Greening the Ivory Tower: Improving the Environmental Track Record of Universities, Colleges, and Other Institutions (Urban and Industrial Environments)

Sarah Creighton

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Universities can teach and demonstrate environmental principles and stewardship by taking action to understand and reduce the environmental impacts of their own activities. Greening the Ivory Tower, a motivational and how-to guide for staff, faculty, and students, offers detailed "greening" strategies for those who may have little experience with institutional change or with the latest environmentally friendly technologies.The author was project manager of Tufts CLEAN!, a program whose mission was to reduce Tufts University's environmental impact. After analyzing the campus's overall environmental impact (each year the main campus serves 5 million meals; makes 14 million photocopies; uses 65 tons of paper towels, 110 million gallons of water, and 23 million kWh of electricity; and generates over 2,000 tons of solid waste), the team decided to focus on food waste, transportation, energy efficiency, and procurement practices. An essential discovery was that to change practices requires the personal commitment and direct involvement of those who have the responsibility for operating the institution on a daily basis. Although the Tufts experience forms the basis for many of the proposals in the book, the story goes well beyond Tufts; the author includes examples of successful practices from many other institutions.

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