
WILL THE OLD DAIRY FARM DEVELOPMENT HELP LINCOLN UNIVERSITY'S SUSTAINABILITY?

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The SOCI 314 Professional Practice course is a compulsory paper for Bachelor of Environmental management and Planning (BEMP), Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA) and Bachelor of resource Management (BRM) students. The course has a core component taught to all students that covers things like contract and land law, professional ethics and communication skills. Each profession then takes its particular stream of students and focuses on professional skills and techniques of particular benefit to their profession. For instance, the environmental management and planning students have to present evidence as either a planning officer or an environmental expert in a mock hearing in front of former Environment Court Judge Peter Skelton.

In 2008 they also had to take a current planning issue in the region and write an article on it for LUPR (as discussed in the undergraduate articles section). To help them develop professional skills in group work and project management they were also tasked as a group to produce a "Planning Issues and Options" discussion document based on Lincoln University's campus and its sustainability.

The options developed were based on the stated goals of the University and assessed against criteria drawn from the University's policies. All issues had to include a 'business as usual option' and at least two alternatives. With the limited timeframe for this assignment, this was a 'big ask', but the outcome was of a reasonable standard and was prepared on the basis that all options required much fuller evaluation (an exercise for the 2009 class). Among the options were some that provide avenues for future students at local high schools (e.g. for

planning and decision making topics) and the University and these are synthesised here.

Data obtained by the students indicated that in 2007 there were 3521 students and 705 staff at Lincoln University. On campus accommodation was available for 557 students, but 78 rooms were unoccupied. Lincoln township apparently lacks amenities, part-time employment opportunities, and the entertainment (the 'buzz'), that would attract university students and staff to stay in the vicinity. There is also insufficient appropriate affordable local accommodation and an unwillingness among some house owners in the community to rent to students. Partly as a consequence, many students live in Christchurch. This, coupled with a bus timetable that is not well synchronised to course timetables, creates a preference for individual car transport that then reduces use of the public transport and is less sustainable for the environment.

The development of the University's old dairy farm provides an opportunity for addressing some of those problems. The students concluded that a complete overhaul of the proposed development with an emphasis on students and staff of Lincoln University would be the best choice for the University and would involve the University ensuring that their housing needs are met, particularly with the development of affordable housing options for students.

When aligned with other findings related to needing to improve the amount of indigenous biodiversity and the desirable location of a new swimming pool there appears to be a number of opportunities for this development, which is on University land, to be planned and promoted in a way

that supports the University goals as well as those of the wider community.

With the first turf being turned on the supermarket site it may be too late for a serious review of the plans for this development, but on the other hand, it provides an excellent focus for student projects, whether they relate to the broader issues of drainage, waste and biodiversity management, or to the more subtle

concepts of designs creating a development that not only physically links town and gown, but develops a cultural vitality and heritage that is beneficial to the Lincoln community as a whole. The challenge is there!



NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of LUPR is planned for July 2009. Articles for publication should be submitted by May 15, 2009 to Hamish Rennie, lupr@lincoln.ac.nz (Please put 'LUPR' in the subject line)

In issue 2 we hope to include an 'agony aunt/uncle' section - an opportunity to ask an expert your planning related question.