COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS CAN ALIGN WITH THE CO-CREATION MISSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION SUSTAINABILITY

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Co-creation is the emerging mission in many universities that promotes a collaborative, innovative relationship between universities, industries, and government to enhance the local economy and quality of life. Sustainable community engagement programs have allocated resources from universities to enlarge the social responsibility of higher education institutions such as University of Oregon’s Sustainable Cities Initiatives that encourages students to be part of the design of sustainable cities with the collaboration from local government and businesses. The purpose of this study was to find the implications of Co-Creation mission of universities from the US regarding of the pioneering and impactful community engagement that was built-in with the campus sustainability as well as through university-industry partnership. Through my internship with UW Sustainability Office, I utilized the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) scorecards published by the Association for Advancement in Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) for evaluating universities. These universities are filtered by STARS version 2.1 metrics. Findings show that Stanford University, Colorado State University, University of Connecticut-Storrs have the highest scores under campus and community engagement sector with multiple events and programs design for student and faculty to solve sustainability-oriented challenges from the community. As for the community engagement benchmark, UW should increase student participation in the international environmental conference as University of Connecticut funds students to join Conference of the Parities (COP), and formulate community sustainability incubator to integrate government and industry’s effort with technologies transferred as Oberlin College pioneered in Oberlin Project.