



UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA

2021-22

Sustainability Council **Annual Report and Action Plan**





**Robert Summers,
Academic Director**



**Howie Harshaw,
Associate director
for the Certificate in
Sustainability**



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**Guillermo
Hernandez
Ramirez**

Sustainability Council Members



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The Sustainability Council is an academic leadership unit that works with all faculties to spark learning, discovery and citizenship for sustainability. We provide students with courses and experiential learning opportunities that lead to meaningful careers. We create avenues for academics to join a central conversation on researching and teaching sustainability issues.



Message from the Academic Director

It's been quite a whirlwind year with a lot of really exciting achievements and many transitions in our office. We have also begun to set out an ambitious vision for the future, which is discussed later in this document.



The big news story for us this year was that the University of Alberta was ranked 11th in the world by the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. More than 1400 universities placed in the rankings, which measure universities' overall contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The application was led jointly by the Sustainability Council and University of Alberta International, with the support of Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy Management and Sustainable Operations).

To apply for the Impact Rankings, we had to do a detailed analysis of all SDG-related teaching, research, engagement, stewardship, outreach and operations happening at the university. This is important data for us and for others. To share this data, we are working with central communications to significantly expand our online SDG Info Hub, a one-stop hub for all things SDG related on campus.

I am pleased to note that our academic programs are continuing to do well. The Certificate in Sustainability has grown to more than 450 students and the first offerings of our SUST 201 and SUST 202 courses were very well received. We've begun having conversations across campus about establishing a new master's degree program and expect to have a proposal ready in the winter semester for engagement across campus.

On the experiential learning front, we are thrilled to have two years of additional funding (\$2.285 million) from the province to offer and expand our Adaptation Resilience Training program, which offers full-time, eight-month internships in climate change adaptation. We were also very pleased to see growth in our Sustainability Scholars program, with 21 participants this year compared to 19 last year. We have an ambitious agenda underway to expand student internship opportunities in sustainability.

These are just a few highlights of a very busy year. Please have a look through this document to learn more about what we have been up to.

I want to end by thanking the folks who have left us for other pursuits this year, and welcoming those who have joined us. Nada Baali, Trevor Chow-Fraser and Nathalie Walker all moved on to exciting new opportunities elsewhere. Each was an integral part of our operation. Frank Robinson, Sheena Wilson, Cindy Gaudet and Joel Gehman all ended their terms with the Sustainability Council this year, and I want to thank each of them for their contributions during our first few years of operation. I want to welcome Riley Tjosvold, Hussain Al-Rikabi, Justis Allard-Hagan and Apryl Bergstrom who joined our office throughout the year. All new and current staff are integral to the success of our operations, programming, and any institutional efforts we undertake.

"The big news story for us this year was that the University of Alberta was ranked 11th in the world by the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings."

Robert J. Summers

Academics

An important part of the Sustainability Council’s mission is to support sustainability-focused learning. To achieve this goal we use a hierarchical approach; we support sustainability teaching and learning across faculties, schools and departments, and we develop and offer sustainability programs and courses.

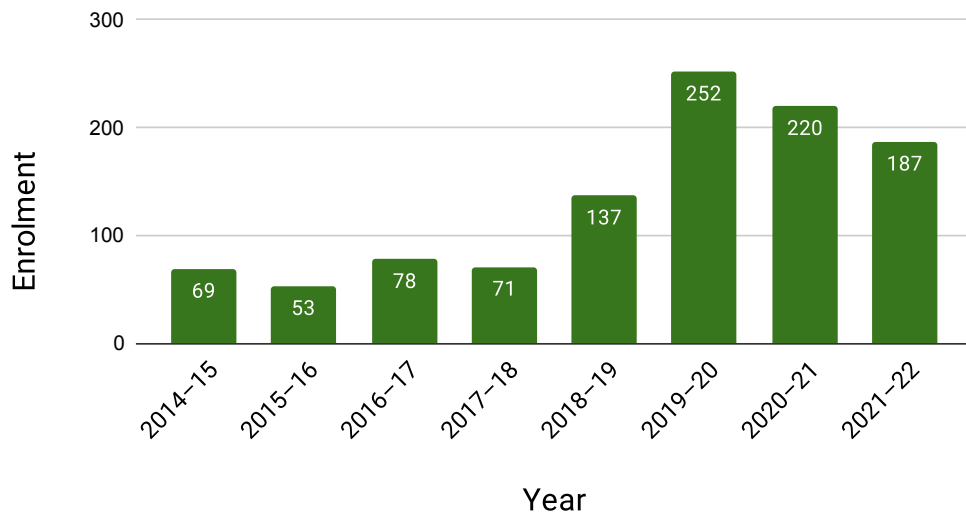
Our existing initiatives include the Certificate in Sustainability, our sustainability (SUST) courses, support for sustainability-focused student research, and support for the reinvigoration of the BA Environmental Studies Degree program.

