



## New Institute Promotes Kingdom Practices of Sustainability

by Kami L. Rice

**J**uliana Lezama tells the story of her 9-year-old self who, while riding with her mother, was writing down license plate numbers of cars emitting excessive amounts of pollution. She then wrote a letter to the Ministry of the Environment of her native Colombia to report the polluters.

Her passion hasn't waned from its early beginning, so it's no surprise that she joined the first cohort to enter programs offered by **Lipscomb University's (TN)** new Institute for Sustainable Practice, following the completion of her undergrad degree in political science.

"I found my calling," she said, speaking of sustainability. "It's not only what I want to do with my career, but it's a way of life. ...It's really refreshing to study what is my passion in life." She couldn't find anything like this program back home in Colombia. While she would love to work in sustainability there, she said it's difficult because underdeveloped countries don't yet have the resources to support sustainability. Companies aren't interested yet, and one can't find supplies to provide products necessary for energy-efficient homes and businesses.

Lipscomb is positioning itself as a leader in the emerging field of sustainability. With the October 2007 inception of the Institute for Sustainable Practice, the university launched an undergraduate major and minor in sustainability, as well as a graduate certificate program and a terminal master's degree. The first students were welcomed into these programs during the 2008-09 academic term.

The Institute's first and second cohorts have attracted students with an excitingly diverse array of backgrounds: a pharmacist, a waitress, a stay-at-home mother/accountant, a civil engineer, a farmer's market employee, a coffeehouse manager, a landscape architect, a homebuilder and more.

Preston Clark, a U.S. Army officer in the sustainability concentration of Lipscomb's MBA program, is an example of a Christian whose perspective has shifted. He came from an



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**ABOVE: LIPSCOMB AND THE INSTITUTE** is taking the lead on green initiatives, including the construction of the new Burton Health Sciences Center and Villages at Lipscomb Residential Complex, which represents a \$21 million renewable energy and green building effort by the campus and by hosting the 2008 Tennessee Green Business Expo (**RIGHT**).

anti-environmental movement perspective before he began to be interested in emerging trends in green marketing. That led to learning about the environmental side effects of production, which took him to study consumerism and finally deposited him in the sustainability movement. "I stumbled across the word sustainability and was like, that's what I'm looking at," he said. The uniqueness of Lipscomb's program and the fact that it was faith-based drew him to the school, as did its location in Nashville.

Lipscomb is the first—and currently the only—school in Tennessee to offer majors in sustainability. Before beginning these programs, Lipscomb was already going green. When the school's Ezell Center was constructed in 2005-06, it was the first academic building in Nashville to use geothermal heating and cooling systems. All-new construction on campus since then has included this energy-saving system.

Sustainability's goal is to "holistically integrate the needs of people, the planet and prosperity," explained Dodd Galbreath,

