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Abstract Title: Monitoring Cultural of Sustainability at the University of Michigan: A Model for Measuring Behavioral Change in Universities and Other Organizations

Abstract Text:

There is an increasing awareness that societal changes in societies are needed as issues of climate change and resource depletion become more pressing. Among those changes is a shift from a consumer culture of to a sustainability culture. Sustainability culture is defined as a culture in which individuals are behaving in sustainable ways, are aware of major environmental (and social/economic) challenges, and are committed to a sustainable lifestyle now and into the future. This paper reviews efforts to change the culture of sustainability including the behaviors of students, staff, and faculty at the University of Michigan (U-M). It then discusses a program that measures, monitors, and maps these change from 2012-to 2017. The Sustainability Cultural Indicators Program (SCIP) is intended to 1) inform U-M officials and others responsible for day-to-day university operations including its academic programs, and 2) serve as a model demonstrating how behavioral research can be used to address critical environmental issues within universities and other settings. Following a review of recent efforts to enhance the culture of sustainability, an overview of SCIP is presented. Selected findings from 2014 as cultural indicators are then presented and significant changes in indicators are reported. Finally, the uses of indicators in university operations and in academic programs are discussed as well as efforts to extend SCIP to other universities and other settings.