Institutional Theory: Universiti Sains Malaysia's Journey Towards Sustainability

Dr Suzyrman Sibly
Deputy Director &
MSDP Programme Coordinator
Centre for Global Sustainability Studies
Universiti Sains Malaysia

Institutional Theory?

- Organisation’s decisions to adopt ideas are not primarily based on efficiency goals but are also influenced by the institutional environment

Institutional Environment

- Rules and requirements (values & norms) to which individual organisations must conform in order to receive legitimacy and support

Organisational Isomorphism

- The similarity among organisations in a population

Why organisations become similar?

- Coercive Isomorphism
- Mimetic Isomorphism
- Normative Isomorphism

Coercive Isomorphism

- Organisation adopts certain norms due to pressures exerted by other organisations and by society in general

Mimetic Isomorphism

- Organisations intentionally imitate one another to increase legitimacy

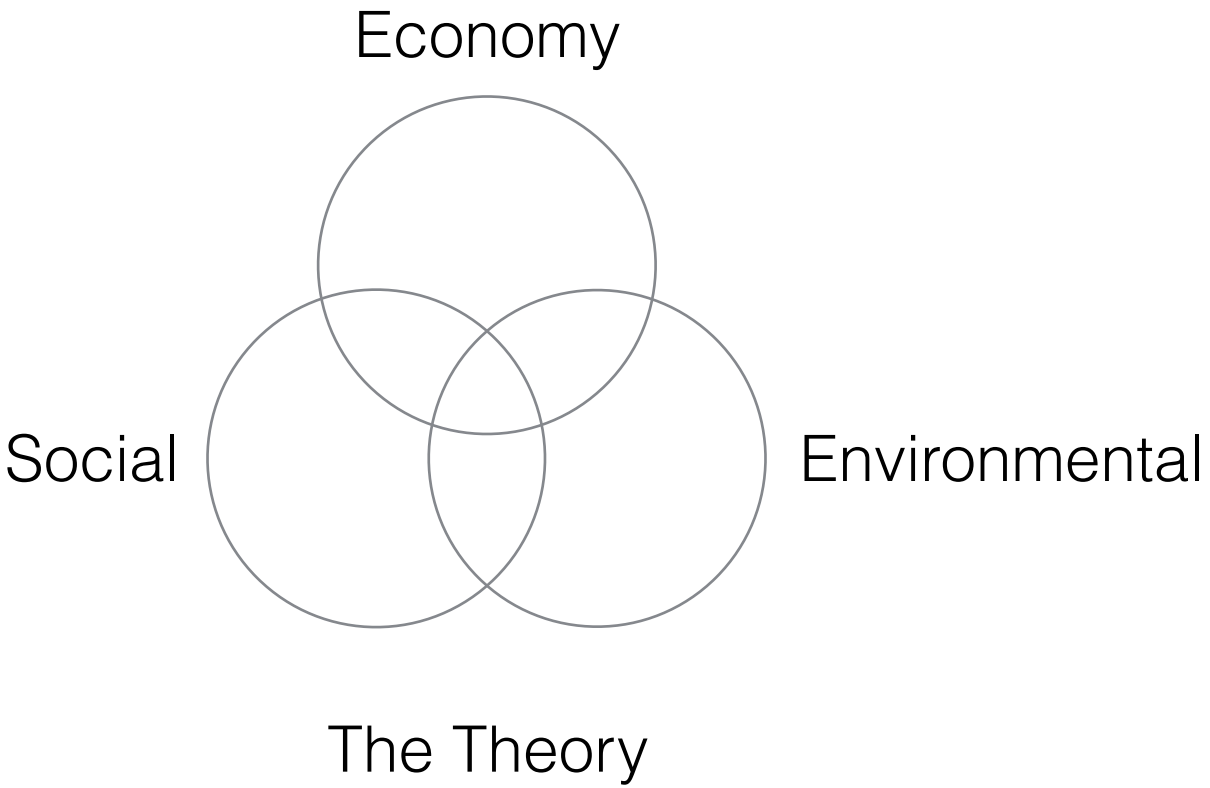
Normative Isomorphism

- Organisations indirectly adopt the norms and values of other organisations in the environment

