Smith and Smith: Achieving Sustainable Education Together

A qualitative study of the potential for Smith College to reach its own goals of sustainability by

beginning a learning exchange with Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School

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Abstract:

At Smith College we lack a major program of study in Environmental Science and Policy, and as a part of our sustainability initiative on campus, we should expand our curriculum to branch out, into the Northampton community and form an educational agreement with Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School. Graduates of Smith College should have a grasp of the vocational fields offered at Smith High School be able to make ecologically sound decisions for themselves, the community and the planet. Smith College should take notice and participate with the local community where there is great potential to change the dominant modes of thought through education. There is also great potential for crossover education in academic and vocational subjects at the high school level as well as at Smith College. We can look at SVAHS as a model institution as well as a partner in experiential and transformative learning.

Introduction:

Sustainable Education

The future of land stewardship is of particular interest today, because of the state of the planet’s finite resources, which our economy and sustenance is based upon. The educational system is responsible for preparing students to make ecological decisions about land use and management, to ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy the natural landscape, as we know it. Smith College is a leading institution for women’s education, yet it lacks a complete program of learning to provide students with the knowledge “that prepares people for lives and livelihoods suited to a planet with a biosphere that operates by the laws of ecology and thermodynamics” (Orr, 1994, 27). Our educational facilities and curriculum could be complimented by the resources and initiative found at Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, operating on over 500 acres of land. This investigation was intended to qualify Smith High School as a model for sustainable education as proposed by Orr (2003) and Sterling (2001); which Smith College can move away from formal education and incorporate in its own curriculum of sustainability a connection to the local community. I suggest that Smith College should consider a learning exchange with Smith High School, in which our students can
participate in the experiential learning that occurs in the “out of classroom setting’ as well as following Smith High School as a model for combining classroom academia and experiential, hands on learning. At Smith High School, students are receiving an ecological education by being exposed to equal amounts of academic studies as they are in the shop or field, practicing the skills, which they are taught in their vocation.

If what is being taught in schools reflects the ideals of capitalism, value will continually be placed on the commoditization of nature. The separation humans feel that they have with the ecosystem creates the idea of land as free for the taking, meant to be owned, or seen as a blank slate waiting to be developed; a *terra nullis* unoccupied by no one (Posey, 1999). Agricultural practices therefore reflect deeper societal meanings of the human relationship with nature. In our western society, our values, or how we view the land is taught in our schools, especially this unique program in Western Massachusetts, situated in a relatively rural farming community. Practices of clear-cut agriculture and mono cropping necessitate chemical enhancement; and exploitive mining and logging industries commit “eco-genocide” by disrupting the balance of the bio-geochemical cycles that create the landscape that we exist in today. The abundance of forest, arable land, and clean waterways and air are in jeopardy at the rate of anthropogenic sources of pollutants in our soil, atmosphere and oceans (McNeill 2000). Smith College can follow the examples of other institutions to form partnerships in the movement towards sustainable education, which aims to heal the anthropogenic effects on the environment (Orr, 1994).

**Goals**

The objective of this study is to help Smith College to think long term, not short, and locally, not globally. The dominant ideas, or thought paradigm of modernity that has brought our
society to a state of ecological imbalance, utilizing a mechanist view of nature that allows nature to become a commodity; and wealth, progress and the accumulation of material goods are praised above peace, biodiversity and the preservation of habitat. If we want, as a society, to move in a different direction, and change the path of modernity from a polluting, techno-based culture to a conserving, long-term thinking, and earth-aware society, a more sustainable society, we must start with the education system: the avenue for conveying cultural norms, information and values.

History

Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School (SVAHS) was founded sixty years after the death of Oliver Smith, a “Plain farmer” of Hatfield, Massachusetts (Walker, 1900). He died in 1845, leaving $30,000 in an interest account, to be strictly used by a board of elected trustees, entitled “Smith Charities”. He acquired his great wealth by farming at an early age, raising cattle for the market, and making significantly high profits in a land deal with Mr. Moses Cleavland, of whom Cleavland Ohio was founded, in which Smith sold portions of Northampton Massachusetts and Ohio to The Connecticut land company (Garvey, 1948). He was politically active his whole life and actively selling stocks and bonds; he never married, and was remembered as being a stingy miser, although he always intending on giving his money to the “indignant youth” of the area with intentions of providing the lower class with opportunities for betterment (Titus, “Connectiuc”). The Agricultural School, Smith stated, should have two farm sites: one a “pattern” farm for learning and working, the other was to be an “experimental farm, to “aid and assist the labors and improvements of the Pattern Farm in the Art and Science of Husbandry and Agriculture” (Smith, Last will and testament, 1845). He was part of a solidifying
movement to create a real New England way of farming. Today it is the oldest independent vocational school in Massachusetts, and the only one of its category.