Certificate in Sustainability

The Certificate in Sustainability is an embedded credential that recognizes students who integrate sustainability learning within their degree program. Open to undergraduates in 10 faculties, it is designed for students to develop interdisciplinary, problem/transition-focused thinking about sustainability within their standard course load. As part of the certificate, students complete a capstone integrative project which they must present to a public audience. The Certificate in Sustainability is a valuable credential for any student wanting to kick-start a career or pursue graduate studies in sustainability.

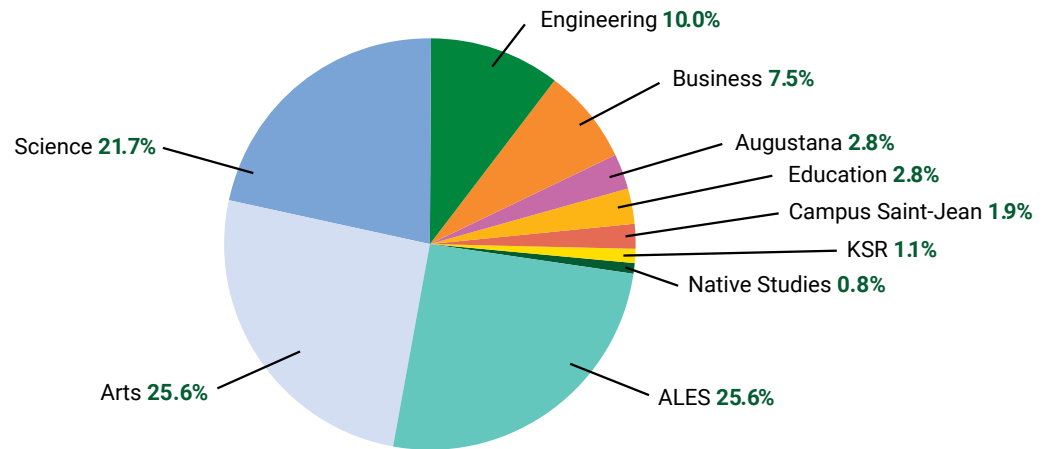
During the academic year, we engage with enrolled students using a newsletter, which includes relevant dates for their certificate completion and highlights opportunities for students to get involved with sustainability initiatives. We also offer monthly, online information sessions which inform students who are enrolled, or are interested in enrolling, about the key benefits and requirements of the Certificate in Sustainability.

New Enrolments by Year (July 1 - June 30)



In summer 2021, we onboarded a new Academic Advisor–Guillermo Hernandez Ramirez. Over the past year, Guillermo has hit the ground running as the advisor for dozens of students. Howie Harshaw (Associate Director - CIS), Brandon Alakas, Sarah Pelletier and Eva Lemaire are other academic advisors who support our students as they advance through their integrative projects. Students in the CIS program come from across the university.

Certificate Enrolment by Faculty



Students must present their integrative projects to an audience as part of their certificate. Throughout the year, online presentation options included social media posts featured on the Sustainability Awareness Week webpage and short presentations at the Alberta Student Leadership Summit. In late March and April, we used our Twitter and Instagram pages to present social media-optimized slide decks of students' work. In different ways, each of these online venues gave students the chance to share their work and meaningfully engage with a broader audience.

Links to Selected Integrative Projects on Instagram

[Concrete alternatives for sustainable housing](#) by Olivia Duong

[Is Calgary or Edmonton better?: Exploring the relationship between pedestrian mobility and long-term sustainability](#) by Susana M.G.

