

Sustainability Conference  
Thursday, April 2, 2009  
9:00 A.M.

Good morning. I am delighted to welcome you to FIT's annual sustainable business and design conference. This event was launched three years ago to address one of the most critical issues of our time: the preservation of our planet's environment and resources. Given the urgency of the issue, I am not surprised by the interest this conference has generated...and its growth.

Indeed, I think that as a culture, we finally get it---we finally understand that our planet's resources are not endlessly self-renewing...and that sustainability is our new necessity. It is now a consideration in everything we do---including how we design, manufacture and market every product we use. And as a college that prepares students for careers in design and the full spectrum of fashion-related industries, we know that sustainability will be one of the greatest challenges our graduates will face. It is a challenge we all face, in every aspect of our lives.

In fact it was this imperative---as well as the great interest that the FIT community has in this issue---that led me to commit FIT to a series of environmental initiatives when I attended the Clinton Global Initiative University in Texas recently---a conference organized by former president Bill Clinton. This is an annual by-invitation only gathering of college and university students and presidents, as well as representatives from non-profits who come together to make commitments for change in areas of pressing world-wide need. Over 1000 students and 100 presidents participated.

FIT chose to make a commitment in the area of energy and climate change, and in a few moments, an FIT panel will describe to you the scope of that commitment, as well some of the other activities we have undertaken to support environmental concerns.

I am very pleased to note that today's conference is co-sponsored by every one of FIT's four schools, as well as by my office---yet another measure of this community's heightened awareness and commitment.

I want to thank all of our distinguished speakers and student presenters. I'd like to also thank the members of the conference committee and all of the others here at FIT who worked so hard to organize this event.

I hope you will all enjoy and benefit from today's program.