

The Batten Institute's Sustainable Business Initiative is interested in better understanding how to create competitive advantage through innovative management of the triple bottom line – the economy, environment, and stakeholders. The Initiative's aim is to help practitioners, scholars, and students think about ways to innovate and transform business organizations through the creation of this advantage. Our intent is to work with our faculty and external thought leaders to develop materials that will establish Darden as the pre-eminent educational resource for understanding the transformational benefits of innovations in sustainable business. Visit our website here: http://www.darden.virginia.edu/batten/sustainable_business.htm. Activities planned for FY05/06 are:

- 1) **Innovators' Roundtable** (November 14-16) on companies and their supply chain partners', innovations to produce green products through benign chemical selection. The roundtable provides an opportunity to identify successful strategies, obstacles to supply chain transparency, and ways in which REACH (Registration, Evaluation, and Authorization of Chemicals) and similarly framed chemicals regulations can drive innovation toward safe products and processes. The Institute will partner with the German Ministry and the University of Massachusetts Lowell Center for Sustainable Production. The Lowell Center uses rigorous science, collaborative research, and innovative strategies to promote communities, workplaces, and products that are healthy, humane, and respectful of natural systems.
- 2) **Executive Forum** (tentative dates, March 1-3 2006) In collaboration with Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) we will bring together a small group of thought leaders and Darden faculty to identify the skills and knowledge needed to help businesses develop this competitive advantage and transform their organizations. This forum is intended to address what is needed to prepare MBA and undergraduate students to tackle this challenge, and to educate executives in ways to transform their organizations into sustainable businesses. Attendance by invitation only.
- 3) **Teaching Materials in Development:**
 - a) Partnership with the WWF and Green Chemistry Institute for 20 **sustainable business caselets**. The Batten Institute Sustainable Business initiative in collaboration with Dr. Richard Liroff and the Green Chemistry Institute will develop a set of short business cases describing a number of sustainable business innovations that yield real value to corporations. This business value includes cost savings, strategic differentiation in the marketplace, revenue growth, and transformations in corporate perception of market opportunity. The cases will highlight the benefits and competitive advantages that companies have gained through integrating sustainability practices into corporate operations and strategy. The cases will be made widely available through a download option on the Darden website and are expected to be published in spring 2006.
 - b) **Whistler Multimedia Case: Going for the Gold: Whistler, Sustainability, and the Olympics**. This multi-media case will describe how the Resort Municipality of Whistler, British Columbia, positions itself as "the premier mountain resort community" in the world using sustainability as a central guiding principle and global market differentiator. Frequently cited as the world's leading mountain resort, Whistler is the alpine venue for the 2010 Winter Olympics and in 2005 received the National Ski Area Association Golden Eagle award for environmental excellence.
 - c) **Hybrid Cars: Responding to New Technology in the Industry**, by Andrea Larson and Stephen Keach
Do hybrid electric vehicles represent the future in fuel-efficient vehicles? Or will they merely serve as a short-term solution? Through text, video, and animation, this multimedia case demonstrates how what was once peripheral—in this instance, the public's environmental concerns—can become relevant to strategic planning. Considering how to position a company for a future in which hybrid vehicles may, or may not, play a significant role helps students to develop insight into decision-making on (1) strategic positioning (2) technology choices and (3) investment regarding hybrid or other alternative propulsion systems.
- 4) **Course Offering** Fellows, Brian and Mary Natrass will teach a MBA second year elective on sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship January 9-13, 2006: The purpose of this course is to introduce students to global metatrends that are shaking the foundations of conventional business thought and practice and that underlie the accelerating concern for the sustainability of our way of life; to introduce students to the adaptive behavior of organizations on the leading edge of recognizing and meeting the threats and opportunities posed by these sustainability metatrends; and to introduce students to sustainable business strategies and practices as a dynamic and emerging frontier of innovation and entrepreneurial activity in the economy.
- 5) **Batten Briefings:** The November 2005 issue of the Batten Briefings will explore the mounting business case for corporate responsibility and sustainability in today's corporations from multiple perspectives: value creation, stakeholder engagement, ROI, innovation, entrepreneurship, and corporate finance and accounting.
- 6) **Students:** [Net Impact Darden School Chapter](#) (Net Impact conference, November 10-13, 2005).
- 7) **Batten Fellows focusing on Sustainable Business** (see <http://www.darden.virginia.edu/batten/fellows/> for a description of program):
 - a) [Brian Natrass](#) – research focus: Values-driven innovation and sustainable business practices
 - b) [Mary Natrass](#) – research focus: Values-driven innovation and sustainable business practices
 - c) [Joel Makower](#) – research focus: The Business Case for Sustainability (effective November 1, 2005)
 - d) [Christopher Lotspeich](#) – research focus: Innovation, Systems Analysis, and Environmental Issues in Business
 - e) [Braden "Brad" Allenby](#) – research focus: Earth Systems Management
- 8) **Books in Development:**
 - a) Batten Fellows Brian and Mary Natrass and Professors Alec Horniman and Dick Brownlee's book will focus on the role of story in organizational transformation including case studies on organizational transformation within the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the United States Army; and
 - b) Professor Andrea Larson & Karen O'Brien's book will focus on new ways to think about business and the environment, including how companies have reframed environmental and health issues as strategic opportunities for innovation and market advantage. The manuscript is under contract with Harvard Business School Press, to be published in 2006
 - c) Batten Fellow Joel Makower and Professor Richard Brownlee's case book: "The Case for Sustainability" is focused around the publication of a compendium of case studies on business and sustainability, and the leveraging of that publication as a springboard for additional knowledge creation, knowledge transfer, and executive education.