

Dr. Kasie Whitener (00:02):

Welcome into the Moore School podcast. Moore Impact. I'm Kasie Whitener, and with me on this episode is Keely Carter, clinical associate professor in the marketing department here at the Moore School, and an expert, I believe I'm gonna call you that in sustainability. Welcome to the program.

Dr. Kealy Carter (00:17):

Thanks for having me, Kasie.

Dr. Kasie Whitener (00:19):

I'm glad you're here. So I, you and I first met over some entrepreneurial stuff, which was super cool, and then I started to learn a little bit more about your background in terms of your focus on sustainability inside your research and that sort of thing. Why don't you tell listeners just a little bit about your background, how long you've been at the Moore School, and some of the things that you've been focusing on.

Dr. Kealy Carter (00:37):

All right, great. Well, I, I have sort of a non-traditional background for an academic. I have an undergraduate degree in international studies from American University. I worked for about five years in logistics and supply chain before coming to the Moore School to do the international MBA. After that program, I spent a couple years working for FedEx and then decided I wanted to go into academia. So I came back and got my PhD and actually stayed on at the Moore School, which is very unusual. Um and I've been you know, full-time professor on the, the marketing faculty for 10 years now.

Dr. Kasie Whitener (01:17):

That's a fantastic career here in Columbia. What made you wanna stay in Columbia?

Dr. Kealy Carter (01:22):

I have to tell you, the first time I came to Columbia for the IMBA program, I wasn't a big fan, but that was '05, '07 and Columbia's really changed a lot since then. And when I came back in 2010 to start working on my PhD, I just fell in love with it. Just kind of simple. Yeah. you got everything you need on a day-to-day basis with none of the hassles of a, a bigger city and, and, you know, not, not the crime levels that I'd experienced in other places as well. Or, or the traffic. Yeah, no traffic.

Dr. Kasie Whitener (01:52):

Yeah. Prices are nice too. I mean, as far as the cost of living is pretty relatively low here in Columbia too. We were the same way we got down here in 2012, and I was shocked by how much we liked it. Yeah. I mean, I really didn't expect to just love it as much as we have, so, yeah. Alright, so let's talk about sustainability. This is I'm curious about whether or not this is a corporate buzzword or what really is behind the concepts of it. What got you interested in the, the, I guess I say, I already said concept, but I guess what got you interested in sustainability as a, an area of focus?

Dr. Kealy Carter (02:22):

Yeah. When I was working on my PhD, it came time to say like, what am I gonna write my dissertation about? And one of the things I realized was I was really more interested in applied research versus more theoretical kind of conceptual stuff. So I started saying, well, what are the big issues facing businesses

today? And I mean, that was 12 years ago, right? 12, 13 years ago now. So sustainability was one of those areas that I honed in on really quickly because we saw a growth in sustainably marketed products. There was very little academic research on it at the time, and it was sort of starting to, to build some momentum. So that's what initially got me started on sustainability. And I'm glad you brought up. Is it real? Is it a corporate buzzword or not? Because I would say no. And in fact in, in the classes I teach, one of the things that surprises students the most is companies been, have been engaging on this for 35, 40 years or more. And it's just we've, we've sort of, the word sustainability has seen exponential use in the media and so forth, e, SG, other topics,

Dr. Kasie Whitener (03:34):

Politicians. Yeah.

Dr. Kealy Carter (03:36):

Politicians. Right. So I think, you know, probably to the lay person, it seems like this is a new thing, but companies have been focusing on like reducing waste, improving efficiency and a lot of the sort of core concepts or actions that they can take around sustainability for decades.

Dr. Kasie Whitener (03:56):

So can you give us some basic characteristics of, of sustainability? I mean, if somebody were to be like, I don't even know what that means, what's it all about? Like, what are the characteristics that you think would make up a sustainability effort or some of the metrics that people might use or companies might use if they're gonna focus on sustainability?

