



## NEWS RELEASE

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### Lessons from the Gulf: The American Public Believes Business Leaders Need to Be Well-Versed in Sustainability

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#### **University Leaders Say Success Starts with Access**

Madison, Wis. -- (August 16, 2010) -- A recent national survey shows that 82% of Americans believe that in order to remain globally competitive, U.S. business leaders must understand how to manage business in an environmentally sustainable manner. Yet only 13 percent of U.S. adults are confident that corporate America has the knowledge to make decisions that consider long-term impacts on the environment. As a result, university leaders say academia must provide greater access to environmental education for adult returning students, and business must tap into new programs so that emerging leaders get what they need to succeed. The Sustainable Leadership Census was conducted by telephone within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the University of Wisconsin-Extension May 19 - 23, 2010 among 1,006 U.S. adults.

The vast majority (82 percent) of U.S. adults agree that company leaders need to learn more about the environment in order to make better decisions.

"It's becoming increasingly apparent that sustainable management is not confined to a limited segment of 'green sector' jobs. Every job confronts sustainability issues," said David Schejbal, dean of the University of Wisconsin-Extension Continuing Education, Outreach and E-Learning division. "All current and future managers across every business discipline will have to be environmentally-literate."

As sustainability becomes a requirement of businesses due to intensifying regulation, increasingly limited resources, advances in green technologies, and heightened public demand, the survey results point to a knowledge gap. Only one third (32 percent) of the employed respondents reported that their managers have had some training on the subject of sustainable management business practices. Furthermore, when asked which of the following courses would help businesses make decisions that take the environment into consideration, 70 percent of the respondents selected courses in renewable energy, natural resource management, and Triple Bottom Line accounting that measures the business' impact on people, profit and the planet.

The Council of Environmental Deans and Directors (CEDD) sees the survey as a call to increase the diversity of environmental programs as much as possible to prepare students for the wide range of jobs that require this knowledge to succeed.

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CEDD President Bill Sullivan said "This is relevant for today's managers across all industries. As expectations rise, so does the need to retool. To compete as this new economy surges forward, today's corporate leaders must be environmentally agile, eco-literate, and able to respond quickly. We must educate executives already on the job. But when juggling the demand of work, family and life in general, even the most environmentally-sensitive executives may wonder how they'll gain the new skills and mindset needed to lead their businesses and this country forward."

Sullivan, a professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, added, "Future success rises and falls on access. Our job as educators now is to focus on increased access and flexibility for the curriculum foundation we've built to deliver relevant environmental and sustainability programs to returning adult students."

A growing number of managers are turning to innovative online programs like the nation's first interdisciplinary certificates in sustainable management, pioneered by the University of Wisconsin-Extension and four University of Wisconsin campuses. The University of Wisconsin-Extension worked with companies leading the way in sustainability to tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of businesses. Managers can retool online through the Sustainable Enterprise Management or Sustainable Management Science certificates.

Four out of five people agree that educating business executives about sustainable management will help this country remain competitive with the rest of the world.

"The economic landscape is radically changing in ways that redefine business performance and, ultimately, our nation's prosperity. Imagine a day when water isn't free; when emitting any pollutant costs money; when today's incentive becomes tomorrow's tax," said Schejbal. "When that day arrives – and it will – the businesses that have prepared their management teams will prosper."

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### About the Methodology

This Sustainable Leadership Census was conducted by telephone within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the University of Wisconsin-Extension between May 19 - 23, 2010 among 1,006 U.S. adults. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region, number of adults in the household, and number of phone lines in the household were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. A full methodology is available.

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**About the Council of Environmental Deans and Directors**

The Council of Environmental Deans and Directors (CEDD) is an association of institutional representatives who come together to improve the quality, stature and effectiveness of academic environmental programs at U.S. universities and colleges. CEDD is facilitated by the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE). More information is available at <http://ncseonline.org/CEDD>.

**About the University of Wisconsin Sustainable Management Program**

The University of Wisconsin-Extension has brought together four University of Wisconsin campuses—UW-Parkside, UW-River Falls, UW-Stout and UW-Superior—to craft an online sustainable management certificate program and bachelor of science degree that equips workers with the management skills they will need to lead sustainable business strategy. Visit <http://sustain.wisconsin.edu> for more information.

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