Disadvantages of Isomorphism

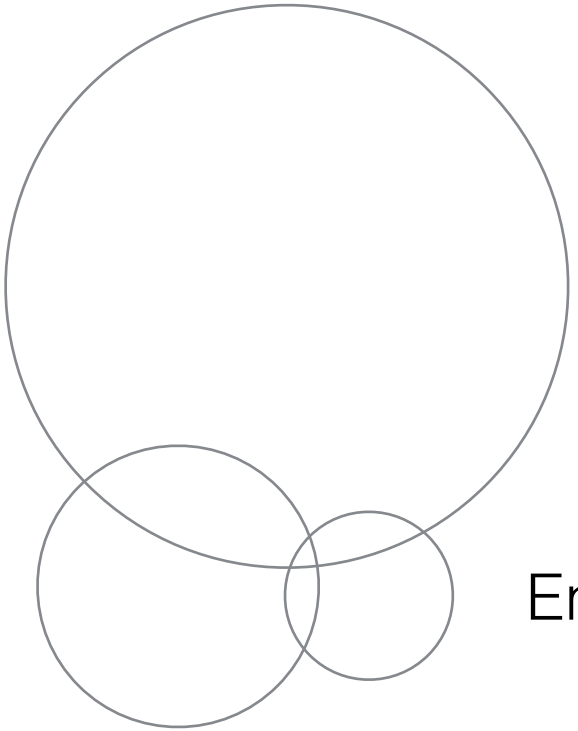
- Learn behaviour that may have become outdated and no longer lead to organisational effectiveness
- Pressure to imitate may reduce the level of innovation in the environment

What is Sustainability?



