

Accepted by the ACM
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Proposal to Endorse the Earth Charter. Draft Two. 5/23/2003.

Background

What is the Earth Charter?

"The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principals for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. It seeks to inspire in all people's a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well being of the human family and the larger living world. It is an expression of hope and a call to help create a global partnership at a critical juncture in history."

Where did it come from and who wrote it?

"In 1987 the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development issued a call for creation of a new charter that would set forth fundamental principals for sustainable development... The Earth Charter is the product of a decade long, worldwide, cross-cultural conversation about common goals and shared values... Thousands of individuals and hundreds of organizations from all regions of the world, different cultures, and diverse sectors of society have participated."

What are the sources of the Earth Charter values?

"...contemporary science, international law, the wisdom of the world's great religions and philosophical traditions, the declarations and reports of the seven UN summit conferences held in the 1990's, the global ethics movement, numerous nongovernmental declarations and people's treaties issued over the past thirty years, and best practices for building sustainable communities."

What does endorsement mean?

"Endorsement of the Earth Charter by individuals or organizations signifies a commitment to the spirit and aims of the document. It also means a commitment to work for the implementation of the values and principles of the Earth Charter and a readiness to cooperate with others in this endeavor."

The Earth Charter Initiative is seeking to develop a world wide base of support for the Earth Charter. The Initiative is promoting the endorsement, dissemination, implementation and formal and non-formal educational use of the Earth Charter by individuals and organizations in all sectors of society. Nevertheless, organizations are asked to send an official letter of support as stated in the Statement of Endorsement."

Since it was launched in June of 2000, 10,543 organizations, governments, communities and individuals have endorsed the Earth Charter.

Rationale

The four core principles of the Earth Charter -- respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, social and economic justice, and democracy, nonviolence, and peace -- are consistent with and will help to deepen and further the values stated in the mission and vision of

College of the Atlantic.

By endorsing the Earth Charter, COA will be supporting the Earth Charter Initiative, which aims to:

Disseminate the Earth Charter and its principles to individuals and communities throughout the world,

Gain endorsement and implementation by individuals, governments, businesses, and organizations, including the United Nations, and

Promote the educational use of the Earth Charter in schools, universities, and communities.

By endorsing the Earth Charter COA can help to:

Encourage the use of the Earth Charter as "an ethical foundation for the ongoing development of environmental and sustainable development law,"

Promote its use as an ethical framework for businesses, organizations, and all segments of civil society,

Encourage its use as a foundation for programs for sustainable development,

Call and guide communities and individuals toward a sustainable way of life,

Spark dialogue across cultures, sectors, and ideologies concerning global ethics.

Endorsement of the Earth Charter will benefit COA directly by:

Publicly reaffirming our mission,

Deepening our commitment to global ethics,

Providing impetus to reevaluate our curriculum and policies based on this new commitment as well as the values set out in our mission and vision,

Connecting us to other groups and institutions worldwide who have similar goals,

And signifying our participation in the world community.

Proposal

Therefore, we the COA community, resolve to:

Endorse the Earth Charter,

Explore ways to strengthen our curriculum through appropriate incorporation of the Earth Charter's core principles,

Broaden our commitment to sustainability both on campus and off,

Use the Earth Charter as a tool for outreach to and collaboration with other groups, and

Agree to revisit and evaluate our implementation of these resolutions at least once a year.