Dr. Kealy Carter (04:11):

Yeah, sustainability is one of those super abstract terms, like I said, that that, that gets applied to just about everything. Sort of the definition that we've adopted in the Moore School is we look at developing curriculum and that is following the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which lay out sort of the 17 biggest problems facing the world today. And those are largely grouped around sort of three dimensions, the environmental component, which I think is the most salient when we think about sustainability.

Dr. Kasie Whitener (04:43):

You hear that a lot. Green policies, you know, solar panels, all that sort of thing, all sort of kinda get lumped together with sustainability.

Dr. Kealy Carter (04:49):

Yeah. You've got your, you know, your energy considerations, life on land life under the water just climate change in general. So that, that, that's sort of like everybody knows that piece of it, right.

Dr. Kasie Whitener (05:00):

In the environmental category.

Dr. Kealy Carter (05:01):

Right. And I think a lot of people don't give the attention or the think about some of the social aspects as well. And when you look at things like poverty, hunger, education economic, gender inequalities, those

kinds of things if some of these needs aren't met, then we can't focus on other issues like these environmental concerns. And also they, they, they impact each other. So,

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([05:30](#)):

So a second category would then would be like social sustainability in terms of creating environments that people wanna continue to interact with one another where people feel safe, where they feel heard, where they feel like they're part of the process as opposed to being excluded.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([05:43](#)):

Exactly. and there's environmental justice kind of considerations that go along with those that kind of bridge that gap between the environmental and social. But I think one of the biggest pieces that, that, that, that kind of gets overlooked as this economic component you know, we've gotta continue to have some level of growth and be able to meet our needs and, and meet those needs in a, in a responsible way. So those, those really kind of define those three elements, the environmental, social, and economic components. So if you're looking at what companies are doing companies that are sort of that benchmark are the ones that you're, you're gonna be most proud of or be farther along the journey are taking more holistic view, and they're focusing in on these problem areas where they have the biggest impact.

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([06:38](#)):

So if they're, if you're a company well, 'cause you said we, the things that we need to, to work on. So when we look at economics as that, the economic category is the, we as a nation, as a world or we looking at individual markets, are we looking at individual companies? I mean, is it like the, the royal, we, we all need to be paying attention to the economics of this, or are, is most of our study in the business school gonna be looking at at the corporate level at the company level? Or are we looking at it at the market level?

Dr. Kealy Carter ([07:06](#)):

This really is a global problem. And, and requires coordination across multiple stakeholder groups companies, government, NGOs, individuals. And so when we're looking at it from a curricular standpoint, a lot of what we're doing is saying, you know, what can an individual company do to affect change? Or how are companies impacted by some of the issues that we're facing today? A lot of that, and if you think about it from a marketing standpoint we have to understand sort of that individual what can we do? How can we get people to act or behave in a certain way, right? And, and, and companies are starting to say like, look, we've taken care of a lot of our in-house issues. You know, there's been a big focus on climate change recently and, and certainly like greenhouse gas, carbon emissions.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([08:04](#)):

So you'll hear companies talking about their scope one, scope two scope three emissions. They've done a lot to reduce their own direct impact, right? They're working with utilities to say, how do we have you know, greener or renewable energy sources that scope three emissions really looks at their entire value chain where they're having to say, how do we influence suppliers? How do we influence consumers? So that in the use of our products and the disposal of our products, we're having less of a negative impact or maybe even a positive impact, right?

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([08:42](#)):

You've got me thinking about just a thousand different kinds of businesses that would be affected by this. I mean, on the strategy side, we talk about sustainability in terms of strategic sustainability, right? So if it is an economic play, like how do we reduce our costs by reducing our energy usage, right? How do we improve our corporate standing or our, our, our shareholder value by improving our economic or our ecological footprint, these kinds of things, or lower our carbon emissions, these sorts of things. But there are businesses that seem to be sort of set for dangerous levels regardless. I'm thinking of the server farms up in the Northern Virginia area, which is where I'm from, and they're taxing the electric system up there. They're creating, you know, just this continuous buzz in the area where people can just like, hear the server farms going. You know, there's all these kinds of environmental impact, but also sort of I guess like community impact of these different types of businesses that are kind of growing up in these new economies. And the server farms obviously being relatively new over the last 25 years or so. Are those kinds, some of the companies that you guys are looking at are, do you, in your curriculum, in your study, are you saying like, let's look at each of these individual types of businesses and talk about a range of impacts that they might have?