There are 13 shops including plumbing, manufacturing, information technology, electrical, health technology, graphic communications, carpentry, auto motive, auto body, cosmetology, and culinary in addition to the Agriculture and Forestry/Horticulture programs. The “Ag-cluster’ department is run by Mr. John Szafranski, and the teaching staff includes John Kelly and Jim Anspach in Forestry/Horticulture, Donald Baker in Animal Science, Dave Travers in Agriculture mechanics and Richard Storrs, the farm manager.

**Methodology:**

Qualitative research methods were employed to gain a full understanding of the workings of Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School from the point of view of the administration, faculty and students. Information was shared through interviews to grasp the attitudes of the faculty and staff on the program as a holistic education, and then I analyzed this discussion in a framework of sustainable education theories, emphasizing what connections Smith College can make with the High School.

**Results:**

My communication with the Smith Vocational and Agricultural High school includes phone conversations, and two interviews. The material has been condensed and summarized below.
Interview on phone with John Kelly April 4 2005

He is a new teacher, as of Nov. 2004, having recently left the local vegetable growing industry (a profession he had for many years after leaving Cornell University). He explained that Smith High school students work towards a certificate of occupational proficiency (COP), which is a state-wide program in Massachusetts. The school had banned chemicals in 1990’s during a “Toxic Reduction plan”, forcing all of the vocational shops to eliminate dangerous chemicals to protect the students and follow legal protocol on pesticides and hazardous materials. His view of the students includes them as a part of the theory of the “final control element”. This focuses on the skilled worker as an integral part of the action potential in any plan of work. In addition, 53% of graduates of Smith High School do go on to higher education. After graduation many student begin working, and the school has been encouraging Union 298 to take graduates; if offers good for pay and benefits mainly for heavy machinery operators. The Animal Science department is currently working on an “articulation agreement” with Holyoke and Greenfield Community colleges; how can these be two-way relationships. Massachusetts wants kids trained for skilled jobs and they are working on an overhaul of the forestry department.

Interview with Administration and Faculty Tuesday April 12 2005 at 2:30 pm

In my next communication with Mr. John Szafranski, the department head on April 6, 2005 we scheduled meeting for with the entire staff of agriculture and forestry/horticulture departments. A discussion was planned for a description of the existing program in terms of how information is conveyed to the students.

We met at the Superintendent’s Office for the weekly department meeting. It was the weekly staff meeting of the Ag. Cluster Faculty, two subdivisions: Forestry and Horticulture and
Animal Science/Ag mechanics. Those present include John Szafiranski, John Kelly, Donald Baker, Jim Anspach, and Dave Travers.

The state of Massachusetts has no curriculum for vocational programs, and agriculture programs are especially unique and vary from region to region. MCAS standardized testing for 10th, 8th, 6th and 4th that school must meet requirements on to have children pass exams, an indirect way of creating broad base curriculum. Students do not get a diploma without passing these exams, and the focus is on English, Math, and History. The same amount of academic knowledge is expected from these students as in the other school, except they are in the academic classroom only half as much. The students have 90-minute periods of English and math every day, every other week. State Competency Exam COP (Certificate of Occupational Proficiency) is a different exam for each vocational shop; a projection of state curriculum without mandating teaching, outlining what is important. The testing is mostly a competency-based approach and a project-based approach, where the students are tested at a real work site. The example given was for the plumbing exam in which the students install different projects in a local Habitat for Humanity House.

Their Composting Project is ongoing at a nearby location off of Route 66 in Northampton by the state hospital grounds. Here students process cafeteria to farm waste. Contracted with different sources to create a commercial composting program. Sources such as Smith horse manure and UMASS food waste. Smith food waste used to be brought in buckets by kitchen staff. They also collect old vegetable and fruit stock from the Big Y and Stop and Shop food marts. They are keeping a good deal of material from going into the trash. The project became more than the means of the school. They were making lean profit by charging for dumping and selling the compost, but it began taking away from the learning time of the students because of
the constant care the project requires. Less value for the students, and how can that be measured on a scale of financial return.

