

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 4, 2007



Gerard Farias

Dear ISE/CHRMS Partners and Community Members:

Greetings! Once again we are at that time of the year when we must look back and review where we have been and learn from our experiences in our pursuit of continuous improvement and excellence. We aspire to have a significant positive impact on our organizations and on our world. To fulfill our aspirations, we must work closely with the large number of individuals and institutions from all sectors who have dedicated themselves to the urgent call to global sustainability. We are fortunate and honored to work with some of the most dedicated, hardworking and passionate people who have gone above and beyond the call to help us move forward.

Our shared vision for a just and thriving world for future generations and our mission to bring people together to learn how to develop and lead thriving, sustainable enterprises that are “in and for the world,” has been a powerful guide in helping us choose and prioritize our activities. Our network has grown greatly during the year. The many passionate and committed people we meet enrich our understanding and strengthen our resolve to search for and implement ways that will contribute to a sustainable future.

During the year, we have continued to receive encouragement and support from the administration at FDU and the administration and faculty of the Silberman College of Business (SCB). We thank all our colleagues for their support.

We cannot thank enough our partners and supporters for their belief in the cause and support of our activities. Our Founding and Corporate members... Automatic Switch, AT & T, Alcoa, Becton Dickinson, First Energy, Interface, Novartis, Ortho Biotech, NJHEPS, Philips, and Ricoh have performed a critical role in keeping us focused on our mission. Likewise, we thank all

members of our Advisory Board who have helped with their enthusiastic support, participation and candid advice.

In the following pages this report will focus on our achievements in the areas of research, education, and services (including notable research publications and presentations, vibrant courses and seminars, helpful roundtables and workshops, many well-received campus sustainability initiatives, and the imminent launch of our Sustainable Business Incubator). Here, I will focus more on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Global Warming and Climate Change received unprecedented attention this year. The release of *An Inconvenient Truth* and its recognition by the Academy Awards played a major role in bringing this global problem to the forefront. The release of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report released this year sealed the issue and many have heeded the call to action. While politics continues to muddy the message there is little doubt that a concerted effort is necessary not only to avert the impending crisis but also to develop and implement ways to reverse the process and repair the damage done. The popular media has played a tremendous role in keeping the issue at the surface and publicizing the many innovative ways that people have developed to address the problem. Innovative products and services intended to address the environmental issues have been launched and are proliferating rapidly. The popularity of socially-responsible investing is also growing. All this is great news and we must play our role in participating in and supporting and encouraging actions that have a high potential for success.

Social Equity and Justice is another issue that has come to the forefront... although unfortunately, not to the same degree that the environmental issues have drawn our attention. While climate change and the uncertainty it has generated about the survival of the planet as we know it, has grabbed the headlines, there are deeper and more urgent human issues that lurk below the surface. Hunger, disease, terrorism, illiteracy and many of the other social woes are simply a manifestation of a huge and seemingly insurmountable divide between those who have access and those who do not. Simultaneously, there is no dearth of rationalizations --from ideology to corruption --that we offer to absolve ourselves of any responsibility.

We need to be very careful that we develop solutions to both these insidious problems (social and environmental) *together*. As Hawkins (2007) noted, "Our house is literally burning, and it is only logical that environmentalists expect the social-justice movement to get on the environmental bus. But it is the other way round; the only way we are going to put out the fire is to get on the social-justice bus and heal our wounds, because in the end, there is only one bus."

The sheer magnitude and complexity of these problems and the potential unintended consequences of our actions to address them suggests that we need to be open to learning and recognize the need to work together. At a global level, we will be challenged to collaborate across borders, religions, languages, cultures and income levels with the recognition that the solutions must be developed in the contexts in which the problems occur/exist and with the people who experience them.

At a local level our challenge will be to develop business models that incorporate a set of values that reflect a higher degree of respect for employees, the environment and society—values that will not be compromised. We will need to demonstrate that values are an important contributor to the sustainability of the business, society and the environment. Our emphasis on action research, services and curriculum will help move us in this direction.

One of my key learnings for the year has been the importance of getting out of the way of people driven by their passion and commitment! Dan Twomey, Rose Twomey, Joel Harmon, Jeana Wirtenberg, Gwen Jones, Joan Slepian, Maura Pniewski, Kent Fairfield, Christine Farias, Bill Russell, Jonathan Cloud, Matt Polsky, Adam Ruggiero and Dan Anzaldi all should be acknowledged for their generous and highly effective efforts to move us forward.

I look forward to working with you as we strive to create a better future.