[Sustainable fencing for Northern Alberta's ungulates](#) by Arianna Loogman

To prepare for the upcoming shift in Certificate in Sustainability program requirements, which are taking effect in the 2022-23 academic year, we developed new course lists that aligned with the requirements. This involved an engagement process as well as undertaking an inventory of all sustainability-related courses on campus to identify potential courses for our sustainability core, sustainability focused and sustainability related course lists. The shortlist of courses were reviewed and sorted by our office before being sent out to the Certificate in Sustainability academic advisors for feedback and approval. The new requirements are now available on our webpage, ready for the 2022-23 student cohort.

Sustainability Course Offerings

One of the ways that the Sustainability Council has bolstered sustainability learning on campus is to launch new SUST courses, the first of which went live in fall of 2021. These institution-wide sustainability courses introduce students from diverse academic programs to sustainability-focused scholarship. They are designed to help students better understand the sustainability-related challenges we face at both global and local scales, and introduce students to alternative ways that scholars and policymakers approach such challenges.

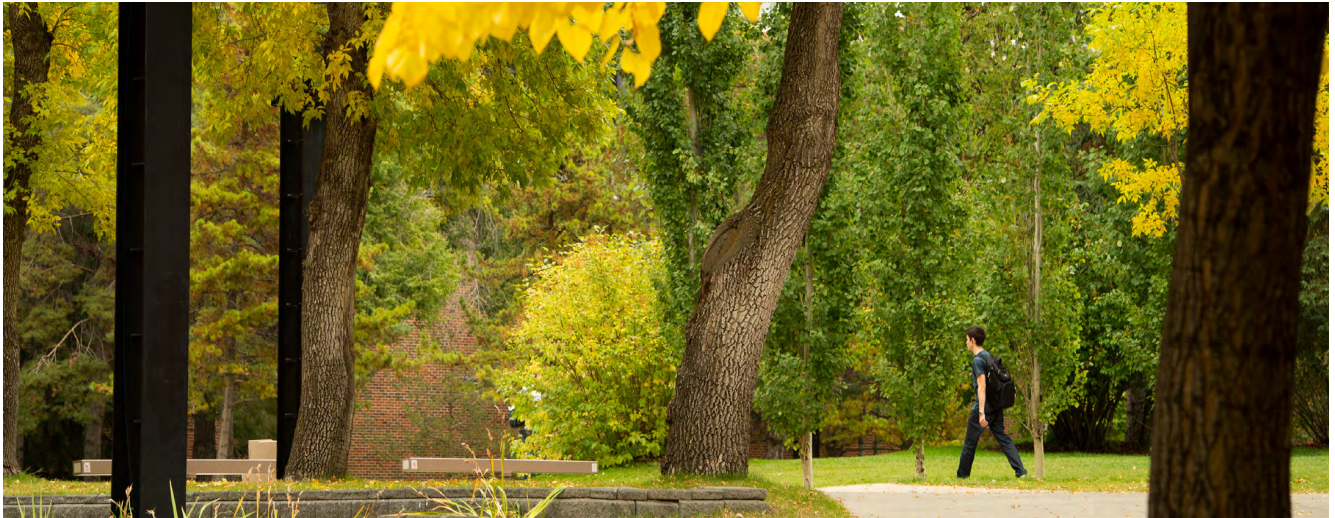
During the 2020-21 and 2021-22 academic years, the Sustainability Council both developed and offered its first suite of SUST courses. They are:

COURSES	2021-22
SUST 201	<i>Introduction to Sustainability:</i> An introduction to the history of sustainability as a concept, contemporary sustainability issues, and the diverse perspectives that disciplines and professions take on while approaching sustainability.
SUST 202	<i>Global Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals:</i> SUST 202 critically examines the evolution of development, sustainable development and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Multiple dimensions and actors in international development will be covered. Students will be able to gain an understanding of the interconnectedness of the SDGs and the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development.
SUST 410	<i>Directed Study in Sustainability:</i> Directed research or study in an area of sustainability defined by the student and a supervising instructor. May be used to fill the integrative project requirement of the Certificate in Sustainability. Registration requires approval of the Sustainability Council.

Collectively, 69 students enrolled in SUST 201 and 202, and the courses were very well received by students. Enrolments for the Fall and Winter terms for the two courses are now well over 200 students.

“This material was really fundamental to understanding why a multitude of issues that both the scientific community and the general public have known about and understood persist even decades after solutions are first proposed.”

—Dylan Caouette, first-year undergraduate and SUST 201 student



Our goal of reaching students in diverse programs can already be considered a success as students in these two courses came from more than 30 different degree programs across the university. We will continue to raise awareness of the courses and expect to see enrollment continue to grow (2022-23 enrollments have nearly tripled to just over 150 students at this point).

