

**ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY NEWS RELEASE**

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**Thirteen Sustainability Graduates Represent Milestone for Arizona State University and Nation**  
*ASU celebrates its first class of graduates from the nation's first School of Sustainability*

President Barack Obama's message of change parallels the vision Arizona State University has been pursuing since Michael Crow became its 16th president in 2002.

"The President's emphasis on building the next generation of leaders in science, technology, and sustainability, as well as the arts, mirrors ASU's mission as a New American University," said Crow. "His advocacy for representation of women and people of color, engaging a broader spectrum of leadership, models significantly for others at the highest level."

And so Dr. Crow wrote to President Obama, inviting him to address the university's Class of 2009. To the delight of the university community, Obama accepted. The President's commencement address on May 13, 2009, is eagerly anticipated and will be a great honor for the university and the more than 8,000 graduates, their families, and friends who will be in attendance.

Among the attendees will be 13 School of Sustainability students – the first class of graduates from the nation's first degree-granting sustainability school. Their graduation thus marks a milestone for the university and the country.

These students are pioneers in a new field of study. Trained to see complex problems from many angles and armed with integrated instruction in a variety of academic disciplines, School of Sustainability graduates have the tools to develop real solutions that address the world's economic, societal, and environmental challenges.

Charles Redman, director of the School of Sustainability, expects these graduates to become true agents of change. "Sustainability has captured ASU by storm and we expect its graduates to transform our country," he said.

It is significant, then, that President Obama will serve as commencement speaker on this momentous occasion. He, too, has been transformational.

Since taking office in January, President Obama has taken bold action to make the US a greener, healthier, stronger, and more equitable nation by addressing a broad spectrum of issues and calling on Americans to change the country where government cannot. "You don't need to be a President to bring change to people's lives," Obama said in a recent address.

Being a sustainability graduate is a good start. Working mother Brigitte Bavousett, who completed her Master of Arts degree in Sustainability and was honored during the fall 2008 commencement ceremony, has already made a difference. As an intern for U-Haul International, she researched forestation processes and non-profit partnership options to help the company create a plan to reduce its carbon footprint through carbon sequestration. U-Haul has since hired Bavousett to the role of carbon offset project manager, as the company implements the plan.

"We really respect Brigitte's capacity to learn something quickly, apply that knowledge to a new topic, and find creative solutions," said Allan Yang, U-Haul's director of corporate sustainability. "She has been a tremendous asset to our department."

Asked what U-Haul needs from graduates interested in corporate sustainability, Yang cited three things: ability to effectively communicate about corporate sustainability to both internal and external audiences, an understanding of basic business operations, and an ability to understand the triple bottom line – that is, the environmental, social, and economic impacts of the company's business decisions.

This three-pronged definition of sustainability is part of the corporate culture at Henkel of America, Inc., too. The Fortune Global 500 Company, whose brands include Dial, Purex, Renuzit, and more, seeks sustainability aptitude in job candidates as they look for ambassadors to drive their sustainability focus across all levels and business units globally.

"We see that consumers are becoming more aware of the increasing issues that are plaguing our planet and it has become an important part of their purchasing decision. Companies, including Dial, need to keep this top of mind. Therefore, we have an increasing need for people with sustainability knowledge and background," said Cynthia Milgroom, Henkel's vice president for sustainability. "Students who receive education around sustainability technology with emphasis on life cycle analysis, carbon footprint and measurement, and who can apply that knowledge to whatever it is they're hired to do, have an advantage in today's market," Milgroom said.

If any graduate is prepared to face such broad expectations, it is one from ASU's School of Sustainability. Redman calls this class, "the first of what we hope will be a long and distinguished line of sustainability graduates," and "the intellectual capital upon which the future depends."

Launched in spring 2007 with a cohort of just six graduate students, ASU's School of Sustainability now has 55 graduate students and over 300 undergraduate majors. The School's mission is to bring together multiple disciplines and leaders to create and share knowledge, train a new generation of scholars and practitioners, and develop practical solutions to some of the most pressing environmental, economic, and social challenges of sustainability, especially as they relate to urban areas.

Arizona is a logical place to lead the nation in addressing the challenges of urban sustainability. ASU is deeply embedded in the Phoenix metropolitan community, a region negotiating societal and environmental challenges that anticipate coming trends worldwide.

For the last six years, ASU has served as America's largest effort at institutional transformation in higher education, building a solution-focused institution that combines the highest level of academic excellence, inclusiveness to a broad demographic and maximum societal impact.

Although the university is first and foremost committed to educating the students of Arizona, it is equally a discovery organization, focused on contributing to regional economic development through enhanced research and academic programs, including major interdisciplinary research initiatives focused on innovative solutions to the world's greatest challenges. Through both its education and discovery missions, Arizona State University is producing the nation's newest national assets.

About ASU's School of Sustainability and Global Institute of Sustainability

ASU's School of Sustainability, the first of its kind in the US, offers integrated degree programs that advance practical solutions to environmental, economic, and social challenges. Established in 2007, the School (<http://schoolofsustainability.asu.edu>) is part of the Global Institute of Sustainability, the hub of ASU's sustainability initiatives. The Institute (<http://sustainability.asu.edu>) advances research, education and business practices for an urbanizing world.

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Global Institute of Sustainability/School of Sustainability

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