Dr. Kealy Carter ([10:00](#)):

Yeah. We look at a, a wide range of businesses. And, and one of the things that I try to do, at least in my class, I teach the core course for the undergraduate sustainability and business concentration and the graduate sustainability and business certificate. And I try to employ case studies that, that take a, a look from everything from like your traditional manufacturing setting to a FinTech company. What can they do? I haven't looked at at server, server farms in, in particular, but in the example that you mentioned, everybody's talking about AI and all this and, and the servers and the computing power that you need to drive a lot of where we're going, right? It has a

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([10:42](#)):

Blockchain, crypto, all that. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

Dr. Kealy Carter ([10:44](#)):

Has a tremendous environmental impact. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So, you know, if you're looking at a company like that, you'd certainly hope that they were focused on renewables and other ways to sort of lessen their impact, their noise pollution and, and so forth. So we take more of a holistic viewpoint from a curriculum standpoint. And really, I think just to go back to what you touched on, want students to understand that this is not philanthropy, this is not altruism. Yes, there's good that comes of it, but at the same time, there's a clear business case for many of these activities that companies are focused on. They're able to reduce costs, they're able to reduce risk in their supply chain. They're able to kind of, you know, ensure that they're gonna have access to natural resources that they need going forward limit the impacts that they might see from climate change related to drought, flooding, fires, more intense or more frequent storms, those kinds of things.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([11:52](#)):

And, you know, know, so that's, that's sort of on like the, the cost risk side, but also there's a tremendous amount of opportunity for companies to explore new markets and new products. And you, you know, you're thinking about it from an entrepreneurial lens. I mean, how, how do we deal with some of these waste products that we have? Well, a lot of them just go into new products, right? Or different types of products, or how do we make products last longer? Or how do we design 'em so that

they can be recycled or reused? And, and that is a, a real entrepreneurial effort, and we're seeing a lot of activity in that space.

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([12:31](#)):

I like to think of the companies also being so proactive in terms of making their own adjustments, making their own changes, fixing things for the better, to affect all three of these categories. Not just their economics, but also their social impact and their environmental impact with the sense of not wanting to force the government to then make those actions <laugh>, right? Not saying, well, we're just gonna keep doing it this way until you make us do it some other way. Right? And instead saying proactively, we know this is better for everybody if we hit this and strategic, we call it strategic management classes, we call it the triple bottom line, right? So it's this people processes planet, right? The idea that we are there protect SA people planet, and there's another one profit, profit <laugh>. I was like, it's not process, it's profit. So yeah. So that triple bottom line piece in saying this is a, a kind of a leadership wise, sort of a guiding set of principles these days, maybe a little bit more so than it was two decades ago.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([13:26](#)):

Yeah, I think you know, there, there, there, there are quite a few things going on there. I mean, certainly one, the, the salience of climate change has, has brought about some of this, but like I said, a lot of companies have been on this journey for decades already. And then when you look back, let's say in, you know eight, 10 years ago and you start to see the investment community really pay attention to company's ESG performance, their environmental or social governance performance and even had groups like BlackRock, Larry Fink and and State Street come out and say to CEOs and boards, we care about how you're performing on these aspects. And the reason that we do is because we see it affecting your long-term profitability for many of the, the reasons that we just talked about, right?

