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"Triple Bottom Line Practices" in the Classroom and Across the Curriculum for Agents of Change in Apparel Disciplines

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Triple Bottom Line” Practices in the Classroom and Across the Curriculum – An ESRAP Panel

Panelists: Young-A Lee, Iowa State University | Michael Londrigan, LIM College | Virginia Noon, Framingham State University | Anu Pasricha-St. Catherine University | Janet Hethorn - Central Michigan University | Connie Ulasewicz, Moderator – San Francisco State University

Attendees: Over 40 from various programs and schools.

Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Products (ESRAP), formerly Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Business (ESRAB), was founded in 1999 with the emphasis on increasing awareness and impact of the research and teaching of faculty engaged with social responsibility topics. Our session began with a brief overview of ESRAP’s 16 year history, highlighting how it’s members led numerous special sessions that convened faculty and graduate students from over 90 colleges and universities around the globe. The ESRAP Award for Teaching, Research and Design were discussed. The newest ESRAP award for Student Merchandising Posters, effective 2017, was presented.

The interactive session then proceeded to focus on how social responsibility, sustainability, and ethics are topics that have prominently emerged in courses within textiles and apparel curriculums over the past ten years in direct response to industry best practices. As the importance of these topics and practices, a triple bottom line approach, are recognized, the panel reviewed how what remains is a challenge of how to weave this content holistically within an academic curriculum and transfer this learning to student’s real life implications. We then explored successful approaches for this integration at the course, program and department level. Presentations and discussions were led by panel members, each a member of Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Practice (ESRAP).

Panelists each had the opportunity to explore and share:

- How to weave this “sustainable” content holistically within an academic curriculum and transfer this learning to student’s real life implications.
- How the integration and development of concepts into practices imbedded across curriculum allows students to highlight work in their portfolios that integrate these practices in their textile, design and merchandising projects.

Examples of student work were highlighted throughout, envisioning them as change agents as they move forward in their careers in the industry. Each panel member mentioned the curiosity of their students, and their desire to have a greater understanding of the why's and how's of waste and pollution within our industry. One suggested strategy for change included a student's focus specifically on their aspirations for improvement personally and professionally.

Audience participation further directed the session with questions regarding how to holistically integrate content of social responsibility and sustainability within existing apparel design, product development, consumer behavior, and merchandising curriculum. We were left with a greater understanding of how to connect, collaborate, innovate and have greater impact. This session was beneficial for panel members and attendees, who further recognized the existence and accomplishments of ESRAP, and were provided with contacts and tools to be a part of the next adventures of Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Practices.