Source: IUCN 2006

Economy



Social

Environmental

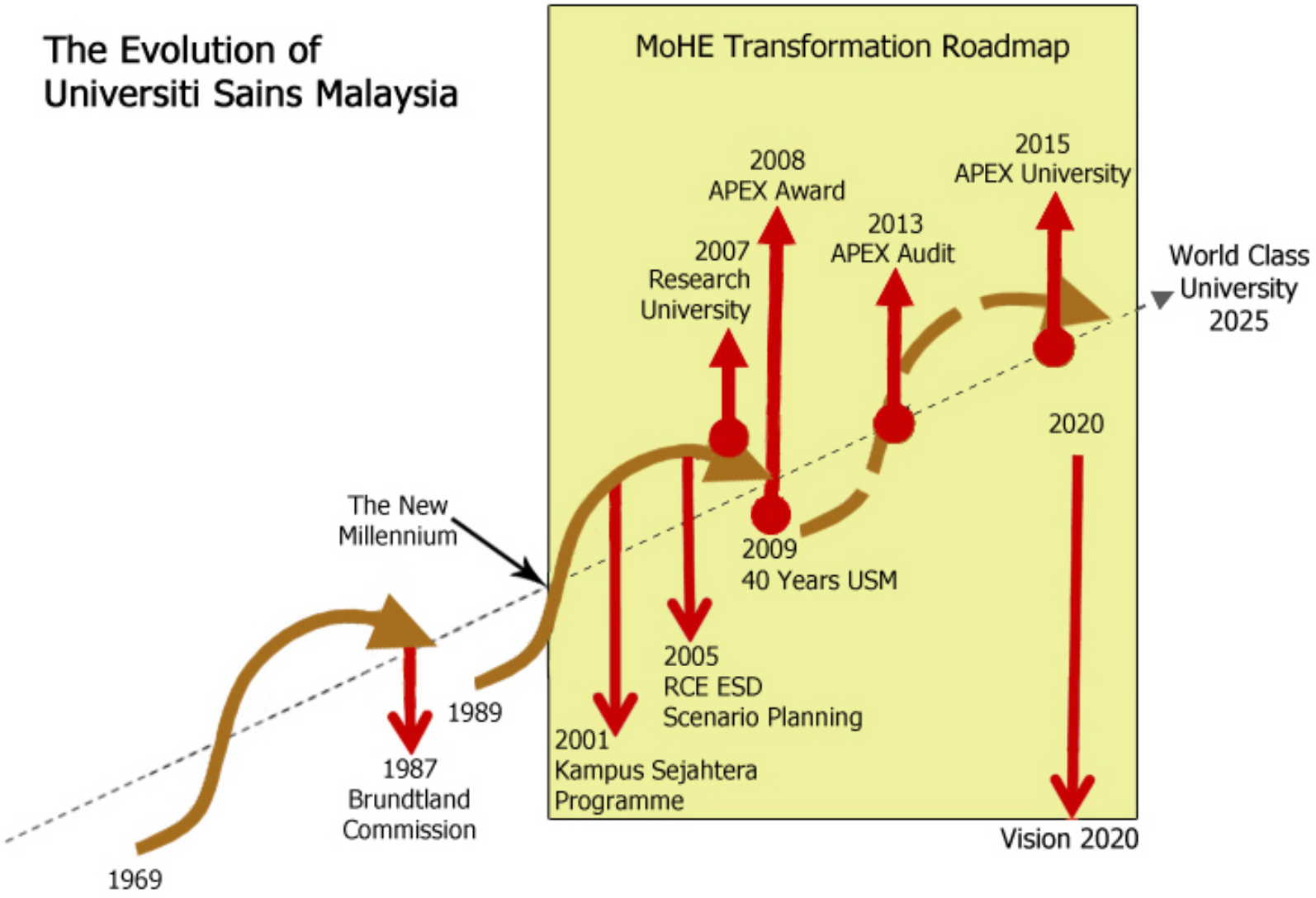
The Reality

Source: IUCN 2006

Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
1 NO POVERTY
2 ZERO HUNGER
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
4 QUALITY EDUCATION
5 GENDER EQUALITY
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION
14 LIFE BELOW WATER
15 LIFE ON LAND
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Evolution of Universiti Sains Malaysia



USM's Early initiatives

- Kampus Sejahtera / Healthy Campus Programme
- Regional Centre for Expertise (RCE) for ESD

Kampus Sejahtera / Healthy Campus Programme

- Emerged in 2000 from the realisation that students' ability to learn depends on their health and quality of life

Regional Centre for Expertise (RCE) for ESD

- regional networks developed in 2005 for the promotion of ESD which addresses local sustainable development challenges through research and capacity development

USM Scenario Planning

- The need to address national aspirations for holistic and people focused development that would be environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive
- To stay abreast of the changing demands of the communities it serves
- To remain relevant in the era of globalisation

USM Future Scenarios

- The Ala Carte University – (market-student led)
- The Invisible University (Market – Tech-led)
- The Corporate University (Commerce-led)
- The State University (State-led)
- The University in A Garden (Scholar-led)
- The Declining / Collapsing University

University in a Garden (2006)

Allows USM to respond best to

- the national aspirations (the national education policy)
- the changing demands of relevant stakeholders in the era of globalisation

APEX University (2008)

- Accelerated Programme for Excellence
- A fast track development programme introduced to facilitate selected universities to raise its level of excellence

USM's APEX Vision

"Transforming Higher Education for A Sustainable Future"