Dr. Kealy Carter ([14:21](#)):

You know, the, you think about stock prices, right? The lower your risk, the better, the lower your cost structure, the better, the more your money you can make, the better, right? So you know, that I think that pushed some companies a little farther in the direction that they had been before. But if you look at in particular like large multinationals, they have to operate to the standard of their, their highest market. If they, they were operating in Europe and in the US they have to be thinking about, okay, what's happening in Europe, which they're a little farther along than us in the sustainability discussion and, and so forth. And they've gotta make sure they're operating in that way in the US as well. So in that way companies tend to be more stable than governments in terms of their, their view, their ability to impact and their longevity on these.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([15:17](#)):

One thing that is interesting though is it's requiring companies to rethink the way they traditionally measure success and even return on investment, because a lot of the investments in, in some of these sustainability related efforts, you know, you, you'd have a maybe a high upfront cost and that impact might be seen out of a longer term. So you'd have a longer ROI period, right? But that's using traditional metrics. One of the things that we're looking at is, is, you know, how do, how do we cost products appropriately thinking about their negative environmental or social impact? Like, most of the products that we buy today don't have any of that built in, right? Once you start building that in, a lot of these investments become a lot more favorable.

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([16:04](#)):

It's got me thinking too about you mentioned the long-term viability of these companies, right? So is it a, is it a cultural shift or is it a generational shift that those incentives for a long-term viability are lining up now? And I'm, and what I mean by that is, like, we're not seeing necessarily that we've seen quarterly stock earnings and quarterly stock reporting as creating short term metrics, right? We need short term profitability, short-term, short-term, short term, which sometimes we sacrifice the long term for these like short term gains. But now it seems like there's maybe this shift, it's, maybe it's a pendulum into this direction of saying, okay, well, we understand that the short term is going to be lesser gains for that the long term is going to be more sustainable and viable. And if we can continue to invest in these like long term strategies, we know we can hold your stock for a very long time and we're going to continue to be successful for a long time. As opposed to kind of a a short term take the money and run kind of strategy that maybe dominated sometime in the late eighties, early nineties.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([17:07](#)):

I think there's still definitely that short term focus, right? But you are seeing some shifts in it. When Paul Pullman came into Unilever as CEO, one of the first things he did was suspend quarterly earnings reports. And that gave them the opportunity to make some investments in the Unilever sustainable living plan, which it was at that point in time. And, you know, without all of the intent attention from investors, right? I think Unilever has, has made some pretty strong commitments towards sustainability that other CPGs have as well. So you do see a little bit of, of that. But at the end of the day, these CEOs have limited tenure and they, they need to show that, that they're generating a positive return for their shareholders. And I, I think they're able to do it. If you look at the investments and the, the level of emphasis that CEOs are placing on sustainability, they realize if we're not doing this, we're not gonna be able to generate the returns that our, our investors and other stakeholders are gonna expect from us.

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([18:16](#)):

And certainly not for the long term. Right? Yeah. So I think that's the, what's interesting to me about the term itself, sustainability, is that it has a sense of long term, right? Of thinking through impact of immediate actions, what that's going to look like in the foreseeable future. And, and maybe sometimes even beyond that. One of the events that you held this semester with Sustain SC was a forum with some companies here in town in Columbia that were able to talk about their efforts at sustainability, but also talk about what kinds of skill sets they were looking for when they were hiring students. And this goes specifically back to the curriculum that you mentioned, which is the concentration in sustainability. Is that for marketing majors?

Dr. Kealy Carter ([18:58](#)):

It's for all majors in the business school. Alright.

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([19:00](#)):

So we've got the entrepreneurship concentration as well. So it's a, is it a four class sequence? Like ours is,

Dr. Kealy Carter ([19:06](#)):

It's a 12 credit hour course load that you can add on to any major in the business school.

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([19:14](#)):

Gotcha. And so they, students are coming out and they've had this exposure to these concepts, they've done these case studies, they see these three categories of what, you know, what sustainability sustainability really means. And then they go and they, out of their, you know, resume or on their transcript, they're going to get hired. And one of the things that this event that Sustaina held was trying to bridge that gap between what does it really mean to say, I have this certificate, and then what are the skills that come in that? And then also what are the companies looking for as far as skills? So share just a little bit about like what kind of came out of that meeting because most of our listeners weren't there, but we were both there. <Laugh>.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([19:51](#)):

