST 320 Sprawl, Transportation, and Planning
- SUST 330 Biodiversity
- SUST 340 Policy, Law, and Ethics

Special Options
- SUST 350 Service Learning
- SUST 390 Special Topics
Crosscutting Themes

Science and Environmental Literacy
Environmental and Social Justice
Urban and Suburban Systems

Pedagogical Highlights

Interdisciplinary Learning
Field Trip Experiences
Service Learning Opportunities
F2F, Online, and Hybrid Classes
Des Plaines River Wetlands Demonstration Project – tour of a wetland restoration (April 2009)
Exploring the waters of the Des Plaines River Wetlands Demonstration Project (fall 2010)
Chicago Center for Green Technology – learning about sustainable design (Feb. 2009)
Canoe trip down Bubbly Creek, an industrialized tributary of the South Branch of the Chicago River (May 2009)
Testing the water quality of the Chicago River’s North Branch (May 2010)
Toward a Greener Metropolitan University

Improving the Physical Campus (both new and old buildings)

Developing Curriculum: Sustainability Studies and Environmental Science

Fostering Connections with Urban and Suburban Communities