

Changing the world, one MBA at a time

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Investing for a Better World

Trillium Asset Management Corporation, Summer 2008

The change we want to see in the world is being created by activists, artists, philanthropists, social entrepreneurs, responsible investors and ... MBAs. Yes, MBAs! Given that corporations have become the dominant institutions on the planet, this represents a much-needed revolution from within, augmenting all the good work making a positive difference from the outside.

I recently spent four days at Bainbridge Graduate Institute (BGI) as a Change Agent in Residence, joined by the renowned Native American environmentalist Winona LaDuke, the nation's leading expert on employee ownership Corey Rosen, and the Chief Operating Officer of the Gates Foundation Cheryl Scott. BGI is a pioneering leader in sustainable business education and in just five short years is already developing an international reputation for its authentic and powerful learning community, infusing sustainability throughout a business curriculum.

BGI's motto, *Let's Change Business for Good*, is reflected in each and every course listing, such as: "Finance, Accounting and the Triple Bottom Line," "Classical & Ecological Economics," "Sustainable Operations," and "Creativity and Right Livelihood." The school's popularity is growing like a weed, fostering a new generation of socially conscious, highly skilled business leaders.

BGI's innovative delivery model includes nine long weekends per year on Bainbridge Island, WA at IslandWood's 255-acre environmental learning center. This uber-green, gorgeous setting helps attract some of the most innovative professors from other, more traditional institutions around the country. The academic faculty co-teaches courses along with creative entrepreneurs and experienced business professionals. IslandWood's ecological simplicity adds to the monthly BGI magic, recharging the action-oriented innovators to continue pushing the boundaries of sustainable business practice. A web-based, distance learning and social networking platform called The Channel knits the community together in between the monthly convenings.

The long BGI weekends are called Intensives, and it is no doubt intense to spend what feels like 72 continuous hours immersed in inter-generational teamwork, research, presentations, networking and socializing. In their first year, BGI's students engage in action learning projects within corporations, helping engineer sustainability into existing business models. In their final year, students form teams to design entrepreneurial, sustainable businesses from scratch, and some of these are becoming a reality.

The risk-taking and enchanting founders of BGI, Gifford and Libba Pinchot, acted from the deep belief that fundamental reform of business education is required for positive systemic change. In recognition of their inspiring achievement, BGI won the inaugural Joan Bavaria Award for Innovation in Building

Sustainability into the Capital Markets. The development of entrepreneurs rooted in the multiple bottom lines of profit, people and planet is laying the groundwork for a more sustainable and conscious capitalism, consistent with Joan's and Trillium's mission over the last quarter-century.

BGI now needs to take another leap and focus on its own long-term sustainability, including more expansive fundraising and the development of a diverse and engaged leadership Board. I have been asked to serve as a Trustee at BGI, and look forward to working with this joyous and energetic community to change business for good.