FDU push to better corporate world earns honor

Morristown nonprofit names institute leader in development vision

BY VIDYA PADMANABHAN
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MADISON — The corporate world of the future will abandon its “self-defeating” focus on just keeping its financial investors happy. It will instead adopt “long-term sustainability” by being mindful of the interests of all stakeholders, including society at large.

This is the utopian vision of the Institute for Sustainable Enterprise, part of Fairleigh Dickinson University’s Silberman College of Business. And this is the vision for which the Institute will be recognized as a local leader in sustainable development, at an April 21 Earth Day gala hosted by Unity Learning Environments, a Morristown-based nonprofit organization dedicated to sustainability education.

“This is wonderful,” said Gerard Farias, associate professor of management and member of the Institute. “We are relatively new in the area of sustainability, and when we look at the other awardees, we are very excited.”

This year’s awards will mark the third time Unity Learning Environments has honored achievement in sustainable development; ULE director Paul Miller said.

For the first time this year, multiple winners have been chosen. Besides FDU’s Institute for Sustainable Enterprise, awardees include:

If you go
The Unity Learning Environments gala will be held 6:30 p.m., April 21, at the Hyatt Morristown. For tickets, visit www.communityearth.net or call (973) 452-2875.

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■ The Morris Land Conservancy, which engages in open space advocacy in the county;
■ The Willow School, a Gladstone, N.J.-based charter school that has a sustainability-based curriculum;
■ Jaime Cloud, who started the Cloud Institute in New York City to develop sustainability-based educational programs;
■ E+Co, an organization that provides business and financial support for sustainable energy projects worldwide.

The recipients have all been selected for their commitment to the “triple bottomlines” of sustainability — environmental, social, economic — Miller said.

“The FDU model is very exciting,” he said, “focusing as it does on collaboration between business, academia and the nonprofit sectors.”

The Institute teaches sustainability through a “service learning class,” and tries to work sustainability into the curriculum where possible, Farias said.

Every year, students make a trip to live, work and learn in a developing economy, such as organic plantations in Costa Rica.

In the service learning class, students raise funds for charitable projects — one project involved raising funds for a school in Cambodia, with a matching-fund grant from the World Bank; in another instance, students raised $5,000 for the American Heart Association, according to Farias.

“There’s a strong move nationwide to make sustainability part of the consciousness on campuses,” Farias said.

Attendees who watch the Institute honored for its work on April 21 will also get to enjoy a five-course organic, vegetarian dinner prepared with local-grown ingredients, showcasing the talents of well-known chefs from Whole Foods Madison, Hyatt Morristown and the Unity Charter School, a school run by ULE. Miller said.

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