



## **Northwest Earth Institute Sustainability Education Programs Introductory Packet for Colleges and Universities**

### **In this packet, you will find:**

- ❖ The challenge and vision of higher education and sustainability
- ❖ An overview of who we are and the delivery of our programs
- ❖ Guidelines for use of our discussion courses
- ❖ Implementation ideas for discussion courses
- ❖ Testimonials from discussion courses
- ❖ Cost of discussion courses
- ❖ Appendix A: Discussion course profiles
- ❖ Appendix B: Participating universities and colleges

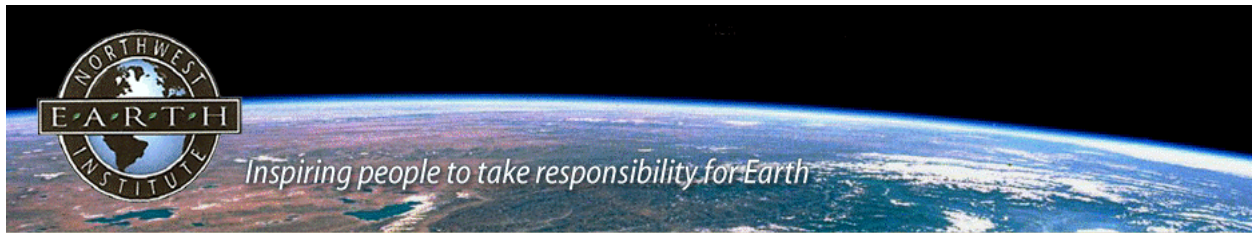
### **What is the Challenge?**

“Our vision is to see higher education take a leadership role in preparing students and employees to achieve a just and sustainable society. The campus itself would serve as a model of sustainability, with curriculum and operations reflecting an integrative approach to learning and practice. The process of education would emphasize active, experiential, inquiry-based learning and real-world problem solving.

On the model campus all sectors would work collaboratively to advance sustainability, and the content and context of learning would reflect a focus on systemic, interdisciplinary thinking with respect to human health, ethics, future generations, and planetary stewardship.”

**~ Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education**

You are probably reading this packet because these visions resonate with you. Whether you are just beginning your sustainability efforts, would like to remain steadfast in your sustainability efforts, or are moving towards becoming a sustainability leader the Northwest Earth Institute offers ready-to-implement sustainability education programs. These tools require minimal input from an instructor, are designed to foster high-quality, effective sustainability education build community and engage students in active learning through dialogue.



In addition to program implementation aligning faculty, staff and student action with sustainability initiatives, universities and colleges can also expect participants to gain leadership and facilitation skills and to engage in behavioral change.

## Overview of the Northwest Earth Institute

The Northwest Earth Institute is recognized as a national leader in the development of innovative programs that encourage individuals and organizations to protect ecological systems while strengthening the quality of our lives.

Founded in Portland, Oregon in 1993, the Northwest Earth Institute has engaged more than 100,000 people in discussion courses. Several dozen universities and colleges have offered NWEI programs as part of sustainability initiatives (see Appendix B).

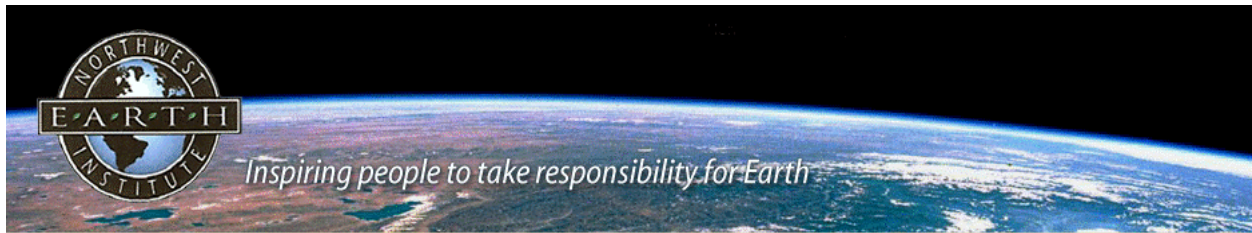
NWEI currently offers seven discussion guides, any of which can be offered as part of sustainability education initiatives. However, the following three programs are the most highly requested in higher education:

**Choices for Sustainable Living** – a seven session discussion course outlining connections between lifestyle choices and ecological stability, and offering practical insights into making healthy and sustainable choices

**Global Warming: Changing CO<sub>2</sub>urse** – a four session discussion course addressing the challenges of climate change, and considering actions to curb its affects

**Menu for the Future** – a six session discussion course exploring the connections between food and sustainability, considering ways to create and support emerging sustainable food system alternatives

We also offer courses on raising healthy children in a consumer culture, simple living, our relationship to the ecosystem and sense of place/bioregionalism.



