

*The Sustainability Project sparks a campus dialogue about our relationship with the environment and commitment to its future*

| by Kara Furlong

# It's All Connected

**Bangladesh, in South Asia,** is a flat, low-lying land situated between the melting snowcaps of the Himalayas and the rising waters of the Bay of Bengal. As the world warms due to climate change, experts predict the nation – less than 40 feet above sea level in most places – will be engulfed by water by the end of the century.

This problem is the concern of more than just environmentalists. As home to 160 million people, the prospect of a Bangladesh under water has profound social and economic implications for the entire planet. In the coming academic year, students half a world away on the Vanderbilt campus will tackle the issue in “Water and Social Justice in Bangladesh,” a class being taught by environmental science professors Jonathan Gilligan and Steven Goodbred and political science professor Brooke Ackerly. It’s one of more than 30 courses being offered across the university as part of the American Studies Sustainability Project.

Sustainability – the effort to meet our present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs – is “the most pressing question of our time,” said Teresa Goddu, director of the American Studies program and associate professor of English. “For example, as we move forward, poverty across the globe is largely going to be dependent upon climate,” she explained. “Poor countries will be hit harder. It’s going to create a more unjust, inequitable economic and social landscape. And it’s incumbent upon us to address it.”

With support from the College of Arts and Science Fant Fund, the Sustainability Project aims to start a dialogue on campus about issues of environmental, social and economic sustainability through undergraduate courses, a graduate seminar, acclaimed speakers and a series of “road trips” open to all students and faculty. In collaboration

with SustainVU and other academic programs and centers, the initiative will sponsor awareness-raising activities for staff and students and partner with colleagues in art, film studies, creative writing and other areas to provide creative outlets for weaving sustainability into the fabric of the university.

“The Sustainability Project represents a compelling application of the full diversity of Vanderbilt’s academic expertise to one of the most complex and urgent human challenges of our time,” said Carolyn Dever, dean of the College of Arts and Science. “In the year to come and for many years ahead, our shared work on sustainability will change this campus and the world for the better in ways we can’t yet begin to imagine.”

**Because sustainability is such a complex problem, it calls for interdisciplinary collaboration and interdisciplinary thinking to begin to untangle it.**

—TERESA GODDU

Vanderbilt is already home to centers – including the engineering-based Vanderbilt Institute for Energy and Environment and the law school’s Climate Change Research Network – that contribute scientific and policy-driven research to the sustainability debate. The Sustainability Project will bring this discussion to the curricular level and broaden it to all disciplines.

“Because sustainability is such a complex problem, no single discipline can tackle it on its own. It really demands interdisciplinary collaboration and interdisciplinary thinking to begin to untangle it,”

Goddu said. With this in mind, American Studies and the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching convened the first meeting of the Cumberland Project in May. The two-day campus workshop provided interested faculty with the opportunity to design or redesign their courses to include significant environmental and sustainability components.

The workshop drew faculty from engineering, earth and environmental sciences, philosophy, psychology, English, Spanish and Portuguese, sociology, and medicine and global health. Participants heard from a Vanderbilt student who pursued sustainability studies by creating his own interdisciplinary major. They also discussed the possibility of sustainability formally becoming a major or minor course of study at Vanderbilt in the future.

The Cumberland Project, which will meet again in spring 2012, and the academic year-long Sustainability Project are intended to jump-start sustainability awareness on campus with hopes for a long-term and lasting effect. “The idea is to incubate this in American Studies this year, then see how it might grow – to see where the interest is and who the stake holders are,” Goddu said.

The Sustainability Project will build on the ongoing work of SustainVU, Vanderbilt’s institutional effort to promote environmental management and sustainability initiatives that improve Vanderbilt’s impact on the environment and the community.

“The Sustainability Project will provide our students with a broad understanding of sustainability concepts and how they can serve as a lens for gaining greater clarity on history, economics, ethics and more,” said Andrea George, director of Vanderbilt’s Sustainability and Environmental Management Office. “Dr. Goddu and her team have developed an amazing line-up of events, films and world-renowned speakers that will afford the Vanderbilt community

many opportunities to learn about national and international sustainability movements.”

Central to the Sustainability Project’s programming are the dozen guest speakers it will bring to campus, all preeminent experts in the sustainability field. The lecture series kicks off Sept. 22 with Bill McKibben, founder of the international climate campaign 350.org and author of *Eaarth* and *The End of Nature*, pioneering books about climate change written for a lay audience.

Beginning in September, SustainVU will sponsor a green bag luncheon series that will address a host of practical topics – from alternative transportation to sustainable food and dining choices to backyard composting. And April 2012’s Earth Day celebration will feature unique events aimed at reaching the campus in new ways.

