SFU’s Sustainability Initiative
"Sustainability is like teenage sex. Everybody says they're doing it, very few people actually are doing it. Those that are doing it are doing it badly." - Australian architect Andrew Maynard

- Sustainability isn’t about saving the environment. It’s about saving ourselves
- It is about recognizing that without a healthy thriving environment we don’t have an economy or a society
- Sustainability is systems thinking
- It recognizes that every action we take has an ecological, social and economic outcome
- It is about building a better world for people, other living creatures and the planet
- I strongly believe that sustainability solutions are social innovations and are the driver of human progress
Why higher education?

- Universities are hubs for learning, research, and experimentation.

- We are the training grounds for our current and future leaders.

- Sustainability can be the key to redesigning the modern University and what higher education can contribute to society.

- We can take risks and test new ideas contributing to innovations and demonstrating solutions that work.
SFU’s Sustainability Strategic Approach

**Integration**
Sustainability Principles into Core University Business Planning & Strategy

**Empowerment**
Providing tools, training, resources and consulting services

**Community**
Building a sense of place, connection and ownership

**Demonstration**
Highly visual successes that prove the benefits

Transformative Cultural Change
SFU’s Sustainability Strategic Approach

Some examples

• **Sustainability Policy** designating responsibility for sustainability across all Vice President portfolios [2008]

• Integration of sustainability into **SFU’s Strategic Vision** as a key principle [2011]

• **Senior Sustainability Council**-direct VP reports to guide strategic planning process [2012]

• **Sustainability Office** direct reporting to VP Finance and Administration [2012]

• **University Energy Utilization Policy** [2016]

• Integration of sustainability into **Research Strategic Plan** [current]

• Integration of sustainability into **Finance and Administration Strategic Plan** [current]

• **Sustainability criteria integrated into key leadership JDs and hiring processes** [ongoing]
Sustainability Plan (2013-2016)
Sustainability Plan (2013-2016)
Some examples:

• Lifecycle Assessment Tool for purchases over $75,000

• Sustainable Spaces Certification (Office, Lab, Dining, Events)

• Sustainability Reporting Initiative (online visual reporting tool)

• Student Peer Educators (training, mentorship and experience in sustainability planning and education)

• Talking Sustainability Blog (sustainability literacy focused)

• Communications, design and media support for departments
SFU’s Sustainability Strategic Approach

Some examples:

• Multiple award winning Zero Waste Initiative completely transforming waste management at SFU

• Seeding successful pilot initiatives such as Change Lab, and RADIUS Fellows Program

• Climate Action, Energy Management and GHG reduction commitments and successes amplified

Demonstration

Highly visual successes that prove the benefits
SFU’s Sustainability Strategic Approach

Some examples:

• SFU2021 Engagement Process for the next Sustainability Strategic Plan

• Staff Sustainability Ambassadors (network of staff champions)

• Campus Specific Approaches and connections
SFU’s Sustainability Initiative (2013-2017)

Part 1-2013-2016

2013-2016 Plan

Establish visible leadership projects

Part 2-Jan 2016

Sustainability Reporting Initiative (SRI)

Raise SFU’s profile, inspire engagement

Part 3-2015-2017

2021 Engagement

Engage & energize community, focus energy on solutions & leadership
SFU’s Year Long Community Engagement Process

SFU 2021
Envisioning Our Sustainable Future
SFU’s Sustainability Strategic Plan 2017-2021

community engagement process

SFU’s current institution-wide Sustainability Strategic Plan (2013-2016) expires in 2016. The Plan needs to renewed for another cycle. Between Fall 2015 and Fall 2016, we are undertaking a University-wide engagement process to develop 20 year goals and a five year plan.

Intended Outcomes:

20 year goals
5 year targets (2021) & action plans
100% of community targeted
1000 in person connections

Engagement Approach:

Applying the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) framework for the design and delivery of engagement.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Participation Goal</th>
<th>Inform</th>
<th>Consult</th>
<th>Involve</th>
<th>Collaborate</th>
<th>Empower</th>
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<tr>
<td>To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.</td>
<td>To inform the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.</td>
<td>To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.</td>
<td>To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.</td>
<td>To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.</td>
<td>To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Promise to the Public | We will keep you informed | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influence the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | We will implement what you decide. |
Sustainability Strategic Plan Timeline

Phase 1: Planning and Preparation - Fall 2015

Phase 2: Visioning and Theme Development - Spring 2016

Phase 3: 5 year Plan Development - Summer 2016

Phase 4: Plan Finalization and Final Endorsement - Fall 2016

- Multiple events
- One off event
Our engagement approach?

- 2 University-wide surveys
- One-on-one interviews with senior administrators including President
- Pop-ins at established meetings (e.g., SFU Board)
- Pop-up events at student orientations, community events, open houses...
- Student-led Sustainability Summit resulting in formal submission for consideration
- Staff Sustainability Ambassadors and champions hosting focus groups in their departments (“community conversations”)
- Student Peer Educators hosting events, talking to their peers, collecting online feedback
- 3 Goal setting dialogues—one on each campus with representation from faculty, staff, students and external community representatives (larger more formal events)
Results to date

• **5 Core Themes** that connect the ecological, social, and economic

• Student-led summit resulting in **formal student submission**

• **University Board and VPs** buy-in and support for process and plan

• **Integration of sustainability** into **core strategic planning** of VP Finance and Administration and Research Strategic Plan

• **Incredible increase in understanding** of role of sustainability office and sustainability as a driver of innovation among community members

• **New and stronger relationships** with current and new champions and a **new network** of future champions
Lessons Learned

- The process is the outcome
- Face to face conversations with a focus on relationship building are most effective
- Design partnerships where community members help design and deliver components of the engagement process are best
- Faculty need to be able to contribute from their area of expertise and need more formal ways of contributing
- To do it right you need people on the ground… this isn’t a social media project
How Outcomes will be leveraged

- **20 year goals** to be approved by VPs and community

- Working groups will develop **5 year targets** to begin work toward 20 year goals

- **Integration of these 5 year targets** into department level plans

- **Sustainability Office to act as consultant** to train, provide tools and advise on how SFU departments can achieve targets

- **Regular reporting** to community, VPs and external community on progress to maintain momentum

- **Development of the network** and continued relationship building to empower individuals and departments to understand and transform their work with sustainability as an innovation tool
General Takeaways

1. Be ruthless in the constant refinement of your mission, approach and activities.
   • Be laser focused on one or two things
   • Don’t be afraid to throw things away

2. Be dogged about ensuring that all levels of your community see sustainability as the solution to common problems (e.g., morale and staff burnout) rather than the thing we should be doing to be “good” when we have time and money.

3. One group or office cannot own or deliver sustainability effectively for a whole organization or community. The focus must be on building individual and departmental/unit ownership and resourcing their deep change initiatives so they have success

4. Driving sustainability is all about people. You need to have strong personal relationships, be prepared to have a lot of deep conversations where all you do is listen, ensure your organization is hiring with sustainability in mind and training is regularized.
Contact

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PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS WORKSHOPS

MOBILIZING CHAMPIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 2016, 9:00-4:30
Greening your Organization: Getting Started

FRIDAY, JULY 8, 2016, 9:00-4:30
Procurement Through a Sustainability Lens

FRIDAY, JULY 15, 2016, 9:00-4:30
Natural Resources Planning Using “Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation”

>sfu.ca/fenv/professional-programs.html

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