Yeah. so Sustain SC is a, a nonprofit in South Carolina that brings together various stakeholders to have this conversation around sustainability and make sure everybody's talking to each other and, and, you know, kind of having a conversation in a productive way, right? So they've been great about connecting the Moore School and, and me with businesses in South Carolina and the people that are focused on sustainability, other nonprofit organizations as well as state state government. And so we saw a combination of the three of those come together at our event in February. And one of the things that was, was pretty clear is, is that employers are expecting graduates coming out into the workforce to have an understanding of what sustainability is, sort of that UN Sustainable Development Goal perspective that, that I mentioned earlier. And also understand the business case for sustainability.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([20:56](#)):

You know, I think it's easy to get sucked into some of the polarizing conversations that you'd see on social media or whatnot, but really understand like, what, what impacts business? How can business have a positive impact? And then at the same time, one of the things that came outta that meeting is our business school students need to have a better understanding of policy. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>, like how does policy shape the way business acts? How can at the same time businesses have an influence on policy so that they can make that these kinds of investments and do so in a productive way that they have access to renewable energy sources, and that we see that grid changing. And so that, you know, that that policy piece was kind of interesting to me coming outta that meeting. But, you know, one of the things that I get is like, okay, well what do you need students to actually know how to do?

Dr. Kealy Carter ([21:51](#)):

Right? and, and so the meeting was great because I felt like we actually got down to, I want students to know how to do a lifecycle assessment. I want them to be able to you know, understand how to do carbon footprint assessment, right? I want 'em to understand reporting, like what are the different reporting frameworks that are out there? Like, how are companies using them? And so for me, those were like really tangible skillsets that we need to make sure our students are coming out with in addition to just general understanding, right. Of the concept. And, and the business case.

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([22:31](#)):

It's interesting when we think about an undergraduate education, a bachelor's degree, right? A lot of it is theoretical stuff. It's these frameworks that we're introducing them to, that the scholars have organized, right? By observing how companies behave and then saying, this is kind of the framework that explains the company behavior. And then we teach that framework to our students and we say, recognize it when you see it. But there, the skill piece is like the, the next level of that, which is like, go out there and actually be able to run one of these carbon tests or go out there and be actually able to

interpret these specific reports that you're seeing and know what the reports are saying to you. One of the words that came up in that meeting that I thought was interesting, and you mentioned this too, about policy was compliance.

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([23:10](#)):

And there are compliance officer positions, right? Where the whole job in the company is to be looking at what are the regulations in place in our industry, and are we meeting those regulations? Is every behavior inside the company meeting those particular regulations? And do you think that as we're, as a, as a nation, as a world starting to become more aware of sustainability goals and of this kind of triple bottom line philosophy that's kind of running the world at this point for better or worse, do you think there's going to be a need for more regulation? Are we gonna see more compliance officers? Like is this a, a situation where companies are kind of gearing up to have the, the people in the room know exactly how they're gonna have to navigate these lines?

Dr. Kealy Carter ([23:53](#)):

That's a great question. I'm gonna break it down in a couple pieces, and probably not the direction you were wanting me to go in this, but I think our graduates coming out today, no matter what they're majoring in, are gonna be impacted by sustainability in their careers. And if you think about the scope of what we've been talking about, whether you're in marketing and are thinking about new products and how to commercialize those or how to change you know, consumer behavior or in supply chain, really looking at the value chain and how to be more efficient and, and manage resources and use new materials. And that certainly on the entrepreneurship, innovation side, finance, there's a huge impact from a finance standpoint communicating this stuff to investors, looking at new, new financing options for companies, different debt structures and those kinds of things. Accounting

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([24:49](#)):

And our, and our management team too. Yeah. I mean, the idea that management's gonna be looking at creating strategic plans for these companies and figuring out how to allocate their resources and understanding what they'll, they'll need to be able to do.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([25:01](#)):

Absolutely. And, and building the culture to, to allow this to, to, to blossom and grow and, and instilling that individual accountability, looking at those compensation structures that they're gonna put some of these activities at the same level as the, the pure economic metrics that we've been focused on. So no matter what aspect of business, your career is gonna be impacted by this. In, in terms of that compliance piece, I think that's a really interesting area right now, because a lot of the reporting that's been done, at least in the US up to this point and, and even other parts of the world un until more recently has been voluntary self-reporting, self-reporting. Yeah. And so you're starting to get Europe kind of led the, the way they're a little bit with saying, look, now companies of a certain size have mandatory reporting on their environmental social performance. And, and there's certainly guidance from the SEC the security Exchange commission here in the US that says companies are gonna have to start reporting on their scope one, two, and three emissions. Can

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([26:12](#)):

You talk about that real quick, just break down that scope one, two, and three?

