U of MN Morris – A case study and lessons learned from a campus that has pushed the boundaries of Sustainability

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Sustainability is the topic of the day. The University of Minnesota Morris has done more than talk. UMM worked on modeling and understanding what resources we have and how those resources affect both the environment and the economics. Other elements, which needed familiarity, were what technology is available. When researching technology, a key component in finding the right combination of operational systems was necessary. We learned how to manage risk in a risk adverse institution. Subsequently building our system and managing the outcome were different than we expected. Finally, how all the pieces fit together.

Bio: Lowell Rasmussen serves the University of Minnesota, Morris as the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Facilities. He earned his bachelor’s and master’s degree at Mankato State University. Before joining the Morris campus community, Rasmussen served as Plant Services Director at the University of Minnesota’s Waseca campus. During Rasmussen’s tenure at UMM, he has initiated and overseen several major campus projects. Among them are the construction and operations of a 1.6 MW wind turbine, a biomass combined heat and power gasification plant, and several lead gold building projects. Rasmussen has been the PI for over 1.8 million dollars of federal USDA grant and a 1 million dollar DOE NETL grant focusing on using available low-density biomass for thermal and electrical generation. He has been an invited speaker for national renewable and alternative energy conferences and organizations. Some of these include the Department of Energy and Economic Development (DEED), the Minnesota Chapter of American Institute of Architects, Green Power Leadership Conference, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the IREE E3 Conference, ACORE and AEE Annual conferences in Washington, D.C., as well as many local and regional events. Rasmussen is a past member of the American Council on Renewable Energy Higher Education Committee, and a current member of the Sustainability Advisory Committee for the National College and University Business Officers Organization.