Goddu hopes the Sustainability Project achieves a simple, initial goal: that every discipline on campus recognizes its stake in the sustainability conversation.

“I’m an expert in 19th-century American literature, finishing a book on the antislavery movement. When I think about the most important social reform needed in *our* time, it’s addressing the issue of global climate change,” she said. “Your times demand certain things of you. In our lifetime, the call to action is this.” ●

---

For more information:  
[vanderbilt.edu/americanstudies/sustainability](http://vanderbilt.edu/americanstudies/sustainability)  
On Facebook:  
American Studies at Vanderbilt University

---

◀ **ATTACK** PAGE 7 is something that surprises him, those are rewarding moments for us.”

Integrally involved in the leg’s development are research engineers Jason Mitchell and Don Truex, and graduate student Brian Lawson. The team has seen the leg through seven different incarnations and has spent countless hours perfecting it.

“The powered knee and ankle prosthesis will demonstrate to the industry that intelligent powered prostheses are technologically feasible,” Varol said. “Presumably, it might force the prosthetics industry to be more innovative and bring new and better products to the market. The potential to help those who need it most is very encouraging, and it provides the motivation for us during the times when you are stuck with technical problems.”

Had Hutto not experienced the shark attack, he would never have met Goldfarb, Varol and the rest of the team with whom he has now spent countless hours in the Olin Hall laboratory. He also likely would not have pursued a career in medicine, he said.

“Computers have always interested me. I planned to do computer science. Then this happened, and it was clear to me: Medical personnel saved my life. I need to give back.”

Hutto hopes to get a job after graduation at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt, the same hospital where he received

care in the weeks after the 2005 attack. Later, he plans to continue his education and become a certified registered nurse anesthetist.

“It’s scary for a child to undergo surgery,” he said. “I want to be the one to make that less traumatic for them – to be their lifeline.”

Hutto has vacationed in the Florida panhandle more than a half-dozen times since he lost his leg, and has even returned to the site of the attack. He’s regained most of the use of his hands and fingers, though they are laced with scars and still have some numbness.

In his final months of college, Hutto is president of the inter-fraternity council at MTSU. He shares a house with three roommates, and when he isn’t working or studying, he hits the gym or plays disc golf with his friends. His parents, who live nearby, insist he should visit more often.

In other words, life is good.

But the past is not completely behind him. Hutto has told his story many times – to television crews and reporters, to school groups, to friends, family and strangers. And chances are, he’ll tell it more times still.

“I share what happened to me because that helps people,” he said. “I was very fortunate that I have the family and friends that I have and my faith, which I rely on a lot. I was one of the lucky ones and the whole thing has changed me as a person. It made me realize I *don’t* really need to sweat the small stuff anymore.” ●



Alumna Dinah Shore was a frequent visitor to campus following her graduation in 1938. Pictured (l-r): former Dean of Students Madison Sarratt, Shore and Chancellor Emeritus Harvie Branscomb.

Image courtesy of Vanderbilt University Special Collections & University Archives

## Looking Back

To her Vanderbilt classmates, she was Fanny Shore, a student leader with a knack for performing. Following her graduation in 1938, the world would know her as Dinah Shore, an accomplished big band singer who spent four decades on television, earning nine Emmy awards, a Golden Globe and three separate stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for recording, radio and television.

Born Frances Rose Shore in Winchester, Tenn., in 1916, she majored in sociology at Vanderbilt and served as president of the Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority and the Women’s Student Government Club. She was selected “band sponsor” (an early version of homecoming queen) and founded the Athenian Sing, an a cappella singing contest among fraternities and sororities that continues to this day as a campus-wide talent competition. She also sang on the WSM radio show *Rhythm and Romance*, whose theme song was the 1926 standard “Dinah.” Shore put her own stamp on the song and appropriated its title for her professional name.

Shore would go on to New York, a recording contract with RCA Victor and success on Broadway. She had more than 80 charting songs over the course of her career. In 1951, she became the first woman to host her own primetime TV program. The *Dinah Shore Show*, sponsored by Chevrolet, ran for a dozen years on NBC. It was followed by *Dinah’s Place* (1970-74), *Dinah!* (1974-80) and *Conversations with Dinah* on The Nashville Network (1989-91). In a survey of the top 50 stars in the history of the medium, *TV Guide* ranked Shore at No. 16. ●

Source: “Best All-Around Girl” by Michael Sims, *Vanderbilt Magazine*, Fall 2009

# Vanderbilt University <http://www.vanderbilt.edu>

## Sustainability theme to mark Vanderbilt 2011-12 academic year

by Jim Patterson (<http://news.vanderbilt.edu/author/patterjm/>) | Posted on Thursday, Aug. 11, 2011 — 11:41 AM

### AMERICAN STUDIES

# Sustainability Project



(<http://news.vanderbilt.edu/files/Sustainability.jpg>) Issues of sustainability will be incorporated into many phases of the coming academic year at Vanderbilt University, including curriculum, a speaker series, documentary film series and field trips.