## **Delivery of Programs**

NWEI offers a self-guided series of educational discussion courses not dependent on outside trainers. The only materials required for implementation are NWEI discussion guides for each participant. Each guide includes guidelines for facilitators and participants, a series of educational articles from leading authors around session themes, questions for discussion, as well as ideas for action and further study.

A sample introductory session (PDF format), which includes a reading list is available upon request. Please send an email to: [daniella@nwei.org](mailto:daniella@nwei.org).

## **Cost**

There is no consulting or overhead fee for working with the Northwest Earth Institute. The only cost to your school is the price of discussion guides for participants. Discussion guides are \$20 plus shipping. Support or consulting is available. Note: we can send you our book ordering protocol. Please contact Daniella Dennenberg at [daniella@nwei.org](mailto:daniella@nwei.org) for further information.

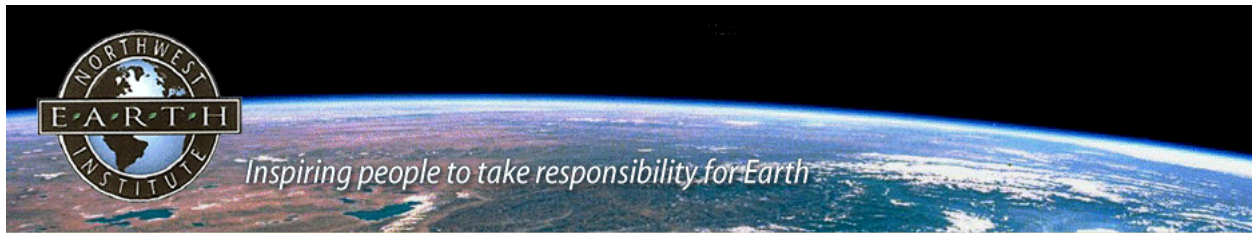


## Guidelines for Universities and Colleges for NWEI Discussion Courses

1. Please use the guidelines that are in the front of the course book.
2. The courses are set up for shared leadership with a different participant facilitating each session.
3. The “Openings” provide a great way to transition from outside endeavors and settle into the discussion course. They also provide an opportunity for participants to share their life experiences.
4. We recommend breaking students into groups of 8-12 since that is the ideal size for active engagement based on our experience.
5. If this discussion group is optional, please make it clear that if students sign up, they should plan to attend all sessions. One of the strengths of the course is continuity in attendance. Participants look forward to the insights and ideas of others.
6. **Student Evaluation:** If you do implement a course, please have students complete our standard evaluation form at the front of the course book and mail them to us at your earliest convenience (317 SW Alder St., Ste 1050, Portland, OR 97204). These are not required, but they will help us shape future courses.

If there were any verbal testimonials students shared that you think would be valuable to share with us, we’d appreciate hearing about them as well. Please email these to Daniella Dennenberg at [daniella@nwei.org](mailto:daniella@nwei.org).

7. **Faculty Evaluation:** Please complete the evaluation (we will email our “Course Evaluation for Universities and Colleges” to you separately when you start a course) and either mail it along with the student evaluations or email it back.
8. Our course work is not meant to be used as a stand-alone for credit class, but rather as an enhancement to an existing course or program. If you have further questions in this capacity, please direct them to Daniella Dennenberg at [daniella@nwei.org](mailto:daniella@nwei.org).



## **Implementation Ideas**

Universities and colleges approach offering NWEI programs in a variety of ways:

### **As a supplement to an existing course/discipline**

Professors have used our courses to supplement their courses in Social Sciences, Biological Sciences, Education, English and Health and Fitness.

### **With Green Teams**

College or universities have used our courses to build community and awareness among Green Teams or Sustainability Teams members and/or to help sustainability initiatives move forward.