Don Baker of animal science, said students are exposed to animal welfare issues, such as controversial news and events. However, more of this type of discussion occurs in the upper class years. The Old Dairy Barn project was another activity that had flourished for the animal science department became The students have daily chores on the farm and curriculum to follow, and for some of these project someone is paid to make sure the animals are taken care of.

The state looks for specific measurable and observable skills, and they measure success by the employment of students and their certifications. This is true for all shop programs.

Pasturing on farm is an important part of the agriculture program. They have been working recently on a lot of fencing projects to learn about rotational grazing. They have created a contract and received a grant as a part of the Environmental Quality Incentive Program of the federal division, National Resource Conservation Services. The students have been working on a fencing project to learn about rotating field use, made possible by this program. The students are presented the big picture through small, skill based learning.

In the 200-acre forest they teach the students about continuous sustainable yield and only to take as much that grows. To produce a crop you must also be able to produce a good living, which is looking at long-term goals. There is unspoken and unwritten land ethics that are passed on to the kids. They are only able to teach the small skills, but through experiencing they learn the right thing to do.

The vocational teachers want to connect more with the academic subjects. The “writing across the curriculum” project will grow in the near future. Because they have to meet standards for the state in half as much academic work. The students produce 8 writing samples to be
reworked over the year and under go a Portfolio Assessment at the end of the year. The students at SVAHS are better at demonstrating skills rather than computerized testing, perhaps that is why some of them chose to participate in this alternative education program.

To express how much change has taken place recently in agriculture, Mr. Baker thinks of the FFA, Future Farmers of America. Or at least that is what it used to be called. Today it is just FFA because it is more technologically based and the field of agriculture is changing. “Agriculture is no longer just plows, cows and sows” and students are less likely to be coming from a farming family; therefore these are mostly not land-based students.

Students From Smith Voc and Ag participate in science projects and compete at the state level. One student last year wrote a paper, “Is Meat Murder” focusing on animal rights issues. Donald Baker says he gets his curriculum from AgEdnet.com for animal science program. Upper-class students have more of an opportunity to discuss the issues surrounding the skills that they are learning. The education they provide is really Career Development Education (CDE) that focuses on immediate, employable and usable skills.

Cultivation projects are limited to greenhouses and a fall pumpkin harvest, with hearty chrysanthemum, which they sell. They are teaching skills of niche farming. Grow and harvest alfalfa, hay and corn to feed the cows, horses, pigs, rabbits, and guinea pigs on their farm. No organic or biodynamic farming projects right now, maybe in the future, right now enrollment is down. It would take away from the existing programs to start one up. At one point there was a certified organic garden (CSA) but due to funding and the special skills of the farm manager at the time, these programs come and go. There was a retreat to the vitals of the program. This is part of the basic skills that they want to provide to the students for housing, nutrition and maintenance of the animals. For example, we used to run an apple orchard but there was a
switch from production to service industry in forestry, more arboriculture. There was a movement to use fewer pesticides, especially for schools, so the project was abandoned due to stricter restraints and budget constraints. Now they learn Integrated Pest Management and students get training to pass the Massachusetts pesticide license, which includes organics too.

“Articulation Agreements” with Veterinary Technology programs at Holyoke Community College entices potentially 30 students/year to prepare for a future career. For this program high school students can waive the application and earn college credit at Smith High School, towards the Holyoke associate degree program, take exam for credit and maintain a B in math and English. There is also Co-Op Placement for a junior or senior to report to a real job site as this helps students to individualize learning goals.

The ratio is presently 3:41, females to males in the forestry/horticulture program and is obviously not a gender-balanced field. Historically, the school was developed for young men, but this could also be because it is presented as a totally outdoors program; enforcing traditional roles of male and females. They incorporate less landscape design/flora-culture, which we offer at Smith College, but they would like to expand that part of the program. A member of the Board of Trustees at SVAHS used to be the head of Dining Services at Smith College

**Interview with Students on Friday April 15 2005 at 9 am**

Sophomore class of Jim Anspach, in the Horticulture/Forestry department. Their classroom was walled with sample ropes tied in knots, and the class conversation was about climbing trees when I entered, and Mr. Anspach was handing back exams to the students. He asked one the students to put the books away and sit down for an interview with me, who they considered an outside guest and neutral observer. I was left alone with the students to talk
for just about 40 minutes. We had a fun and lively discussion with most of the students participating in some way. There was a general consensus among the group, however, some students were reluctant to voice their opinions and I do not want to assume all of these students shared one point of view.