Dr. Kealy Carter (26:16):

Yeah. So our, it, it, when we look at climate change, like 99% of climate scientists agree that climate change is driven by anthropogenic factors are manmade factors. And in particular, if they break it down into all of the possible reasons for the warming of climate, and that's over many, many years. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>, that's not in the short term, right? The, the main driver of that that accounts for the changes that we've seen are greenhouse gases. Greenhouse gases are things like methane, carbon dioxide. Well, carbon dioxide has become sort of this, this focus for a lot of the discussion today. And these carbon emissions, greenhouse gas emissions can be broken down into scope one, scope two and scope three, scope one emissions are those emissions or that carbon that's generated from company owned activities. So think about in your manufacturing plant from the vehicles that you own and those kinds of things, right? Scope two emissions, then are those those carbon emissions that are generated from the production of like the electricity that you purchase? So if you're going out and, and, and buying from Dominion Duke, whoever what type of emissions were produced during to make that energy possible?

Dr. Kasie Whitener (27:46):

So they're adjacent to, but I don't directly control them. That's

Dr. Kealy Carter (27:49):

Right. Okay. And so that's why you'll see a lot of companies putting emphasis on the utilities to change the mix of the grid, right. And focus more on renewables and, and so forth. Gotcha. And scope three emissions, like I mentioned earlier, are, are kind of much harder to kind of conceptualize as they are encompass all of those carbon emissions throughout your value chain. So in the, the, the production of any raw materials, the transportation of your products and to market the use and disposal of your products. And so,

Dr. Kasie Whitener (28:28):

So from the coffee bean growers to the, you know, people that collect their cup trash.

Dr. Kealy Carter (28:33):

Absolutely. Gotcha. And so, so as you can see, that'd be a lot harder for companies like to measure and

Dr. Kasie Whitener (28:37):

Yeah. Very little control over any

Dr. Kealy Carter (28:39):

Of that to impact. Yeah. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>. And so that, that's, that's where a lot of companies are focused. 'cause Those scope one emissions the, the companies that have been on this journey for a while, they've, they've got those under control, right? They're spending a lot of time right now talking to the utilities and, and thinking about creative ways to source their energy that will reduce those scope two emissions. And they're also trying to say, man, what is going on? Like, how do we impact our entire value chain? So you see a lot of this effort being driven at the manufacturer level because they're at the center of this, and they're under sort of the most pressure to say we, we gotta get this done. But

Dr. Kasie Whitener (29:18):

Even the tech companies, I mean, if you think about those scope two emissions for the tech companies, these are the server farms I was talking about before. I mean, those are their, all they're doing are data warehousing. They're just keeping our data for us. And they're, a lot of times they've got duplicate locations, so they'll have one in Raleigh and one out in Utah. And the idea is the same data lives in both places, but we're now doubling the environmental impact of our own, of our data because we're employing a data farm like Rackspace or whoever it is that is, you know, that also has, and that's our, our scope two classification, right? It's whoever's keeping our data for us if we're not keeping it ourselves, depending on how big the company is.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([29:55](#)):

Yeah. And, and so for some of those, like you look at that as like, okay, well that's part of my scope three emissions. Yeah. You know, I need to, I need to figure out how all of my suppliers are impacting my performance. And that's where you see a lot of the emphasis on everything from banking to transportation. I mean, there's a big we had a student group at Southeastern Freight Lines last week and, and they were talking about like, Hey, you know, our customers are asking us for you know, our carbon impact and moving their goods, right? So this is really affecting the entire value chain. So it, one, that's not a buzzword. I don't think it's going anywhere. <Laugh>, the way people talk about it may change, right? But the actions aren't going anywhere. And go back to your question about compliance. It's interesting. And you asked if we need more regulation.

