

The Higher Education Sustainability Act of 2007 (HESA)

Introduced by Senator Patty Murray

The Higher Education Sustainability Act (HESA) amends the Higher Education Act to authorize a **\$50 million** grant program at the Department of Education. At full funding, this program will annually support between 25 and 100 sustainability projects at higher education institutions and consortia/associations.

With energy needs and sustainability in the forefront today, Higher Education Institutions are uniquely positioned to reach a new generation of leaders and citizens to build their knowledge in sustainability as well as transform their own campuses to be consistent with sustainable best practices.

The immediate purposes of HESA are to:

- ✓ Support faculty, staff, and students in their efforts to establish administrative and academic sustainability programs on campus;
- ✓ Promote and enhance research by faculty and students in sustainability practices and innovations; and
- ✓ Support colleges and universities in their work with community partners from the business, workforce, government, and nonprofit sectors to design and implement sustainability programs for application in the community and workplace,

The long-term goals of HESA are to:

- ✓ Produce 3 million "sustainability-literate" college graduates each year
- ✓ Educate and train the next generation of scientists, engineers, planners, and business leaders for 21st century careers in the private and public sectors, and
- ✓ Fully embed sustainable practices in higher education, a \$300 billion enterprise¹

Individual institutions are eligible for funding to:

- ✓ Develop and implement campus and/or business administrative and operations practices that test, model, and analyze principles of sustainability;
- ✓ Establish multidisciplinary education, research, and outreach programs that address the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability;
- ✓ Support research and teaching initiatives in this area that are multidisciplinary and integrated;
- ✓ Establish initiatives in the areas of energy management, green building, waste management, purchasing, toxics management, transportation, and other aspects of sustainability;
- ✓ Develop new tools and strategies for environmental and resource conservation, energy efficiency and more sustainable development,
- ✓ Support student, faculty, and staff work at institutions of higher education to implement, research, and evaluate sustainable practices;
- ✓ Establish sustainability literacy as a requirement for undergraduate and graduate degree programs; and
- ✓ Integrate sustainability curriculum and projects in all programs of instruction, particularly in business, architecture, technology, manufacturing, engineering, and science programs.

Associations and consortia are eligible for funding to:

- ✓ Conduct faculty, staff and/or administrator trainings in sustainability;
- ✓ Compile, evaluate and disseminate best practices, guidelines and standards;
- ✓ Engage external stakeholders such as business, alumni, and accrediting agencies,
- ✓ Create analytical tools to assess and measure institutional progress; and
- ✓ Develop educational benchmarks.

National Summit:

HESA also directs the Secretary of Education to convene a national summit on sustainability in higher education to focus on efforts of national distinction and to create a set of recommendations for addressing sustainability through institutions of higher education.

¹ Higher Education operating expenditures in 2004 were approximately \$300 billion, which represents 2.8% of U.S. GDP and is greater than the GDP of all but 25 countries.