The following students were interviewed (9 total): Zach Fay, Karissa Taylor, Bryan Joyce, Jonathan Deignault, Jim Dalton, Matt Banner, Tom Rule, John Grace, and Nick Boudreau.

I began by asking, the group if they agreed that our generation was facing different environmental problems than our parents generation, pointing out that while some issues have gotten better, such as the use of DDT pesticides en mass, and other things have gotten worse, such as the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere due to burning coal. I wanted to know if they felt that they were ready to tackle these issues through the experiential learning that Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School prepared them with.

1. Do you think people in our society are out of touch with nature?

   *Unanimous yes.*

   *I am the forest. I live, eat drink and breath the forest. I feel very connected to the forest.*

2. Should more of what you learn be taught at other schools?

   *Yes*

3. When you hear the word “environmentalist” what do you think? (This one really got the conversation started, mostly on the cue of the more outgoing student)

   *Tree hugger, hippies*
   *We climb trees*
   *A new tree grows everyday, the world is not coming to an end*
   *Like those guys who chain themselves to the tree, we’ll cut it down anyway*
There are too many policy laws, saying that we can’t cut trees. We should be able to use the land freely. There is so much undeveloped land and people want to conserve it, and not build. We should let people build. Only 3-4% of the land in this country has been developed. We have not read Aldo Leopold, nor heard of him.
In terms of land management, we know not to clear-cut, but instead create sustainable yield, so I can make a living off of the forest. It is important to preserve habitat too, we leave one dead tree per acre of forest for the animals.

3. Do you know anything about the Native Americans who lived in Northampton before the colonist settled here? Do you know anything about their land practices?

   No, not really. They used to use everything, but today we don’t use all of our materials, we are wasteful

4. Do your academics tie into your vocational work and does that give you a well-rounded understanding of the topic?

   There is no cross-over, once a term we are required to do a write up of our favorite project. When you graduate you have a folder of writing that is supposed to help you get a job, but I won’t use it.
   It’s stupid and ridiculous, and it should be optional because it is a large part of our grade.
   We would like if there was more cross over of work between the academic classes and the shop classes. My academic teachers don’t know anything about the shop work and don’t mention it at all. It’s like two different worlds.
   I don’t think the teachers like the Ag/For. Students.
   Its like we have to shut out the shop info for academic time.
   A few students are transfers from Hampshire Regional School, and we are learning the same things that we did in the 7th/8th grade. There is an overlap in the skills.

5. Were you involved in the composting project?

   Yes, we were there yesterday. We bagged 600 bags of compost to be sold at $5 for about 12-15 lbs.
   Its pointless, because its for the agriculture students, not horticulture.
   Its way too big, we just spend our time picking up trash. It would be much better if there wasn’t so much plastic.
   They have biodegradable bags now.

6. How was your high school experience different from others?

   We don’t sit in a classroom, so it is better. We come out knowing more
Discussion:

Smith College Reaching Out

If Smith College intends on expanding its Environmental Science and Policy program, and possibly create a major in this study, working with the Vocational High School can be an integral component of that. It’s close location and resources are beyond what Smith College can provide for its students and a partnership is a solution to expanding our sustainable education program without purchasing more land or developing extensive programs. We would be following a sustainable model to branch out to the local community, foster relationships and reduce our ‘footprint’ while expanding our curriculum. In exchange, we can offer an “Articulation agreement” with Smith High school like that of Holyoke and Greenfield Community Colleges. Agreement programs are specialized based on the degrees offered at the Community College, which match the vocational preparation that Smith High school provides. Smith College could start with the Plant Science, Landscape Design and Biology programs, and in the future entice students from the local community to continue to study a major in Environmental Science and Policy. We can potentially attract a population of female students from the local community to not only participate in the High School program, and continue their education at Smith College.