An important part of our strategy is to ensure that students can access these courses within their degree programs. To achieve this, we have been working with programs and departments across the university to integrate the courses as core requirements or approved options for students in any discipline. We have had a very positive response from nearly all of the programs and departments we engaged with. As a result, a number of programs will change their 2022-23 and 2023-24 academic calendars in order to integrate SUST courses.

The two SUST courses will become core courses in the BA Environmental Studies degree program and are also core courses in the Certificate in Sustainability. The courses have been added as approved program electives in many Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences (ALES) degree programs. SUST 201 has been added as both an Impact of Technology on Society (ITS) and Complementary Studies (CS) elective for engineering students and SUST 202 has been included as a CS elective. SUST 201 and 202 have also been included as electives in some education programs. DevDu 201 and 202, two French-language courses that cover material aligned with SUST 201 and 202, have been developed at Campus Saint-Jean. It is expected that they will start being offered at Campus Saint-Jean in the coming two academic years. Augustana will be offering a course developed from SUST 201 this coming winter. Students in the Arts and Science Faculties will have access to the SUST courses as open options in their programs. We will continue to work to expand access to these courses.

“SUST 202 provided an outlook on sustainability from a global perspective and helped me better understand today’s world and the forms of governance that have shaped it. In my program, we often look at issues locally, so having a class focused on development from diverse dimensions gave me a greater understanding of the challenges and thinking involved in building a better future.”

—Kevin Theriault, first-year undergraduate and SUST 202 student

Support for Student Research

FURCA Outstanding Sustainability Research Awards

The Festival of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (FURCA) identifies sustainability-related projects in its program, and the Sustainability Council awards up to \$500 (two \$250 prizes) for outstanding sustainability research projects.

In 2022, FURCA received 110 abstracts, of which 23 abstracts were for sustainability-related projects.

Two winners were selected by FURCA judges from the Sustainability Council for demonstrating systems thinking around the environmental, social and/or economic dimensions of sustainability.

- Bailey Brockman's project "[Homelessness and Healthcare Access: Dismantling Barriers](#)" consisted of a systemic analysis of healthcare and housing inequity and its impact on overall health outcomes.
- Maily's Paccoud's project "[How historical tree markings can help Indigenous nations win land rights](#)" focused on the possibility of using preserved culturally modified trees (CMT) as evidence for establishing Aboriginal Title in the Canadian court system.

Undergraduate Researcher Initiative Stipend

Along with the Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI) and Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy Management and Sustainable Operations), we provide students the opportunity to conduct paid, sustainability research with an on-campus focus. This year, two applications were considered for funding, and no stipends were successfully awarded. For 2022-23, we will be making a push to raise awareness of the URI Stipend to encourage students to apply.

Bailey Brockman (left) and Maily's Paccoud (right), the two winners selected for their outstanding sustainability research projects for FURCA 2022.



Support for the BA Environmental Studies Program

The BA Environmental Studies degree program, currently a partnership between the Faculties of Arts, Science and ALES, is an interdisciplinary program focused on issues of environmental sustainability. While the degree has had success in attracting and graduating students, it has struggled somewhat in terms of governance due to challenges in its institutional structure.

After reviewing similar programs elsewhere, we determined that there was untapped potential for the BA Environmental Studies degree. Working with the faculties involved, the Sustainability Council helped to re-establish the BA Environmental Studies program committee and then provided support to that committee to evaluate the current degree program and advance calendar changes to update its curriculum. Further, along with the program committee, we have supported the establishment of a student group for the Environmental Studies BA and have started assisting with student recruitment. The goal of this effort is to reinvigorate the program and to support its growth and success as one of the key interdisciplinary undergraduate degrees with a focus on issues of sustainability.

“I’m excited to see the new energy and enthusiasm for the BA Environmental Studies Program. As a fourth-year student, I see tremendous value and potential in this program.”

Scott Lye, BA
Environmental Studies
Student

Action Plan for Academic Programs for 2022-23 and Beyond

In 2022-23 and beyond, we expect to continue all of the initiatives mentioned above. Our expectation for our SUST courses in the next few years is to see hundreds of students enrolled with at least four sections of SUST 201 and two sections of SUST 202 offered each year. We anticipate steady enrolment in the Certificate in Sustainability despite our launching more rigorous program requirements in 2022-23. We will continue to support the reinvigoration of the BA Environmental Studies program, and we are confident that enrolments will begin to grow in that program over the next year and beyond.

