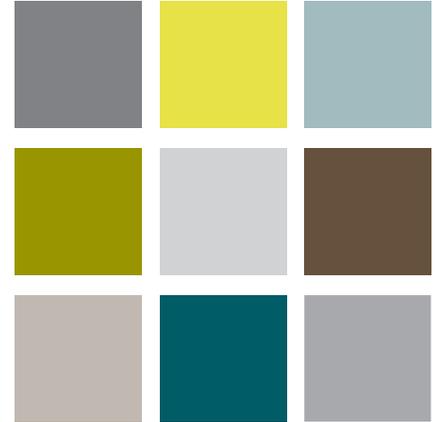


Ohio Environmental Leaders Institute 2013

Impact Statement



SUMMARY

The Ohio Environmental Leaders Institute is a forum for learning for environmental professionals and policy makers to better address complex environmental issues. The Institute will engage representatives from public, private and not-for-profit sector organizations in applied and experiential learning settings. The curriculum will be focused on environmental sustainability, collaborative process skills, and organizational leadership development.

SITUATION

Many of the most pressing issues facing Ohio's communities are and will continue to be related to the sustainable management of natural resources, and the maintenance and restoration of environmental services. These complex issues require collaboration across disciplines, organizations, and geographic regions. In recognition of this challenge, the Ohio Environmental Leaders Institute is proposed as a forum for learning for environmental professionals and policy makers to better address complex environmental issues. The Institute will engage representatives from public, private and not-for-profit sector organizations in applied and experiential learning settings. The curriculum will be focused on environmental sustainability, collaborative process skills, and organizational leadership development. Each annual cohort that completes the program will join an expanding leadership network to advance environmental policy discussions in Ohio.

RESPONSE

We held three sessions between June and September 2013. The first and last sessions were two full days with an evening dinner networking session, the middle session was one full day. The session themes included sustainability, climate change, and energy. Each session involved panel discussions, small group exercises, and presentations, and addressed collaboration, leadership, and environmental sustainability. 24 environmental



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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participants completed the Ohio Environmental Leaders Institute offered by The Ohio State University in the School of Environment and Natural Resources. The environmental professionals represented the public, not-for-profit and private sectors as well as two students.

IMPACT

The primary outcomes reported by evaluation respondents included increases in collaboration skills and networking. All respondents (n=23) reported gains in this area. Half of respondents reported gains in the areas of knowledge of environmental sustainability and leadership. A variety of suggestions were made for individual activities but generally the sessions were well received. The theme of improvements particularly for the environmental sustainability content was to include more practical/solution oriented information and go into more depth over fewer topics.

Collaborative Skill Building

The biggest program impacts appear to be in the areas of collaborative process skill building and networking. On the final evaluation 23 of the 23 respondents responded 'yes' to the question "overall the institute helped me to improve my collaborative process skills." Some specific examples of how participants plan to use these skills included: "In guiding a master planning process involving multiple stakeholders" and "Examine how to strengthen my leadership goals and actions."

Networking

When asked if overall the institute helped to expand their professional network again 23 of 23 respondents answered 'yes.' Comments included: "I met so many people that I never would have had the chance to meet." "I plan to stay in contact and engaged." "I've already collaborated & shared information with folks from the program."

Leadership

On the topic of leadership around sustainability half of respondents answered 'yes' to the question: Overall, the Institute helped my ability to provide leadership on issues related to sustainability and no one answered 'no.' Some comments related to this question included: "Learning to see larger issues as complex." "Panel speakers were a plus. Ability to ask them questions was helpful." "Has encouraged me to make a re-commitment to enable others and those around me to think outside of the box."

Environmental Knowledge

When asked "Overall, the Institute helped me improve my knowledge/understanding of environmental sustainability" 11 respondents answered 'yes' and 2 'no.' Some comments included: "Reinforced my thoughts on sustainability." "Broadening my perspective beyond a single natural resource focus (water) to bigger issues like energy and sustainability." "Introduced me to different issues and perspectives." "Brought in good speakers. Sessions were well organized."

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