

## Sustainability

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# The Diffusion of Innovations Theory as Applied to Student Engagement

November 25, 2017 | Madelaine Sinclair

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To do this, we devised three groups: the Greens, the Sprouts, and the Barrens.

The Greens encompass the innovators and early adopters. These are the people who have a "sustainably minded" attitude and generally go out of their way to take action. The Sprouts, or the early and late majority, have the right mindset and attitude but often experience a barrier to action. Finally, the Barrens are the group with the attitudes that do not align with a sustainable mindset, preventing them from taking action. This is a laggard attitude. The UMD Office of Sustainability has been working on trying to incorporate this theory into our different projects and events. We've found that our programming is frequently geared toward the Greens and the stronger Sprouts. How do we become involved in events and programming that reaches across the curve and successfully reaches the Barrens? At the same time, how do we keep the Greens and Sprouts engaged? How do we "grow" the Sprouts enough that they will independently "fertilize" their peers with a Barren attitude? Based on this model, we have found ourselves reassessing the formatting and content of almost everything we do.

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