

Green Chemistry and the Big Picture of Sustainability

Robert Peoples, Director, ACS Green Chemistry Institute

Abstract

Sustainability is a word that is being used more and more these days. What does it really mean and do we understand what it will take to truly be sustainable? This talk will focus on macroscopic issues to create a global perspective and then drill down to discuss the meaning of green chemistry and provide examples of green chemistry and engineering in action. There will be embedded "pearls of wisdom" for students in the audience and a chance to ask those burning career questions.

Biography

Robert Peoples, Ph.D., is Director of the ACS Green Chemistry Institute®. In this capacity, he drives the implementation of the principles of green chemistry across the global chemical enterprise. Dr. Peoples spent 23 years in the chemical industry before moving into advocacy organizations to pursue his passion for the environment. He has been a member of the American Chemical Society (ACS) for 35 years, giving him valuable experience and insight into the chemical industry. Immediately prior to becoming Director of the ACS Green Chemistry Institute®, he served as Director of Sustainability for the Carpet & Rug Institute, the Executive Director of The Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE), and President of the Environmental Impact Group, his environmental consulting firm. Preceding these positions, Bob was Director of Carpet Sustainability and Market Development at Solutia, Inc., where he was actively involved in carpet reclamation and negotiations that led to the formation of CARE. He is a founding member of the CARE Board of Directors and was honored as the first recipient of CARE's Person of the Year. After graduation from Purdue, Bob joined the Monsanto Corporation. He was a member of the team that developed Monsanto's patented, revolutionary stain blocker and fluorochemistry for the carpet industry. He also led the technical team for the commercialization of Flectron®, a new business for Monsanto in St. Louis where he spent three years in Advanced Performance Materials. In 1992, he was appointed head of Carpet New Products in Pensacola, FL. After the spinoff of Solutia from Monsanto, he was named Director of Nylon Technology. Bob is a member of California's prestigious Green Ribbon Science Panel, which is comprised of experts who provide advice on scientific matters, chemical policy recommendations, and implementation strategies. The panel is part of the state's Green Chemistry Initiative being implemented by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). He also serves as a member of the Chemical Sciences Roundtable at the National Academies of Science. An internationally recognized speaker in the areas of sustainability, standards, innovation, and carpet reclamation, Dr. Peoples holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics and chemistry from Montclair State University in New Jersey and a Ph.D. in physical organic chemistry from Purdue University. He has served on a number of local and national boards.