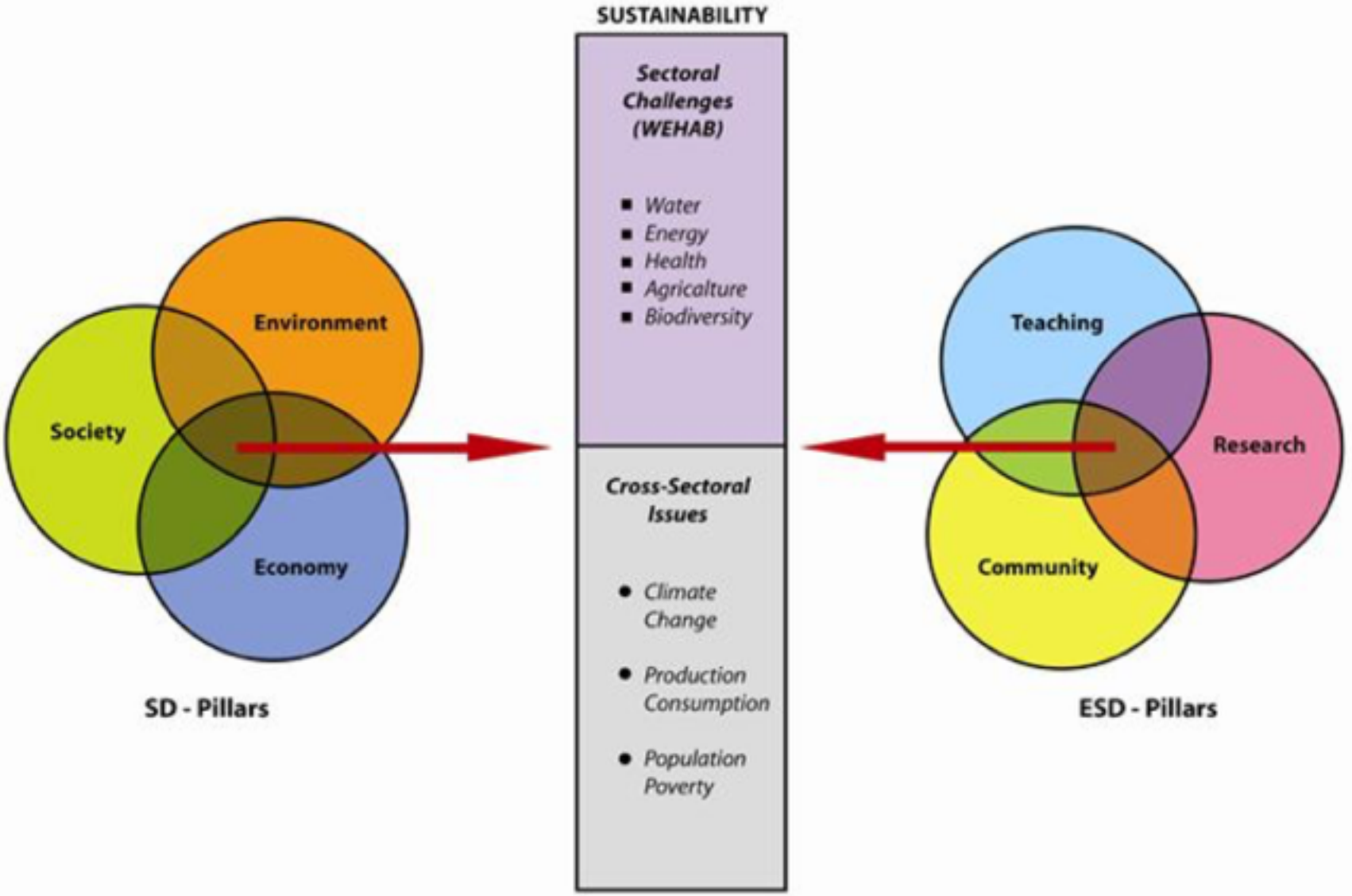
CGSS

