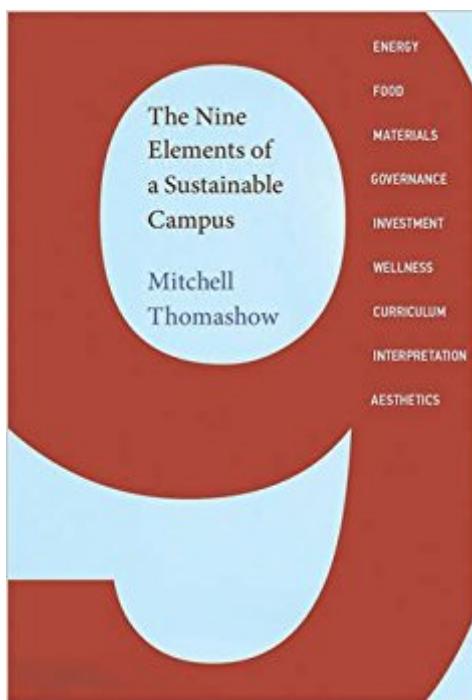


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# The Nine Elements Of A Sustainable Campus (MIT Press)



## Synopsis

Colleges and universities offer our best hope for raising awareness about the climate crisis and the other environmental threats. But most college and university administrations need guidance on the path to sustainability. In *The Nine Elements of a Sustainable Campus*, Mitchell Thomashow, a former college president, provides just that. Drawing on his experiences at Unity College in Maine, he identifies nine elements for a sustainability agenda: energy, food, and materials (aspects of infrastructure); governance, investment, and wellness (aspects of community); and curriculum, interpretation, and aesthetics (aspects of learning). He then describes how Unity put these elements into practice. Connecting his experiences to broader concerns, Thomashow links the campus to the planet, reminding us that local efforts, taken together, can have a global impact.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There are other books on greening our colleges and universities, but this latest is the best. Thomashow's *The Nine Elements of a Sustainable Campus* is wonderfully comprehensive, clear, and useful. His writing style is efficient but quietly elegant, so the book is actually a pleasure to read. What a huge difference it would make if all of America's higher education campuses read this book and pursued the good advice in it! (James Gustave Speth, author of *America the Possible: Manifesto for a New Economy* and former dean of Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies) This is a trail-blazing book that should be required reading for university leaders at every

level. It's that important. The ideas in The Nine Elements of a Sustainable Campus can transform universities, and universities can lead the cultural and structural transformations that are essential to a thriving future. (Kathleen Dean Moore, co-editor of *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril*) The Nine Elements of a Sustainable Campus is essential reading for those engaged in campus sustainability. It is an insightful, holistic, and thought-provoking book that eloquently integrates the myriad complex elements and immense opportunities of campus sustainability. Mitch Thomashow artfully weaves his personal sustainability narratives for a compelling read which demonstrates an integrated and purposeful approach to campus sustainability. (Heather A. Henriksen, director of the Office for Sustainability, Harvard University) Colleges and universities are idea factories that impact all aspects of our collective ability to adapt to and invent the future. Sustainability of the linkage between our designed environment and our inherited natural environment must be ensured for our future success. Thomashow, in *The Nine Elements of a Sustainable Campus*, provides a great blueprint on how colleges and universities can use their campuses as the teaching platform to make sustainability a core value and a core outcome for all of our planning and thinking. If we can design our colleges and universities to instill these values and ideas then we will see a greatly improved chance of a sustainable future. (Michael M. Crow, president, Arizona State University) Overall I found *Nine Elements* an inspiring read. For those already familiar with the field it may not offer startling new solutions to achieving sustainability overnight, but it does provide nuanced insight into how we might undertake the journey in an accessible and engaging way. At a time when we still need many more university leaders who vocally champion sustainability, it is particularly significant that someone in Thomashow's position has added his weight to the growing body of voices calling for profound sustainability transformation, in universities and beyond. (Jon Emmett London School of Economics Review of Books)

Mitchell Thomashow is Director of the Second Nature Presidential Fellows Program, which assists colleges and universities in promoting a comprehensive sustainability agenda on campus. From 2006 to 2011 he was president of Unity College, Maine, and from 1976 to 2006 he was Chair of the Environmental Studies Department at Antioch University New England. He is the author of *Ecological Identity* and *Bringing the Biosphere Home*, both published by the MIT Press.

Good guidelines for colleges seeking to create sustainable campuses

This book offers a few interesting perspectives but falls short of pushing the envelope of campus sustainability. It's tiresome to read through the author's self-centered stories and tone. With his self described expertise in leadership and sustainability I was looking for innovation but found a lot of the same old thing.

I first became familiar with Thomashow's work when I read *ECOLOGICAL IDENTITY*, a landmark text in Environmental Studies. I use both it and *BRINGING THE BIOSPHERE HOME* often in both my undergraduate and graduate classes, so I was particularly excited to hear about his new book. It's the perfect complement to his previous works and offers all that makes Thomashow's work at once theoretically rigorous and utterly engaging: his use of both personal narrative and science, his ability to meet readers where they are and, perhaps most importantly, his insistence that we consider practical application and attention to the whole person. This book will undoubtedly influence an entire generation of thinkers and scholars.

Finally, a book that recognizes and provides guidance through the labyrinth of a campus sustainability transformation. College campuses are small cities that embody all of the social, economic, environmental and political dimensions that any successful 'mayor' needs to navigate and resolve before making a difference in the 21st century. This book captures the translation of a strong sustainability ethic into action - enriched by the challenges, dissonance and rewards that come with any change process. It is told through the experience of a strong and responsive leader who managed to make a difference by mobilizing and leveraging the knowledge and values of faculty, students and community into a livable, resilient and sustainable campus.

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