### **"Brown Bag" Meetings**

Core groups of faculty, staff and/or students have piloted our programs in an effort to identify leaders who will carry the program forward on an ongoing basis.

### **As part of a study abroad or service learning program**

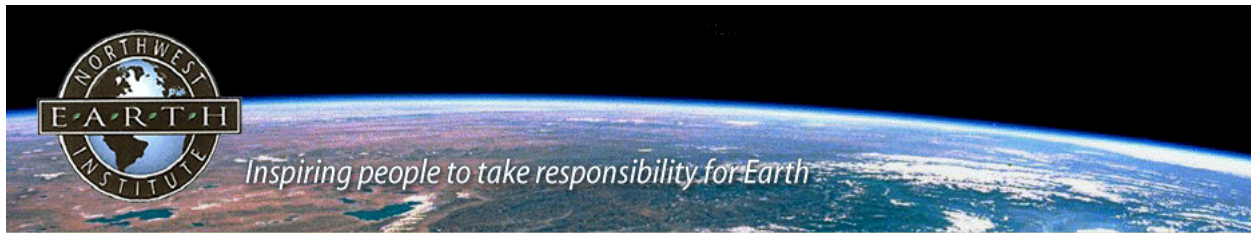
Courses have been offered to small groups of students studying abroad to aid students in getting to know one another while expanding experiential learning opportunities.

### **As part of freshman orientation**

Courses can be use to foster an understanding of our relationship with place and responsibility to that place.

### **Residential Life/Community Building**

***Courses can be offered*** in residential halls or living and learning communities as a means of building community.



## **Testimonials:**

“I am a campus minister at Marquette University and have been using the discussion course in *Voluntary Simplicity* for the last four years. The discussion course in *Voluntary Simplicity* has been wonderfully received by students. Students find the ideas presented in these discussions truly help them set their priorities on how they want to live their lives. Many students tell me that they have really appreciated the insight this course provided in helping them to be more intentional in their choices and decisions.”

**Gerry Fischer, Assistant Director of the Campus Ministry, Marquette University**

“I think the best thing about this series from a community college perspective is the sense of community it builds among the participants. It is the highlight of the week for many of us. How often do you get to sit down and have meaningful discussion on timely and important issues for an entire hour with a group of like-minded people? I plan to keep NWEI discussion groups as a regular feature of our program.”

**Wendy Connelly, Co-Director, Teaching and Learning Center and Adjunct Faculty, Biology  
Portland Community College**

“Usually in a college course, I take notes, read the books, do the assignments and when it is done, I go home and put the notebook on the shelf and continue on with my life. This course is different. I may put the notebook on the shelf, but I will be thinking, acting and changing every day because of this class.”

**Trina, Global Warming: Changing Course course participant, Tacoma Community College**

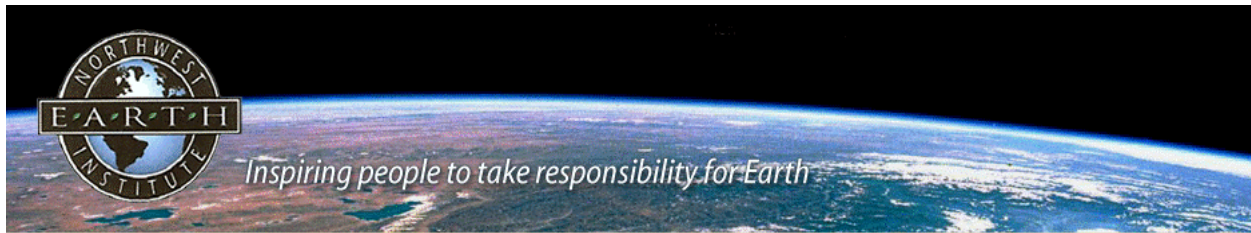
“Center for Ecological Living and Learning very much appreciates our collaboration with NWEI. We appreciate the professionalism and helpfulness of your staff, your expertise, and your passion and commitment to promoting an understanding of this thing we call ‘sustainability.’ Sustainability is our future, and NWEI is helping to raise the consciousness of how it is, indeed, possible to live sustainably. The NWEI materials are outstanding! You have pulled together an amazing collection of thought-provoking readings that cover a variety of perspectives on sustainability. We, at CELL, are very appreciative of the work you are doing and are honored to be partners with NWEI!”