Note that with the significant transformation of these programs and a recent restructuring of our office, we continue to work on improving the efficiency of all of our operations. One example of this is that we are seeking to establish automated academic advising for our Certificate In Sustainability students. This system would allow students to instantly check their current status in the program with regards to courses and components completed.

With regards to our efforts to support sustainability-focused programming, we have reviewed the academic opportunities at the University of Alberta and at other institutions in Canada and beyond and identified gaps in our offerings. A key part of our academic initiatives is to fill those gaps. The Certificate in Sustainability, our SUST courses, and our involvement with reinvigorating the BA Environmental Studies program are all part of this effort.

Over the next year, we will be looking to take on the following new initiatives:

1. Launching our first SUST 300 topics courses in areas where the university is lacking course options. One such topic is climate change; another is Indigenous perspectives on sustainability.
2. Integrating more Indigenous content and perspectives into our existing SUST courses.
3. Developing a proposal to establish graduate-level SUST courses. Proposal development will involve engagement across the university.
4. Developing a proposal for a graduate, sustainability-focused degree program that draws upon expertise (and participation) across the university and that offers multiple streams, filling institutional gaps.
5. Supporting emerging programs and courses across the curriculum, such as the Integrated Science Climate Change degree that is in the early stages of development in the College of Natural and Applied Sciences.
6. Exploring the establishment of a sustainability field school with Aachen University in Germany whereby we would exchange cohorts of students on a two-week course to study sustainability initiatives. This has arisen out of an existing partnership with Aachen and University of Alberta International.
7. Working with the BA Environmental Studies degree program to explore the establishment of a climate change concentration as a fourth possible specialization in their degree program.
8. Working to identify climate change-focused pathways in the Certificate in Sustainability.

We will continue to develop the details of these initiatives as our efforts move forward. For the master's degree, we have researched what other institutions are doing and examined key gaps in our own programming. We will be drafting a proposal that explores governance and operational options, and engaging with stakeholders across the university as we develop and advance the proposal.

Note that along with the academic aspects of pursuing the above initiatives, there will be concurrent work on seeking to establish the necessary institutional support to ensure that these programs are effective and remain viable in the long run. This is likely to include some level of commitment from teaching staff across the institution as well as the possible establishment of new teaching and/or faculty positions to support these new courses and programs.

There are many long-run possibilities for how the various academic initiatives are institutionally situated at the University of Alberta. Many institutions across Canada, the USA and Europe have established 'Schools' or 'Colleges' of Sustainability that house similar core courses and programs. In the coming years, this may be something that the Sustainability Council will explore. At present, we are undertaking background research that could support such an effort.

"The university is well placed to advance a number of academic sustainability initiatives which will further enhance our global leadership in this area."

Dr. Robert Summers,
Academic Director

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning connects students to their fields of study through experiences that lead to challenge, reflection and personal growth. Students engage in self-discovery and learn how to use their talents, creativity and curiosity to contribute to collective action on sustainability.

Sustainability Scholars

Sustainability Scholars are University of Alberta graduate students who complete applied research projects as part of a work placement with Edmonton-area corporate, institutional and government partners. They work directly with professional mentors, gaining real-world experience and insight into their fields of research and exploring possible career paths.

Despite the pandemic-related capacity challenges and budgetary constraints faced by many of our past community partners, we maintained a strong cohort this year. We set up 21 Scholar positions across eight organizations starting in May 2022. The positions focused on a variety of topics including research on green and solar roofs, accessibility in city parks, energy transition involving carbon markets, climate change risk assessments and more.

In the past, Sustainability Scholar projects were locked in at 250 hours total. This year, we offered our partners more flexibility. The smallest project available was 250 hours (approximately 15 hours/week), and the largest was 575 hours (35 hours/week).

To assist the partner organizations in covering the costs of their interns, we supported them in applying for the Mitacs Business Strategy Internship. For accepted projects, Mitacs matches the funding provided by partner organizations to support these student opportunities. Nine projects successfully secured funding through the Mitacs program.

