



Attention News/Business/Education Reporters and Assignment Editors:

Corporate Knights releases 2009 Knight School Survey; Teacher Education programs evaluated for first time

(Toronto, Canada, June 24, 2009) Today, Corporate Knights Magazine unveils the sixth-annual Knight Schools ranking. The ranking analyzes how Canadian universities fare in integrating sustainability into the school experience.

This year marks the first time Corporate Knights has evaluated Teacher Education programs, supported financially by Industry Canada. In studying the schools, the researchers adopted a broad definition of sustainability that encompassed environmental and social concerns. Issues of social justice, human rights, inclusion, cultural diversity, and environmental conservation were considered.

The survey, modeled after the US-based Beyond Grey Pinstripes Survey, scored the programs in the areas of institutional support, student initiatives, and course work.

All of the programs readied teacher candidates for junior or primary grades. With the exception of Quebec, where all Teacher Education programs must be 4 years in length, the degrees studied were consecutive, or “after degree” programs that ranged from 9 months to 2 years in length.

The Knight Schools survey was intended to study how teachers responsible for younger children were being exposed to environmental and social issues. What children learn in their formative years can significantly affect the way they perceive the world later in life. As the environment continues to make headlines, it is important that future teachers be equipped with the appropriate answers to their students’ inevitable questions.

The programs covered a broad range of issues. Many schools, including Memorial University, McGill University, the University of Manitoba, and the University of New Brunswick offered specializations or certificates in indigenous education. Professors in all of the programs were dedicated to researching a multitude of sustainability-related issues, including race and education, poverty, and cyber-bullying. Roughly 75% of the schools reached the maximum amount of points for the faculty research section. And 83% of the universities contained at least one institute or research centre with an environmental or social mandate.

The top school was the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. Its score of 87.17% put the school in the top spot, followed by the University of British Columbia (66.77%), and the University of Saskatchewan (59.94%).

Most of the schools studied had at least one mandatory course that significantly involved sustainability. While these programs should be lauded for requiring students to learn about inclusive classrooms, multiculturalism, and special needs, there were no core courses that were entirely dedicated to environmental issues. A large part of the electives offered also tended to be social in nature.

“It is encouraging to see how dedicated professors and teacher candidates are to social issues,” says Monika Warzecha, primary researcher of the Knight Schools survey. “In the future, we hope that teachers will continue to explore new avenues of sustainability, including those that involve the environment.”

The full results and methodology of the Ranking are available at www.corporateknights.ca/knightschools and are summarized in the Best 50/Education issue (Vol. 8.1) of Corporate Knights, distributed in the Globe and Mail yesterday.

Teacher Education programs (out of 12)

1. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education: 87.17%
2. University of British Columbia: 66.77%
3. University of Saskatchewan: 59.94%
4. University of Alberta: 59.37%
5. McGill University: 53.2%

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To schedule interviews with Melissa Shin, the Managing Editor of Corporate Knights, or Monika Warzecha, Editorial Assistant, contact: Don Huff, 416-972-7404, huffd@ecostrategy.ca

About Corporate Knights: Founded in 2002, Corporate Knights Inc. is an independent Canadian-based media company focused on promoting and reinforcing sustainable development in Canada.

