

# 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



Greening the Physical  
Campus



Launching  
Sustainability Studies



Making Community  
Connections



The green roof of Chicago's City Hall  
(source: City of Chicago)

## 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.

# 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

# SUST Courses

## 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

# SUST Curriculum

## 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



# SUST Field Trips



**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