“The Sustainability Project (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/americanstudies/sustainability/>) represents a compelling application of the full diversity of Vanderbilt’s academic expertise to one of the most complex and urgent human challenges of our time,” said Carolyn Dever, dean of the College of Arts and Science (<http://as.vanderbilt.edu/>).

“In the year to come and for many years ahead, our shared work on sustainability will change this campus and the world for the better.”

The goal is to create a dialogue across all parts of the campus about environmental, social and economic sustainability. Among the activities:

- More than 30 classes incorporating sustainability themes will be offered across the university in cooperation with the American Studies program. Offerings include Global Climate Change, Green Cities, Literature and the Environment and Intensive Elementary Spanish with a sustainability focus (a listing of all the course offerings (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/americanstudies/sustainability/courses.php>)).
- A speakers series kicks off Sept. 22 when Bill McKibben, founder of international climate campaign 350.org and author of *Eaarth* and *The End of Nature*, speaks at 5 p.m. in Ingram Hall at Vanderbilt’s Blair School of Music. Other speakers include landscape sculptor Gabriel Warren, clean energy expert Van Jones and Nashville Mayor Karl Dean (more information on the speakers series (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/americanstudies/speakers.php>)).
- A “Green Bag” luncheon series begins in September, with the Vanderbilt community along with the community at large invited to a series of talks on subjects including alternative transportation, backyard composting and sustainable food and dining choices. Specifics of these luncheons will be released later.
- Sustainability-themed films will be shown at Sarratt Cinema during the academic year, sponsored by Vanderbilt’s Alternative Energy Club. The first “Green Screen” film is *The Last Mountain* at 7 p.m. Sept. 21. It is open to the public.
- A series of road trips open to faculty and students will introduce participants to the rich cultural resources and

pressing environmental issues of Middle Tennessee. ((Information about road trips will appear as they are planned. (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/americanstudies/events/roadtrips.php>))

The initiative, coordinated by the American Studies Program at Vanderbilt, is supported by the College of Arts and Science Fant fund.

Teresa Goddu, director of American Studies (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/americanstudies/>) and associate professor of English, said that sustainability “is the most pressing question of our time.” Goddu is an expert in 19<sup>th</sup> century American literature and is finishing a book on the antislavery movement.

“When I think about the most important social reform needed in *our* time, it’s addressing the issue of global climate change. Your times demand certain things of you. In our lifetime, the call to action is this.”

For an updated list of all events go to the Sustainability section of the American Studies website. (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/americanstudies/sustainability/events.php>)

The Sustainability Project is also on Facebook at American Studies at Vanderbilt University.

**Contact:**

Jim Patterson, (615) 322-NEWS

[jim.patterson@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:jim.patterson@vanderbilt.edu) (<mailto:jim.patterson@vanderbilt.edu>)

# NOW AND Later

Yearlong project sets out to change the campus and the world for the better.

ould you refuse to drink bottled water if it would help your yet-to-be-born great grandchild?

That's a delicate balance—the contemporary demand for immediate gratification and the responsibility to secure and protect resources for the future. From debates about oil drilling in the Arctic to the use of reusable bags, the tension between having it now and having enough for later generations crosses all spectrums.

Understanding and managing these competing issues has been the topic of the Sustainability Project, a yearlong Vanderbilt-wide exploration under the aegis of the College of Arts and Science's American Studies program and funded by the College of Arts and Science's Fant Fund.

Sustainability—broadly defined as meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs—is the most pressing issue of the 21st century, says Teresa Goddu, associate professor of English and director of American studies. “The ultimate goal of the Sustainability Project is to create a campuswide conversation that emboldens Vanderbilt's efforts toward sustainability while deepening our understanding of what we are working toward.”

Dean Carolyn Dever puts it more directly. “We're applying the full diversity of Vanderbilt's academic expertise to one of the most complex and urgent human challenges of our time,” Dever says. “In the year to come and for many years ahead, our shared work on sustainability will change this campus and the world for the better.”



A fall rolling seminar took participants to Kentucky to see the effects of mountain top removal.