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([30:45](#)):

Well, I think that my question is, do you anticipate there being more regulation? I don't necessarily, we don't, I don't think as academics we necessarily wanna make a recommendation one way or the other. I just wonder if, like, do we think there's going to be more of that? And, and we've seen it getting, we've seen it increasing over time. Do we think we'll continue to increase over time or do we think we're kind of hitting, you know, peak regulation period and we're gonna start to see fewer of them?

Dr. Kealy Carter ([31:10](#)):

Yeah, that's, I think that's hard to say. I mean what could be interesting is, and is, is to say like what are companies doing? And, and if you think about regulation as just a way to prevent bad actors then maybe it's good. You know, I think always the concern is, is, is regulation prescribing a way to do something which might limit innovation? Right? So I think you have to just be careful there. And, but I do see companies probably being more involved in the conversation about what regulation would look like just to make sure that they're able to continue pushing that envelope forward.

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([31:47](#)):

And in this way, if they've got this kind of history, as you said, they've been, some of these companies have been doing this for a very long time. They sort of know the marketplace. They kind of know what these things are, maybe even a little more than our government regulators would know, or than our agencies, certainly more than our politicians would know, right. As far as like, this is the way forward and this is how we're gonna be able to, to make a positive impact here.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([32:08](#)):

Yeah. I think we, we have companies here in South Carolina that that are, are, you know, being really innovative and, and leading the charge on some of these. You know, I think in particular when you talk

about energy mm-hmm. <Affirmative>, like how can we get the energy that we need, even if it's not here in the state?

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([32:24](#)):

And this South Carolina Department of Commerce was just recently part of a huge project to name South Carolina as a tech hub and through the US department, I think it's through the Department of Energy. And now we're gonna, we're gonna see a lot more of that innovation on those sustainable technologies and renewable energy coming through a lot of South Carolina partnerships here. South Carolina, university of South Carolina is part of that partnership as

Dr. Kealy Carter ([32:47](#)):

Well. So yeah, I think that's the nexus sc exactly that you're talking about Nexus SC So that, that's pretty exciting to see us be identified as, as one of these innovation hubs, particularly around like green energy. And we, we've got a lot of exciting things going on in the state. And, and certainly our state government has so many hands in, in the bucket here, like helping these businesses get along the way, identify more innovative solutions to handle waste materials. You know, it, it, it's pretty dynamic when I think a lot of the conversation that we might hear just as a, the average person doesn't center around that. We've got a lot of cool activity going on around sustainability in the state,

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([33:38](#)):

A lot of collaborative efforts, which I think is really impressive. And the Department of Commerce has led quite a few of those, especially through achieving federal grant funding to be able to create some advantages for companies and some incentives for companies to want to move in that direction. Back to the February sustain SC event part of what we were talking about was those skill sets for students. Now we're at the end of the semester as we're recording this and thinking about did the students get what they needed? Right? What kinds of curriculum revamps are you looking at? What sorts of things did you build into your curriculum this semester? If, if anything that came out of that meeting or, you know, things sometimes are already set by the time we get almost a spring break or what sort of things are you thinking about building in next semester that may get us a little closer to that skillset for them?

Dr. Kealy Carter ([34:23](#)):

Yeah, so specifically with our undergraduate sustainability and business concentration, we have a few additional electives that are gonna be offered. And we're talking about how do we make sure the students have a solid background in, in lifecycle analysis and those kinds of concepts through our sustainable supply chain course. I know they're getting exposure to that, but one of the things coming out of this is, hey one of the participants reached out to me and said, we need a student that can do this. And so, you know, part of my job is not just sitting in the Moore School, but saying like, we have other people on campus and engineering and the school Earth, ocean, environment and geography. Like, who are those students that can do this? Right? And what we found was that pool is relatively limited right now.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([35:17](#)):