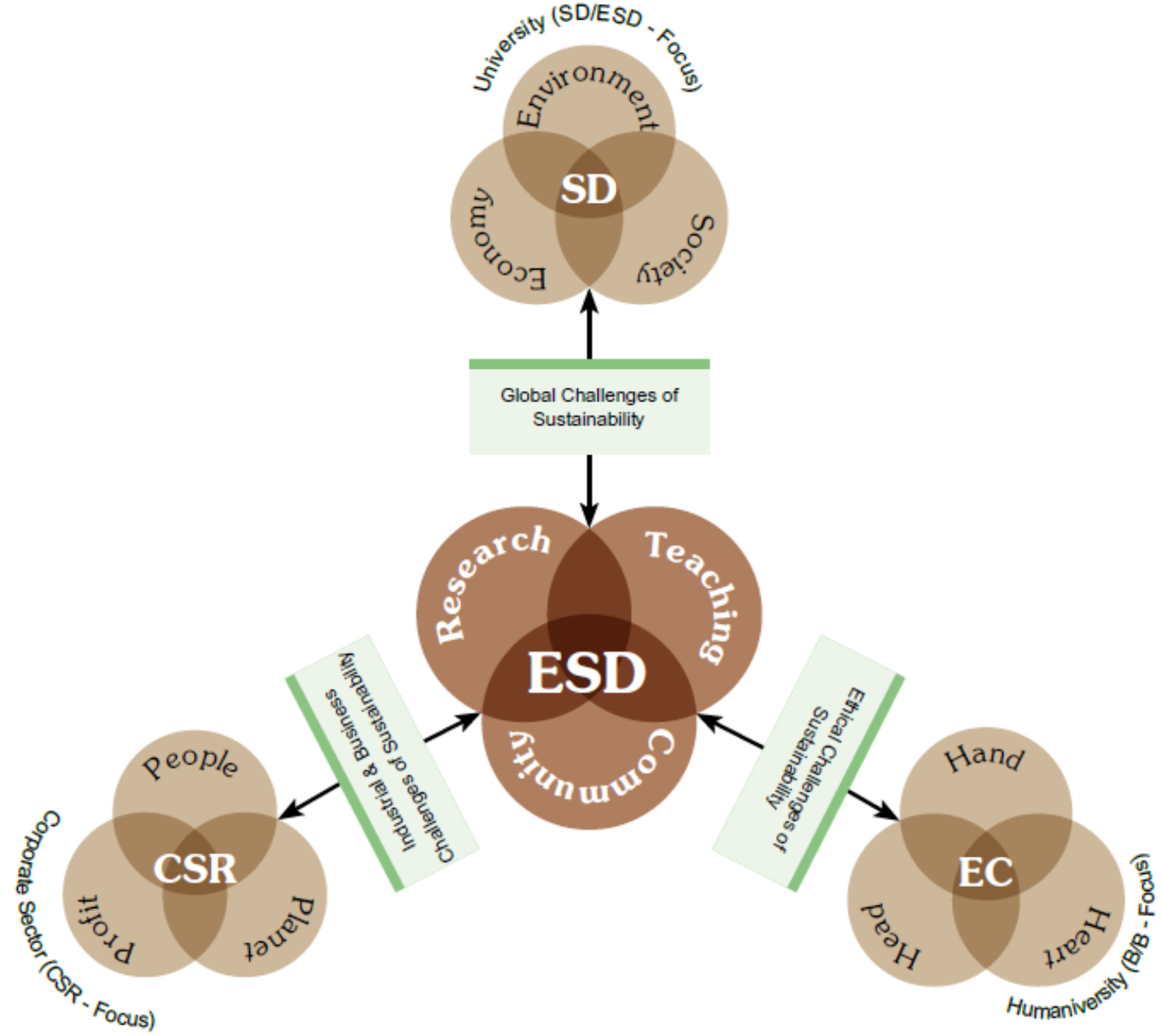
Centre for Global Sustainability Studies