**Dave Oakes, Director, Center for Ecological Living and Learning**



## Appendix A: 2008-09 Sampling of Discussion Courses Profiles

- ❖ Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, IL will be using a series of courses for sustainability training of incoming Residential Advisors through the Office of Residential Life (Fall 2009).
- ❖ Green Team Project Manager, Jason Fults at the University of Florida in Gainesville will be using *Choices for Sustainable Living* in a summer reading group of University Green Team captains to further knowledge on sustainable practices for the university and community (Summer 2009).
- ❖ An associate professor of Social Science, Sherry Keith at San Francisco State University in San Francisco, CA is using *Healthy Children, Healthy Planet* and *Discovering a Sense of Place* for her "Individual in Modern Society" course that focuses on childhood, nature and society (Winter 2009)
- ❖ Sociology professor, Dr. Michael Epitropoulos of University of Pittsburgh is using *Choices for Sustainable Living* and *Voluntary Simplicity* as part of his Sociology and the Environment course (Winter, 2009)
- ❖ Faculty member, Coleen O'Connell of Lesley University in Cambridge, MA will be partnering with Tacoma Community College in Tacoma, WA to use *Global Warming: Changing Course* for an Applied Ecology course. The course reflects a hybrid model of teaching which combines face-to-face and online discussion methods of learning and is for adult learners (Winter, 2009).
- ❖ Dining Services staff at the University of Montana in Missoula, MT will be using our *Menu for the Future* course book (Spring, 2009)
- ❖ An adjunct faculty member of Evergreen State College will be using *Choices for Sustainable Living* and *Discovering Sense of Place* for his business course (Fall, 2009).
- ❖ Science Curriculum Chair, Biology instructor and Sustainability Committee Chair, Penny Hooper of Cartaret Community College in Morehead, NC will be using *Menu for the Future* as part of a brown bag series for students and members of the community (Winter 2009).



- ❖ Director of Teaching and Learning, Wendy Connelly of Portland Community College in Portland, OR is bringing *Exploring Deep Ecology* to a reading and discussion group.
- ❖ Assistant Professor of Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA used *Menu for the Future* for a food and nutrition class (Fall, 2008)
- ❖ The Assistant Director of Advising and Student Services at Lesley University in Cambridge, MA launched a student, faculty and staff *Choices for Sustainable Living* brown bag series and has an accompanying blog: [www.discussingsustainabilityatlesley.blogspot.com](http://www.discussingsustainabilityatlesley.blogspot.com) (Fall, 2008)
- ❖ A staff member and Hall Director at Iowa State University used the *Menu for the Future* course to supplement an honors level course “The (Sustainable) Clean Plate Club” (Fall, 2008)
- ❖ An adjunct professor at Naropa University in Boulder, CO used *Choices for Sustainable Living* for graduate students of her Sustainability: Policy and Practice course (Fall, 2008)

## **Appendix B: Participating Universities and Colleges**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ❖ Carteret Community College                | ❖ Portland Community College                      |
| ❖ Center for Ecological Living and Learning | ❖ Portland State University                       |
| ❖ Clark College                             | ❖ San Francisco State University                  |
| ❖ College of Lake County                    | ❖ St. Catharine’s College                         |
| ❖ College of the Rockies                    | ❖ Tacoma Community College                        |
| ❖ Community College of Aurora               | ❖ University of Arizona                           |
| ❖ Community College of Vermont              | ❖ University of Colorado                          |
| ❖ Evergreen State College                   | ❖ University of Florida                           |
| ❖ Howard Community College                  | ❖ University of Montana                           |
| ❖ Illinois Wesleyan University              | ❖ University of North Carolina School of Medicine |
| ❖ Iowa State University                     | ❖ University of Oregon School of Architecture     |
| ❖ Lesley University                         | ❖ University of Pittsburgh                        |
| ❖ Marquette University                      | ❖ University of Southern Maine                    |
| ❖ Naropa University                         | ❖ University of Vermont                           |
| ❖ New York City College of Technology       | ❖ University of Washington                        |
| ❖ North Lake College                        | ❖ Utah State University                           |
| ❖ Oregon Institute of Technology            | ❖ Virginia Tech                                   |
| ❖ Paul Smith’s College                      |   |



❖ Western Michigan University

❖ Williams College