## Across Disciplines

The initiative began with the Cumberland Project, a spring 2011 two-day intensive workshop for faculty. Faculty from various schools and across campus met to discuss sustainability and to develop curricula that incorporated the topic. A second workshop is scheduled for May 2012 to carry the project forward. While the Sustainability Project will conclude officially in 2013, a new minor in environmental and sustainability studies was recently approved by Arts and Science faculty.

A concurrent goal was to create course collaborations between the sciences and humanities that discussed sustainability as a societal issue. More than 30 courses were offered, ranging from Water and Social Justice in Bangladesh, taught by faculty from Earth and environmental sciences and political science, to The Psychology of Sustainability and even an intensive elementary Spanish course with a sustainability focus.

For Dana Nelson, Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor of English, delving deeply into a compelling topic by drawing on resources across disciplines represents the best of a liberal arts education.

“Fundamentally, the Sustainability Project opens pathways where students learn to speak in the languages of other disciplines,” says Nelson, who is also a professor of American studies and women and gender studies. “Doing so opens them to new ways of thinking and seeing the world around them.”

Nelson's fall 2011 class, Writing for an Endangered World, captured both the multidisciplinary ground of American studies and the core objectives of the Sustainability Project. Using works ranging from Henry David Thoreau to Barbara Kingsolver, she challenged students to think and write persuasively about the allocation and distribution of common resources.

In the spring semester, she and John Ayers, chair of Earth and environmental sciences, taught a graduate seminar exploring



society's ability to manage valuable resources in common and the role of government, corporations and other institutions in protecting those resources in a fair, equitable way.

Such issues inspired Katie Ullmann, a rising senior and American studies major, to look closely at the environment, climate change and resource scarcity within the context, ethics and morals of American culture and history. Ullman, an environmentalist since high school, spent the spring 2012 semester in South Africa, where she focused on urbanization and ways to reduce individuals' environmental impact through shared consumption and space.

"Our shared work on sustainability will change this campus and the world for the better."

—Dean Carolyn Dever

"The Sustainability Project has changed my viewpoint," she says. "I've always felt one person could make a difference. At the same time, however, Sustainability Project speakers often stressed collective action and that helped me see how much top-down environmental change we need to expedite the cultural shift to more sustainable practices in America."

### Impact and Implications Everywhere

Beyond the classroom, speakers such as Peter Gleick, cofounder of the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security, and Bill McKibben, environmentalist and author of *Eaarth* and *The End of Nature*, brought environmental discussion to public forums on campus.

Road trips—open to any Vanderbilt student but a core component in American studies courses—took participants to Hindman, Ky., to learn firsthand about the impact of mountain top removal, an environmentally contentious method of coal mining. Other activities included visiting the water reclamation operation at Metro Nashville's Water Treatment Plant and exploring environmental justice in Nashville.

Yearlong green lunches cosponsored with the university's Sustainability and Environmental Management Office addressed practical topics ranging from cooking with local foods to composting and alternative transportation. One symposium explored sustainability in connection with legal issues and another with creative writing. The Film Studies program and campus film series sponsored films that involved sustainability issues.

Awareness and action galvanized students who participated, including some who began studying the topic even before the project was officially launched. Jill Vaum, BA'11, took a course on water in American studies last year. She says the topic opened her eyes to numerous ideas that previously had not been on her radar, including the environmental impact of fracking—a controversial method for retrieving oil—to water rights and their intersection with religious beliefs.

Vaum says she's become her family's moral environmental compass, advocating against beverages in disposable plastic bottles and for using recyclable shopping bags. "Now, when I hear stories on the environment, I'm interested and I'm taking small steps in my own life to lessen my environmental impact," Vaum says. "Change is fundamentally about one person making a different decision."

*Above, left: Creativity and new ideas emerged from faculty brainstorming sessions during the spring 2011 Cumberland Project Workshop. Above, middle: Students on an environmental justice tour discovered the issues facing some Nashville neighborhoods. Above, right: McKibben and students discussing how to change things globally by acting locally.*

# Nashville Scene

---

This is a past event.

---

## Bill McKibben Lecture: Global and Local: Reports from the Fight for a Working Planet

When: Thu., Sept. 22, 5 p.m. 2011


[www.vanderbilt.edu/americanstudies/sustainability/events.php](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/americanstudies/sustainability/events.php)

Sure, plenty of people are finally talking about climate change seriously (even if some important people who should be, aren't). But not many were talking about it in 1989, the year Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature* was published in book form after it was serialized in *The New Yorker*. In the years since, McKibben has dedicated himself to studying and advocating for sustainable living and development -- while also organizing some of the biggest climate change-related demonstrations the world has seen. A former Guggenheim fellow and contributor to *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's*, among others, McKibben is arguably the foremost environmentalist writer working. The 2011-2012 American Studies Sustainability Project at Vanderbilt -- a series of classes, speakers, films and "actions" -- gets under way with this not-to-be-missed appearance.