CGSS - 2009

- Change towards sustainability requires a custodian
- Sustainability becoming everybody's interest but nobody's responsibility

USM Sustainability Model




University (SD/ESD - Focus)
Environment
SD
Economy
Society
Global Challenges of Sustainability
Research
Teaching
ESD
Community
Challenges & Business Industrial & Sustainability
Ethical Challenges of Sustainability
People
CSR
Profit
Planet
Corporate Sector (CSR - Focus)
Hand
EC
Head
Heart
Humaniversity (B/B - Focus)

Sustainability Training for Staff

- compulsory two-hour module on sustainability at USM for newly appointed academic, administrative and support staffs

Sustainability Education

Undergraduates

- WSU101 - Sustainability: Issues, Challenges and Prospect
- allows and encourages students from different disciplines learn to work together to address sustainability issues
- 2011 - 127 students in main campus, 2016 - 482 students in main campus only

Sustainability Education

Master in Sustainable Development Practice Programme (Kuala Lumpur)

- A collaboration of 28 or more universities around the globe
- Global Secretariat is in Columbia University New York
- Promotes training for sustainability practitioners having disciplinary depth but lacking interdisciplinary breadth and hands-on skills required to be effective practitioners
- Offers courses in the disciplines of Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Management and Health Sciences

Sustainability Education

Postgraduates

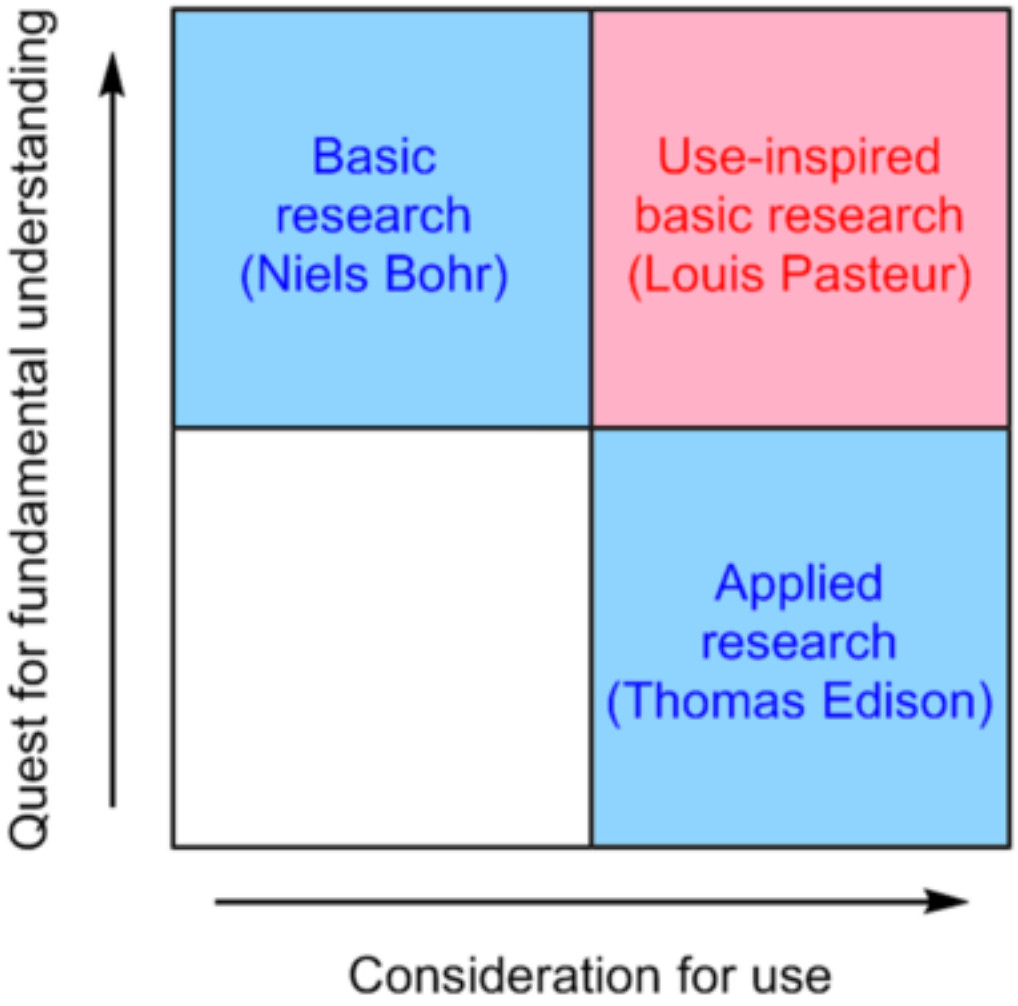
- Master in Sustainable Cities and Communities
- MBA in Sustainable Development
- Master of Communication (Science and Environmental Journalism)
- M.Sc. in Environmental Science
- Master of Science Environmental Engineering

Sustainability Education

Research

- PhD, Sustainability
- Master in Science / Arts, Sustainability

Pasteur's Quadrant



USM Sustainability Council

- Chaired by Vice Chancellor
- Membership includes all four Deputy Vice Chancellors, Heads, Directors and Deans of sections
- All sustainability initiatives of USM are under the purview of this council

USM Sustainability Policy

1. Teaching (formal, non-formal, and informal education)

- Policy: Integrate sustainability into academic curriculum at all levels using all modalities of delivery. This is to ensure that necessary knowledge, skills, perspectives, value systems and issues are introduced and their relevance to the three pillars of sustainability is emphasised

USM Sustainability Policy

2. Research and Innovation (process, fundamental basic, action/applied, and sustainability science research)

- Policy: Champion sustainability research activities that are trans-disciplinary and promote advanced innovative thinking, new knowledge creation and the ability to use and disseminate knowledge to find solutions to pressing sustainability challenges based on WEHAB +3 priorities

USM Sustainability Policy

3. University-community engagement (Industry, village, NGOs, Civil Society/non-state actors, business and policy communities)

- Policy: Promote knowledge/skill transfer programmes using ESD principles and practices to address community needs and challenges

USM Sustainability Policy

4. Institutional arrangements (utilities, infrastructure, transport, waste, and soft structures involving data, software and networks)

