

## Sustainability in Higher Education Licensed Data Set—2009 Database Overview

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Sustainability Database includes information about college sustainability initiatives, campus-wide sustainability efforts, sustainability transparency/documentation, as well as student activities, curriculum, research, buildings and grounds, recycling, energy, transportation, food, investment, and purchasing. This Overview is designed to give you a broad sense of the database. A Data Dictionary, comprised of detailed descriptions of the tables and fields in the database, is available in a separate document.

In July 2009, the President's Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) reported that "Jobs devoted to environmental improvement grew far faster than other occupations from 2000-2006 and the BLS projects fast relative growth through 2016." In fact figures included in this report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics projected 52% growth in this job sector between 2000 and 2016, as opposed to 14% job growth overall. Members of the higher education community were among the first to recognize the importance of the concept of sustainability, not only to the long-term growth and survival of their institutions, but to the survival of the planet itself. According to its Web site, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, (AASHE) "was officially launched in January 2006, serving as the first professional higher education association for the campus sustainability community." In 3 years, participation at its AASHE's annual conference has grown from 650 colleges and universities to over 1700. Peterson's, with over 40 years of experience providing timely and high quality information about colleges and universities to students, researchers, and companies, developed the Sustainability Database last year to collect information for the first edition of *Peterson's Green Jobs for a New Economy: The College and Career Guide to Emerging Technologies*.

### **UNIVERSE:**

The Sustainability Database for 2009 includes 448 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada that completed *Peterson's Survey of Sustainability Efforts in Higher Education* and responded affirmatively to the question that asked whether the institution currently engages in sustainability efforts and/or initiatives. To be included, an institution must grant a degree at the associate's or baccalaureate level and either have full accreditation or candidate-for-accreditation (preaccreditation) status granted by an institutional or specialized accrediting body that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Recognized accrediting bodies include the six regional associations of schools and colleges (Middle States, New England, North Central, Northwest, Southern, and Western), the American Association of Bible Colleges (AABC), the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS), the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools/Colleges of Technology (ACCSCT), the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC), the Transnational Association of Christian Schools (TRACS), the American Academy for Liberal Education (AALE), the Council on Occupational Education (COE), the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES), the Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools (AARTS), and the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS). Program registration by the New York State Board of Regents is considered to be the equivalent of institutional accreditation.

Canadian institutions must be chartered and authorized to grant degrees by a provincial government, affiliated with a chartered institution, or accredited by a recognized U.S. accrediting body. Institutions from outside the U.S., its territories, and Canada that are accredited by recognized U.S. accrediting bodies are also included. Specialized accrediting bodies exist in over forty different fields, each of which is authorized to accredit specific programs in its particular field. This can serve as the equivalent of institutional accreditation for specialized institutions offering programs in only a single field (e.g., schools of art, optometry, music, theology, etc.).

### **TIME FRAME, RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA VERIFICATION:**

This is the first data collection we've conducted specific to Sustainability. Data collection for the Sustainability Database began last November and continued through March of this year. *Peterson's Survey of Sustainability Efforts in Higher Education* was sent to the institutions meeting the criteria defined above (see "Universe").