Tsering Dhondhen

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ASSHE Conference Reflection

The conference that I attended was “The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education” or AASHE with more than 2300 attendees from all across the US. The aashe annual conference is the largest stage in North America for higher education sustainability practitioners to take advantage of face-to-face networking in a collaborative environment. This was my first such conference in sustainability in higher education as well as my first non-economic conference. I have attended several economic conferences as an economics major over the past three years but rarely have I felt that I truly had much to learn from topics outside my major. The AASHE conference was a delightful change in substance and direction. I felt that I had something to contribute and proud about my position as data manager and analyst for the office of sustainability at Berea College.

In a review of the conference, I came across several highlights and points of learning.

The first was the overall theme experienced at just about every presentation, and that was to address the carbon emissions from higher education institutions in the US and to help create a sustainable economy in those institutions. The process of learning the deeper meaning of sustainability and its application to what my goals are has been enlightening. I initially joined the conference to learn or make myself more familiar with the STARS report system, but at the end of the conference, I was more informed than ever regarding the sustainability practices in schools and private life than the STARS report system itself. It instilled a strong desire for me to explore my questions regarding sustainability and pass the passion to my fellow friends and family members. I really enjoyed meeting very interesting people who have worked so tirelessly in the field of sustainability and in overall, the conference was an eye opener for me and would love to go every year. As such, I would like to thank you for providing the fund necessary to make the trip and the learning experience possible. THANK YOU!