



Dissertation Data

Megan Czerwinski, a doctoral student in nursing, is using data from the U-M Sustainability Cultural Indicators Program (SCIP) survey as part of her dissertation. Her research focuses on sustainability education in the nursing profession, and she wants to understand “what nurses know or feel” in regards to sustainability.

“The foundation is there” for nurses to be engaged with sustainability, she says. “Florence Nightingale talked about the environment patients are in and how we need to pay attention to that.” What’s more, nurses are the largest component of the US healthcare workforce, and have been consistently rated as the most trusted profession by Gallup Polls. “Nurses can play a role as trusted, nonpartisan voices in starting sustainability discussions and pointing out the immediate impacts and health impacts of [sustainability issues],” she says. For instance, talking about reducing medical waste, or location-specific contamination like the current dioxin pollution impacting Ann Arbor groundwater.

Czerwinski is using the SCIP survey methods and design to collect data, and will target just the nursing school. This will allow her to zero-in on attitudes, awareness, and behaviors around sustainability just within the nursing students. From the data she hopes to gather, Czerwinski will create a baseline analysis that she hopes will help inform in what area to target sustainability education. If there are high levels of sustainability awareness but lower sustainability behaviors, then this suggests nurses are already aware of sustainability issues and concepts, and education programs may be targeted more toward behavior change.

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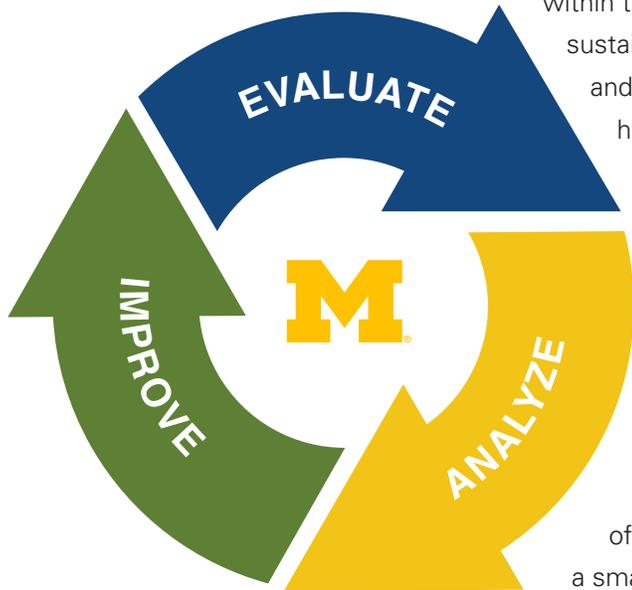
The research is still in its early stages, but Czerwinski has already done some preliminary statistical analyses of the SCIP data that has already been collected. She investigated the breakdown of attitudes, awareness, and behaviors between six groups of students, with each group representing a different discipline (e.g. arts and humanities, engineering, etc.). Although too early for her to draw any conclusions, it appears there are differences between disciplines in the attitude toward sustainability —such as the awareness of sustainability issues and programs, or sustainable behavior — in which they scored highest. This preliminary research will lay the groundwork for her focus on nursing students.



The University of Michigan's (U-M) Institute of Social Research launched the Sustainability and Cultural Indicators Program (SCIP). The program is helping to elucidate the complex relationship between institutional changes aimed at promoting sustainability and the behavior and knowledge of individuals within those institutions.

SCIP Data In Action Case Study Series

In 2012, the University of Michigan's (U-M) Institute of Social Research launched the Sustainability and Cultural Indicators Program (SCIP). Now in 2018 the program is still going strong and helping to elucidate the complex relationship between institutional changes aimed at promoting sustainability and the behavior and knowledge of individuals



within those institutions. The 15-minute survey covers a swath of sustainability issues, collecting data on the sustainability knowledge and behaviors of the students and faculty and staff. Survey data is helping to continuously improve U-M's sustainability programs, and the survey's design and execution is serving as a model for how institutes of higher learning, and other large institutions, can effectively monitor and adapt their own sustainability programs.

Since SCIP's advent, 138 institutions from around the world have requested the questionnaire, revealing a thirst for change and a way to adaptively manage initiatives. Yet more needs to be done to explore the interplay between sustainability and social science. This exploration is essential to the advancement of sustainability in society more broadly. The SCIP data set is just a small part of that, but it holds a wealth of behavioral knowledge that waiting to be tapped by students and faculty who want to start advancing the social science of sustainability that one step further.

There are already some U-M researchers who have begun to use the SCIP data set, both in their own research and as a teaching tool. For instance, Dr. Jonathan Levine, a U-M professor of urban and regional planning, and his PhD student, Jacob Yan, are using the newest edition of the SCIP survey to figure out ways to better support carpooling behavior on and around campus. Dr. Victoria Campbell-Arvai is using data from the SCIP surveys to teach students about using social science in environmental and sustainability contexts. Students, too, have begun engaging with the SCIP data. Megan Czerwinski, a nursing PhD student, plans to use the data as part of her dissertation, focusing on sustainability education in the nursing profession.

The following case studies take a closer look at how these diverse researchers are advancing our knowledge of the social pillar of sustainability.

