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Energy policy must reconcile values across security, economics, and the environment, energy leaders assert

LIVERMORE, Calif. — At a workshop convened by Sandia National Laboratories and the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) [Sustainability Solutions Institute](#) (SSI), some 25 leaders from academia, government, and the private sector gathered on March 18-19 to discuss key energy policy issues and proposed values- and outcomes-based approaches to energy policy.

“Our nation must become clear in defining outcomes that balance national security, environmental sustainability, and economic prosperity goals,” said Les Shephard, Sandia’s vice president for energy, security and defense technologies. Shephard and Charles Kennel, founding director of UCSD’s SSI, opened the workshop, which examined three intersecting perspectives of energy policy: security, economics, and the environment.

The goal of the workshop was to bring together leaders from diverse backgrounds to identify promising areas for energy policy, based on understanding the intersecting issues, assumptions, and priorities from these three perspectives. The “trialogue” surfaced key issues and recommendations for action, including:

- Focus policy on outcomes and values rather than mandating specific technical solutions
- Conduct an assessment of the nation’s energy security status comparable to those for environmental and economic security
- Create a distinguished, high-level independent council, patterned after the Council on Foreign Relations, which could act as a forum for analyzing and communicating critical issues to energy policy makers and the public
- Develop educational curricula at all levels addressing energy and sustainability, including green vocational-technical programs at community colleges, K-12 educational outreach, and support for national centers of excellence in sustainability solutions at land-grant universities
- Develop tangible messages that engage the public to think about their energy decisions

Recognizing the challenge of bringing together diverse perspectives, Sandia and UCSD engaged [Viewpoint Learning](#) and [The Public Conversations Project](#) in the workshop design and facilitation. The backgrounds of the participants spanned climate science, engineering, policy, energy regulation, clean

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technologies, public engagement, national competitiveness and international security. All agreed that the nation is at a critical time and has the opportunity and the obligation to integrate all three viewpoints when setting energy policy.

"There is an urgency in making sound energy policy decisions because they will have a great impact on our country's future economic, environmental, and national security," said participant professor Richard Matthew, director of the Center for Unconventional Security Affairs at UC Irvine.

Workshop participants were enthusiastic about the intuitive integration across the perspectives and plan further development of these ideas. A more detailed workshop report will be released in the coming months. Sandia and UCSD are committed to building upon this dialogue and expanding to include additional partners.

The UCSD Sustainability Solutions Institute brings the University of California's research and educational excellence to bear in meeting the twin 21st century challenges of environmental stewardship and economic prosperity. The Sustainable Solutions Institute convenes interdisciplinary teams organized around specific sustainability questions and disseminates the discoveries through conferences, working papers, and focused educational programs.

Viewpoint Learning engages the public and other stakeholders in dialogues designed to improve decision-making, understand different viewpoints in depth, and build trust. Viewpoint Learning has applied its innovative dialogue-based methods to a wide range of issues including health care, education, the federal debt, entitlements, foreign policy, and environmental sustainability.

The Public Conversations Project (PCP) is a Boston-based nonprofit that uses dialogue to improve relationships and understanding among groups and individuals on opposing sides of divisive public issues. A small, flexible organization committed to broad impact, PCP has developed an approach that has proven effective with diverse constituents across multiple issues and cultures.

For a list of attendees or additional information on the workshop, members of the media can contact Mike Janes, 925-294-2447, mejanes@sandia.gov.

Sandia is a multiprogram laboratory operated by Sandia Corporation, a Lockheed Martin company, for the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration. With main facilities in Albuquerque, N.M., and Livermore, Calif., Sandia has major R&D responsibilities in national security, energy and environmental technologies, and economic competitiveness.

Sandia news media contact: Mike Janes,
mejanes@sandia.gov (925) 294-2447