



Book Review Editor: Theodore J. Weidner, Ph.D., P.E., CEFP, AIA

The topic of sustainability

is not new to APPA members, but it continues to grow as a topic for both APPA members, others in higher education—and in society in general. The two books reviewed this month look at implementation of institutional-wide sustainability, as well as personal sustainability.

In order to continue with the sustainability focus, if you are reading this online, don't print; if you're reading the print version, share it.

THE SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITY: GREEN GOALS AND NEW CHALLENGES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERS

James Martin, James E. Samels & Associates, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 2012, 352 pages, \$45 hardcover, \$37.80 Kindle.

The American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment started in 2006 with 12 founding signatories. Now there are about 675 campuses that have signed on to the commitment. The commitment is a big one for both campus operations and academics. It is such a big commitment that campuses need some help to get started. That's why James Martin and James Samels wrote and incorporated the recommendations and observations of other authors to create *The Sustainable University*.

The Sustainable University is more about the academic implementation, but there's also plenty of information for administration. Energy conservation, facility conservation, and rethinking the entire resource consumption cycle (low-bid, delivery, distribution, use/consumption, disposal, repeat) are addressed. Many of these issues are not new to APPA members, but they will be new to procurement agents. Where higher education administrators,



including facility officers, will benefit is the discussion about the total life-cycle cost, and articulating it to others.

The Sustainable University is also about the campus mindset. How can the academic program become more sustainable? Is sustainability a single, academic area, or is it really something that pervades all academic programs? If it is the latter, what techniques can be used to implement it when some faculty members don't see how to incorporate sustainability into their courses?

And what about the student life side? It's not about events like Recyclemania, but rather about creating a campus environment where sustainable living and actions are natural or encouraged to be natural. My interpretation from the book is that a sustainable campus is like any other: the search for knowledge includes the search for sustainability. Said another way, one gets a higher education because of a desire to become a continuous learner, either by studying the ideas of others or by studying the facts and developing one's own ideas. One becomes sustainable by doing the same thing.

Again, this book is not focused on facilities; it has a much broader audience.

NO IMPACT MAN

Colin Beavan, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, NY, 2009, 258 pages, \$25 hardcover, \$15 softcover, \$9.99 kindle.

It's one thing to commit to sustainability, it is another thing entirely to live it and live it to such an extent that "you leave only footprints and take only photographs." But that's what Colin Beavan did when he undertook an experiment with his family to live so sustainably so as to leave no impact. What is no impact? Simply put, it's no trash; but there's more to it, and that's what's interesting, and humorous.

No Impact Man is a book about a one-year experiment for three people, living in the Greenwich Village area of Manhattan (that's New York City, not the Little Apple in Kansas.) Imagine trying to live off the grid and not generate any trash in Kansas? It's pretty difficult. Now imagine trying to do it in a city with 7 million other people; it's not easy. But that's what Beavan, a keynote speaker at the April 2012 Smart and Sustainable Campuses Conference, did.

This narrative, a summary of events, blog posts, and philosophical musings,

I'll reread the parts focused on facilities several times so I become an expert in my own right; I'll reread the non-facilities parts so I understand how I can help others on campus in my role as facility officer. APPA members who read this book will receive similar benefits.

addresses many aspects of normal living that we have all taken for granted. For facility officers, much of what is discussed is not new or surprising; we're not the target audience. The audience is more likely the casual environmentalist who thinks they're being sustainable when they bring a recyclable shopping bag to the store and load it up with packaged goods, including organic bulk items.

While we have intoned the mantra of "reduce, reuse, recycle" for years, we still seem to have trouble being sustainable, and Beavan discusses why that is, as he gradually approaches absolute zero environmental impact. In *No Impact Man* we learn occasional facts about the U.S. annual per capita waste, water consumption, energy consumption, CO₂ emissions, etc. We learn how Beavan studied how these numbers are generated (not from a statistical perspective but from daily living) and how he went about

eliminating the source to truly become a *No Impact Man*.

Of course, this is not a one-person effort or adventure. The reality of the situation, unless you're Thoreau, is that we live with others, and must reduce our individual impact with their involvement. Beavan does so with his wife and 18-month old daughter, gaining the perspective of their reactions and responses. There are diapers, paper products (towels, tissues, and toilet paper), food containers, vehicles, and so on. Each of these is eliminated if it contributes to environmental degradation (pardon me while I limit my use of "impact" because I think it's an overused word) or greenhouse gas enhancement.

I selected this book because it is my university's annual reading for incorporation in academic programs. While not mandated by our provost, I'm going to teach a course in facilities management,

and it seemed like a good way to get in the academic spirit. It's an enjoyable book with some humorous passages. Hey, avoiding trash generation isn't easy or pretty. It is also clear that to become more sustainable, our society must change; real change not "greenwashing." We have to stop buying, using, and disposing even if it does include recycling.

I foresee some interesting discussions this fall, and hope to share them with readers sometime next year. In the meantime, borrow or share this book with a friend (avoid environmental impact). ☺

Ted Weidner is senior director of project management and construction at Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, and can be reached at tjweidne@purdue.edu.



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