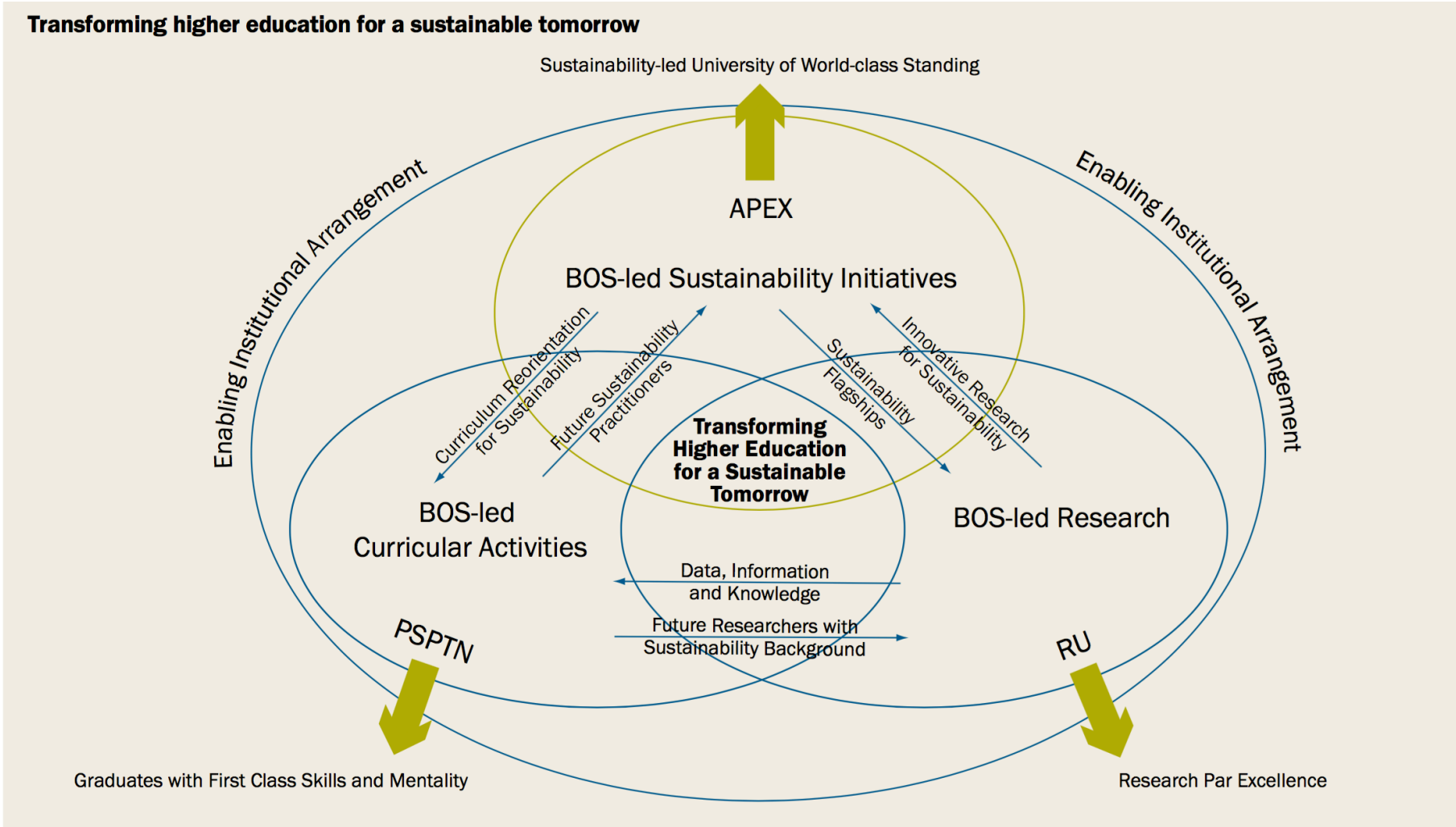
- Policy: Integrate sustainability into the core governance system of the university to create an innovative enabling environment within which the other components (Teaching, research and community engagement) operate efficiently

Knowledge Transfer Programme

- Scientific knowledge and skills from public universities are transferred to partner industries and communities to improve industry performance as well as community well-being

- provides feedback to the universities involved through its graduate interns so that the knowledge as well as the knowledge transfer process can be continually improved.

USM APEX


Transforming higher education for a sustainable tomorrow
Sustainability-led University of World-class Standing
APEX
BOS-led Sustainability Initiatives
Enabling Institutional Arrangement
Enabling Institutional Arrangement
Curriculum Reorientation for Sustainability
Future Sustainability Practitioners
Sustainability Flagships
Innovative Research for Sustainability
Transforming Higher Education for a Sustainable Tomorrow
BOS-led Curricular Activities
BOS-led Research
Data, Information and Knowledge
Future Researchers with Sustainability Background
PSPTN
RU
Graduates with First Class Skills and Mentality
Research Par Excellence

UNIVERSITI
SAINS
MALAYSIA

Thank You

Transforming Higher Education For A Sustainable Tomorrow