

**Title:** The Academic Sustainability Community: How can it impact policy?

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**Abstract:** CaRDI (The Community & Regional Development Institute) will lead a discussion about the relationship between sustainability efforts at the local level and the ways in which the academic community can help policy makers make better-informed decisions. We wish to prompt a broad discussion on how university based research and outreach systems can more effectively engage with the policy making community (at various levels of governance) on the complex, multi-disciplinary set of issues that is implicated in the term sustainability. How does/should the campus sustainability community approach the integration of science, advocacy and policy? How do we best bridge the disciplinary frameworks of our research institutions with the synthesizing, problem oriented decision making tools and information required by policy makers? We will start the discussion with a summary of our new integrated (research/extension) Hatch project. The project is designed to help integrate and reformulate the current models that guide Extension and Outreach programming for local government officials. Our work will focus on local officials and their decisions around economic sustainability issues. What is the role of data and research in their decision-making process? While our project is initially intended to help CaRDI improve its approach to outreach, we expect our findings to have broader application and relevance.