— Steve Haruch

### Ingram Hall

2400 Blakemore Ave. , (Vanderbilt's Blair School of Music) BELMONT/ EDGEHILL/ HILLSBORO VILLAGE

 615-322-7651

(based on 1 user review)

Tags: Community Events, Calendar, Critics' Picks

Vanderbilt University (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu>)

## Vanderbilt achieves highest sustainability rating from 'The Princeton Review'

by [Liz Entman](http://news.vanderbilt.edu/author/entman/) | Posted on Tuesday, Aug. 28, 2012 – 10:43 AM



(<http://news.vanderbilt.edu/files/Sustain-vu-logo-fi1.jpg>) Vanderbilt University has been named to the [2013 Green Honor Roll](http://www.princetonreview.com/green-honor-roll.aspx) by *The Princeton Review*.

The publication's fifth annual green ratings measured the environmental friendliness of 806 institutions nationwide on a scale of 60 to 99. Vanderbilt was one of only 21 universities to receive the highest possible score of 99.

Criteria for the green ratings covered three areas: whether the school's students have a campus quality of life that is healthy and sustainable; how well the school is preparing students for employment and citizenship in a world defined by environmental challenges; and the school's overall commitment to environmental issues.

Institutional surveys, conducted during the 2011-12 academic year, included questions on energy use, recycling, food, buildings and transportation, as well as academic offerings and action plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. *The Princeton Review* developed its green rating system with ecoAmerica, a nonprofit environmental organization, in 2007-08.

"We are pleased that *The Princeton Review* has recognized the great strides our university is making toward a more environmentally sustainable campus," said Judson Newbern, deputy vice chancellor for facilities and environmental affairs.



Among its sustainability efforts, Vanderbilt boasts 12 buildings on campus certified by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program of the U.S. Green Building Council and is in the process of seeking LEED certification for others that are currently being built or undergoing major renovations.

“Over the past few years, Vanderbilt has achieved an 18 percent decrease in energy usage per square foot of building space and significant reductions in water usage campuswide due to the ongoing retrofits led by VU [Plant Operations](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/plantops/) (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/plantops/>) and VUMC [Plant Services](https://plantservices.vanderbilt.edu/) (<https://plantservices.vanderbilt.edu/>),” said Andrea George, director of Vanderbilt’s sustainability and environmental management office (SEMO).

The 2011-12 school year introduced sustainability themed academic projects to campus, such as the [American Studies Sustainability Project](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/americanstudies/sustainability/) (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/americanstudies/sustainability/>) and the [Cumberland Project](http://cumberland.vanderbilt.edu/) (<http://cumberland.vanderbilt.edu/>), and introduced the [Vanderbilt Green Fund](http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/vsg/services/vanderbilt-green-fund/) (<http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/vsg/services/vanderbilt-green-fund/>), initiated by the Vanderbilt campus group [Students Promoting Environmental Awareness and Responsibility](http://vandyspear.wordpress.com) (<http://vandyspear.wordpress.com>) (SPEAR) and managed by [Vanderbilt Student Government](http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/vsg/) (<http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/vsg/>). Other improvements to sustainability on campus over the past year include solar energy installations, electric car charging stations and a community garden.

“*The Princeton Review* is recognizing an achievement that is a collaborative effort among Vanderbilt’s students, faculty, administrators and campus departments, including SPEAR, VSG, Plant Operations, the [Dean of Students’ office](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/deanofstudents/) (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/deanofstudents/>), Campus Planning and Construction and the Sustainability and Environmental Management Office, just to name a few,” said Mark Petty, assistant vice chancellor for plant operations.

Among the 7,445 college applicants *The Princeton Review* surveyed in 2012 for its “College Hopes and Worries Survey,” 68 percent said having information about a college’s commitment to the environment would impact their decision to apply to or attend a school.

To see the complete green rating criteria as well as the other universities included on the Green Honor Roll, visit [www.princetonreview.com/green/press-release.aspx](http://www.princetonreview.com/green/press-release.aspx) (<http://www.princetonreview.com/green/press-release.aspx>).

**Contact:**

Liz Entman, (615) 322-NEWS

[Liz.entman@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Liz.entman@vanderbilt.edu) (<mailto:Liz.entman@vanderbilt.edu>)