And at the same time, this particular company, they're like, we don't have anybody in house that can do it. So we're sitting at this unique point where we're trying to be responsive to business needs, but in many cases, our graduates coming out might be the only one in the company with that expertise. So we need to make sure that they can go deep enough that they, they can be effective. So I know we're, we're

talking about how do we build in a project next semester that would give us these students a deeper level of exposure. So it's things like that, that come out of this event that can really help us adapt our curriculum within existing courses and think about new courses that we need. One of those gaps that we're, we were working on filling is around like accounting.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([36:04](#)):

There's a lot going on right now in terms of how you need to report, and certainly if that SEC ruling comes out related to reporting greenhouse gas emissions, I mean, our accountants are gonna have to know how to do that. Like, how do we do it? How do we provide assurances around it? Like what does that look like? Right? So you know, we are, we're building out the set of electives for, for those students to take. I think we've got a pretty good offering right now but we're going to, you know, continue to develop that over the, you know, kind of the foreseeable future. And at the same time, I think one of the things that, that, that comes out of events like that is, is the, the more justification for why we need curriculum like this and ideas for other types of programming, like our executive education and, and how can we build programs that would be meaningful for members of the business community that aren't enrolled in a full-time program.

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([37:01](#)):

Right, for all of our constituents. Right. Yeah, I think you're right to that. And so it's interesting, I think we're coming to the same place in a conversation that Dirk Brown and I came to as we were talking about entrepreneurship, which is this idea that inside those academic silos, accounting, management, finance, right? Then there, these are skills that they need to fulfill that particular role, right? But then laying above that is this kind of more of a, a, a knowledge of the big picture. And we called it like the entrepreneurial knowledge of the big picture, which is being innovative and creative and looking for solutions in all possible places. But I think sustainability could live in that same space where entrepreneurship lives, which is kind of, it's, it's about finance, but it's also about the sustainability metrics therein, right? And then understanding that big picture, that triple bottom line, right, in accounting and in management and in marketing and sort of seeing that sustainability piece as being like that higher level of knowledge. It's not just the functional knowledge inside the silo or inside the discipline as much as it is sort of the overall big picture knowledge that, that we expect our students to come out with when they've got a bachelor's degree outta the Moore School.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([38:12](#)):

Yeah, you're absolutely right. I mean, our, our students need deep, functional knowledge because they're gonna go into a functional role. I mean, the, the number of sustainability, you know, quote unquote roles in a company is very small. But when you look at the people who are actually executing on the sustainability strategies in these companies companies that are doing it well, those live in every department, right? And so we need our students not only to have that good functional skillset, but understand how they can impact the overall company strategy from where they sit and the bigger picture, like you mentioned. Yeah. So sustainability is one of these truly interdisciplinary concepts. And it, and it, it actually requires understanding even outside of what the traditional business education would be, we need students to have some basic science understanding we want 'em to be working with our engineering counterparts. And, and when I think about it, it's really like we've got this big innovation component. We've got a commercialization component. Like once you innovate, like how do we get it to market to make sure these great solutions are achieved? You know, we, we've certainly got compliance and reporting. We've got a policy component and we've got the, the, these big kind of supply chain

process pieces. So if you, you think about how broad that is, we need students that are e experts in their field with broad understanding.

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([39:47](#)):

It's, you know, no small task,

Dr. Kealy Carter ([39:49](#)):

Easy <laugh>,

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([39:50](#)):

Easy peasy. We get another semester coming up. We'll just try it again next semester.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([39:54](#)):

That's

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([39:54](#)):

Right. Thank you so much, Dr. Ke, Dr. Keeley Carter for being here today, being part of the Moore School podcast. Our title for our Moore School podcast is more impact, and it's clear that that's exactly what your sustainability metrics are doing for us and the work that you're doing at the Moore schools. So thank you.

Dr. Kealy Carter ([40:08](#)):

Thanks for having me.

Dr. Kasie Whitener ([40:10](#)):

When you learn more, you know more, and when you know more, you do more. Thanks for listening.