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ASI 345 - Week 1 & 2

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Friday, September 10, 2010

ASI 345 - Week 1 & 2

Maggie



After two weeks of classes, ASI 345 River Leadership is well underway! During the first class, the students learned about the unique process and development of the course as well as the Fitz Center and the Rivers Institute. After covering the syllabus, student learning outcomes and the logistics of the course, the class launched into a discussion on the common good examining it from an economic perspective and emphasizing the sociological and policy implications. To gain a better understanding of the common good, the class traveled to SunWatch Archeological Park along the Great Miami to learn about the Fort Ancient Indians and this river civilization's understanding of the common good.



After exploring the tragedy of the commons and what the common good means to each student, the second class challenged the students to create a definition of sustainability for the class to use throughout the remainder of the semester. Emily Klein, graduate assistant for the Fitz Center, led the class through a discussion of the reading *Hope and Hard Times* and led an exercise in nominal group technique to help the students develop a definition everyone could agree upon. The students started by brainstorming terms and concepts they felt were essential to sustainability. After listing all the ideas, each person picked the five concepts they felt were the most important. The class then construction a definition using the concepts and terms voted more relevant.



Class definition: "Sustainability is a community-wide effort to protect and restore the environment which requires citizen responsibility, interdisciplinary perspective and leadership continually working towards achievable step-wise goals of engaging with nature, increasing awareness, and balancing natural resources for the long-term common good of the natural world and its inhabitants."

The session focused on sustainability, but was also a lesson in leadership. The nominal group technique stresses the importance of listening to others' ideas, balancing inquiry and advocacy, and working together to create a shared vision where each person can recognize their contribution to the final product.