Smith High School as the Model

If the task of the vocational school is to make students employable after graduation, and the ability to have advancement in a trade; and most graduates will stay within a 25-mile radius of Northampton, these students make up a big percent of local sources of skill and knowledge.
The importance of conveying a sustainable model of education will most likely directly affect land use here in the Pioneer Valley. Smith High school should continue the original dream of Oliver Smith, being both a “pattern” farm to be duplicated in the region, but also being “experimental”, leading the way in innovative teaching and technology. Teaching students more than “just the basic skills” can convey the importance of the role of skilled workers in our society. This can be achieved through greater academic learning through their vocational work such as the “Writing across the Curriculum” project, which combines history and agriculture, literature and forestry, as examples. Balancing their special needs of condensed academic time and their vocational focus on immediate, employable and usable skills, it is a challenge to the faculty to provide transformative learning, or “education for change” (Sterling, 2001, 35). This crossover writing assignment is also a different kind of assessment, one that measures awareness, insight, depth of analysis, and practical knowledge all in one assignment.

Learning process can have no efficacy, reinforce or accommodate what is already known, change or modify the knowledge of the students, or transform what is already known into something new. Also described as:

1\textsuperscript{st} order learning: Functional, Info based, where Smith High does most work
2\textsuperscript{nd} order learning: When we examine the assumptions which underlie 1\textsuperscript{st}
3\textsuperscript{rd} order learning: shift of awareness, consciousness, transform thinking (Sterling, 2001).

To go beyond the level of education that simply accommodates or make little change in the student’s perspective of land use ethic, they want to encourage academic learning through their vocational work. The student expressed to me that they would like more of this and this could expand methods of assessing knowledge. This is the place where transformative education can be achieved, progressing through Sterling’s 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} levels of learning.
“Low and behold [agriculture has] been what drives the army and what drives the military, you can’t go to war if you don’t have food its tied into everything in this country. We do try to teach that. But considering everything. All the things we are trying to balance out, there is a focus on specific observable measurable skill as an outcome. Because we will be graded ourselves on whether our students can exhibit those specific observable measurable skills. Measurement of success to see how many students get licensed in the area” John Sephranzki (2005)

What is presented here is the crisis in education; the “limited ability to assert humanistic and democratic values in the face of quasi-market and managerialist forces”; a part of the modern mechanist educational paradigm that does not account for a ‘holistic’ education that, “involves a deep awareness of alternative world views and ways of doing things” (Sterling, 2001)

This is a post-modernist and reflexive way of looking at education, which I believe is being grasped with the “Writing across curriculum” program at Smith High School, and demonstrates their initiative for achieving Sustainable Education. Gerber writes, “We believe that learning “about” sustainability is not enough. A critical aspect of transformative education for sustainability is the ability to integrate theory and practice in real world situations.” This should continue to be the “Pattern” that Smith High School sets for other learning institutions.

Changing Thought Paradigms Through Education

The goals of Smith College’s sustainability plan are being influenced by the outside agent Good Company, which presented Smith’s “Pedagogy and curriculum” as avenues to meet our changing needs of having “campus systems as learning spaces” and “Environmental studies” existing “interdisciplinary in all campus curriculum” (Skov, 2005). Prof. John Gerber of UMASS teaches in the Plant, Soil and Insect department and provides another example of a model of sustainable education in the fields of Agriculture and forestry/horticulture in the
Pioneer Valley. He defines sustainable agriculture as, “providing for the needs of all people alive today without jeopardizing future generations” (Gerber, Lecture, 2005). This is true for the forestry students learning about sustainable yield timber use, and animal science students, raising cattle, and rotating land use to provide for their needs at the High School level. There has been a decline in farming, including direct farm-consumer sales in our country; there had been 6.8 million farms in 1935, and today only 2.1 million, of which 1.1 million are part time (Gerber, 2005). He believes that it is the actions, patterns and structures of a society create the feedback loops that in turn create the mental models that shape our relationship with the natural world, and our agricultural practices. Smith High school was intended by Oliver Smith to be the template for the “pattern” farm of Northampton, and despite a large decline in local farming, Hampshire county still ranks 49th in the Nation for direct farmer-consumer sales. There is still a need to invest in the education of young people in the area, and Smith College can make innovations just like Oliver Smith did 160 years ago.

