

*Mitchell Praises University at Town Hall Meeting*      [State Press](#)

Emma Breysse

Rep. Harry Mitchell, D-Ariz., and a panel of five prominent community members met Friday afternoon to tell more than 100 audience members how they can save the planet.

A panel, including the director of ASU's new School of Sustainability, presented and discussed different aspects of the new push for sustainability with attendees. ASU hosted the event in conjunction with Mitchell's office.

About 15 students attended the event, with topics covering water preservation, solar power and reducing the amount of carbon used by individuals and institutions.

Sustainability adds a whole new dimension to the idea of going green, said Jonathan Fink, the director of ASU's Global Institute of Sustainability.

"Sustainability is concerned with trying to reconcile environmental values with economic values and social values," he said. "We don't want this to become big business versus tree huggers."

The discussion focused on ASU's efforts to become a sustainable campus and the need for education, government and business to work together for sustainable living.

Mitchell, who is on the science and technology committee for the U.S. House of Representatives, said he was impressed with the University and hopes to further the cause of sustainability when he returns to his work in the nation's capital.

"ASU is practicing what it preaches," he said. "There is a great deal of interest and I think there needs to be more support. These things have to begin at the local level, but they do need some guidance from above, at a more national level."

Along with such obvious measures as the construction of the Biodesign Institute, a completely sustainable building, ASU has been making an inventory of its energy efficiency for the last year, Fink said.

Beginning in the next few months, there will be changes made to improve the campus' sustainability, he said.

One change is that the School of Sustainability will begin offering an undergraduate degree next fall, said Charles Redman, the director of the school.

Students will also have the opportunity to earn interdisciplinary degrees, such as the newly-approved business and sustainability degree, Redman said.

"We have to find ways to work comprehensively," he said. "I applaud [ASU] President [Michael] Crow for forcing us to confront these issues."

Also on the panel were two other University educators and Anthony Floyd, the green building manager for the city of Scottsdale.

Floyd's presence was intended to bring the discussion into the world beyond the University, Fink said.

"We're not up in an ivory tower figuring things out and hoping government agencies out there will use them," he said.

Terra Ganem, a non-profit leadership and management junior and the director of campus environment for ASU's Undergraduate Student Government was impressed with the panel.

"I think they're very knowledgeable," she said.

But Ganem said she does not think there are enough resources on campus for students to be as involved as they should.

"We need to pull together ideas," she said. "We need to call for a better infrastructure and more funding to create programs."

After hearing the panelists, Mitchell said he was excited about the things happening at ASU, especially in light of the slow rate of change in Congress.

"ASU is becoming one of the centers for sustainability," Mitchell said. "Local governments and institutions are leading the way. I really appreciate all of the work that is being done at the University."