Professor John Gerber has incorporated local sustainable farming practices is into his UMASS extension program (affiliated with the College of Natural Resources and Environment), which gives students the opportunity to visit many local farms that are practicing organic, biodynamic and macrobiotic cultivation. The students gain experiential knowledge about what the important issues are in cultivating local land, and selling goods to the local community. Gerber teaches his students the theory of metal models, of which sustainability does not fit into the dominant paradigm that exists today, which is focused on a global market of cheap goods. Sustainability in agriculture can only be accepted in a new paradigm, one that reconnects humans to nature, with the goals of healthy soil and people, and not profit through the maximization of
land. This college program closely resembles the high school program that has been ongoing at Smith Vocational and Agricultural:

> A [EVS&P] major will allow students to broaden their area of study to include complex human relationships associated with agriculture and nature, on farms, in communities, in business and society. Specifically students may study communication processes, systems analysis, decision-making, and relationship building among diverse peoples and between people and the natural world.” (Gerber, 2005, web)

This is evident in the junior/senior opportunities to study off campus, and the “Articulation Agreements” that let students achieve community college credit while still in high school. The teachers emphasized to me that they are only able to teach the small skills, and that the kids are able to learn the unspoken, unwritten land ethics though DOING: experiential learning.

Females working and making major decisions in the field of agriculture has traditionally been a non-dominant role. Smith should target places for women to flourish in new frontiers of sciences that have traditionally been roles un-occupy able by females. A relationship with Smith High school can spotlight this field for the young women in the local community to participate in landscape studies, horticulture, biology, or a future major in Environmental Science and Policy. The composting project could be an initial activity to breech the two schools, as the issue of Composting is an important factor to the student body as well as the Sustainability Committee. A past Environmental Science paper by Katie Marlow entitled *Composting at Smith: Possibilities for the Future* (2004) could now include the possibility of working, learning, participating in the community effort of the Smith High School compost project in Northampton. This would be a way for Smith College students to support the needs of the school, and the surrounding community in a tangible, ecologically productive way; gaining a full understanding
of the cycles of decomposition and reuse, and sharing that learning experience with the students of the local area. The transitions of learning levels are evident in this ongoing composing project; the High School students say that creating a final product, bagging, selling and completing the cycle is a hands-on learning activity to grasp the full commercial aspect. The faculty believes that at the moment, the Compost program is what they consider to be the most sustainable project. They are risking having to give up the project because it is going beyond the scope of the school and taking away from the students learning. There is a contingency of Smith College students who are interested in continuing Composting as part of our institutions sustainability practices, and could work and study in a partnership with the High school program to ensure that it does not go under.

If competition between neighboring intuitions is believed to be incentive for improving sustainability on college campuses, we can also look to Holyoke community college accepting 30 students a year for it’s Vet Tech program; and Greenfield Community College, which offers an Associates degree of the Liberal Arts in Environmental Science/Human Ecology. In addition, the UMASS extension program takes full advantage of the learning experiences that are possible in the local farming community.

Orr (1994) tells us of myths of education that lead to the anthropocentric idea that humans should dominate nature. These are some of the assumptions sustainable education needs to examine. Humans are unable to manage the planet because we don’t have a full understanding of it, but what we can do and should do is people manage. We can influence how humans affect the planet, and acknowledge the interconnectedness of all living and non-living things. Knowledge is not increasing as technological progress likes to imply, but rather we are losing knowledge every day- mostly traditional indigenous knowledge, and biological
knowledge. Narrow, specialized study has led to fragmented thinking in higher education, and what we call pure knowledge has given many “intellectuals” an incomplete education- void of a well-rounded understanding of the world and experiential, corporal learning using all the senses. Progress and success are not the only goals of life and students should be encouraged to make thoughtful decisions, not just make money.

Conclusion:

Evidence of the environmental devastation that our society is facing today has largely been due to development of human activities beyond the means of our ecosystem. To change our pattern of land use we must provide holistic education systems that allow students to learn in a natural setting. As a society we need to gain an understanding of the intrinsic value of nature beyond an economic, capitalistic or objectified view. Smith College needs to join the path that its neighboring institutions have already embarked upon. Orr (1994) emphasizes that education is the key to a paradigm shift in our culture towards a sustainable mindset. What is being taught in our schools reflects the mechanistic, capitalist ideologies of material gain and a lack of acknowledgement of the role humans have had in the altering of the Earth’s surface. Smith wanted to create a school that promoted a certain “pattern” farm, or template to be duplicated all over New England. If the role of the school is still to pass on a template, lets ensure that it is following the ideals of post-modern sustainability. My recommendations include expanding Smith College’s academic programs beyond the college walls to the local community, specifically Smith High School, which has the resources and the incentive to create experiential transformative learning about important ecological arenas that all educated people should have an opportunity to come to know. When students are touch with the natural landscape they can
achieve a better grasp of how humans influence the environment, and this is the first step to changing how we teach “Environmental Science”.

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