We thank our 2021-2022 experiential learning partners

- Alberta Infrastructure
 - Alberta Land Institute
 - Alberta Pulse Growers Commission
 - Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions
 - Alberta Municipalities
 - Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation
 - All One Sky
 - City of Calgary
 - City of Edmonton
 - City of Lethbridge
 - Clark Builders
 - DIALOG
 - Enerflex
 - EPCOR
 - Lafarge
 - Métis Nation of Alberta
 - MD of Lesser Slave River
 - Mikisew Cree First Nation
 - Nilex
 - Olds College
 - PeerRide Inc.
 - QUEST
 - Taber Irrigation District
 - Town of Bruderheim
 - Town of Canmore
 - Town of Drayton Valley
 - Town of Okotoks
 - Town of Stony Plain
 - University of Alberta F&O
 - WaterSMART
 - Williams Engineering Canada Inc.
-

Adaptation Resilience Training Program

The Adaptation Resilience Training (ART) program is a multi-year initiative focused on deepening understanding of climate change adaptation and highlighting the relevance of adaptation across sectors and professions. The program builds climate change capacity within organizations such as municipalities, utility companies, agricultural support organizations, water resource organizations, and community organizations, while also providing recent post-secondary graduates and post-secondary students an opportunity to gain experience.

The program is funded by Alberta Environment and Parks with support from the Natural Resources Canada’s Building Regional Adaptation Capacity and Expertise (BRACE) program. After a successful cohort in 2021-22, the Sustainability Council was given a second round of funding for the program.

In the 2022 cohort, 32 interns worked full time for eight-month terms with 25 organizations across Alberta. Throughout their placements, interns devoted most of their time to climate adaptation projects within their host organizations. They also had opportunities to network with fellow ART program interns and professionals in the field. We matched recent graduates with subject matter experts and professional mentors so that they would have support as they moved through their projects.

Sustainability Scholars

Ayesha Siddika’s project focused on greenspaces in Stony Plain, AB. (left)



Roya Karimi-Boushehri focused on climate resiliency in Edmonton’s land use and mobility planning. (right)



ART Program Interns

Jayranjan Maurya’s project was on valuing ecosystem services in Edmonton. (left)



Taylor Tulissi focused on green buildings in Okotoks. (right)



Campus as a Living Lab



Making Solar-Powered Cities at the Speed of Light

Dr. Mustafa Gül helped lead a Campus as a Living Lab project mapping out [solar energy potential on University of Alberta buildings using 3D satellite imagery](#).

Campus as a Living Lab (CALL) is a collaborative program between the Sustainability Council and Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy Management and Sustainable Operations). CALL connects the University of Alberta's primary academic functions (education and research) to campus operations. It is a program that offers staff, faculty and students experiential learning and research opportunities that are focused on sustainability. These projects use the university's campuses (including grounds, buildings, biodiversity and communities) as a testing bed for innovation and knowledge generation with the aim of developing creative solutions to existing and emerging sustainability challenges. CALL relies on partnerships with many University of Alberta programs to advance opportunities for students. Programs include: Campus Sustainability Grants, which is run by E&CA (formerly EMSO), Sustainability Scholars and the Certificate in Sustainability, which are run by the Sustainability Council. The two units have advanced on defining program parameters and creating relevant intake and instructional documentation. This includes up-to-date website content.

A selection of recent project examples includes: modeling the North Campus (urban) wind environment leading to a research publication; mapping the solar photovoltaic potential of North Campus; creating a comparison of building wellness rating systems in a university environment; and investigating food-related carbon and nitrogen emissions from university food services. Research projects have continued remotely where feasible and in person following all University of Alberta health and safety guidelines where physical attendance at a lab or building was required.

Volunteer Program

100+

volunteers supported by the Sustainability Council

The Sustainability Council runs a volunteer program for students interested in being involved in sustainability-related programs and projects. We also support Sustain SU's volunteer program, which offers additional opportunities for students to engage with sustainability. These positions provide students with a range of experiences from helping to host events, to assisting with improving sustainable operations at the university, to leading small programs on their own (with oversight). Students also develop connections with peers who share similar interests, and in many cases students work alongside sustainability professionals on projects. Many of our past volunteers have identified these experiences as an important step in advancing their career goals in the field of sustainability.

Due to changes in the university's risk management procedures, updates to Sustainability Council operations, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the prioritization of virtual events, the Sustainability Council's volunteer program for undergraduate and graduate students operated in a limited capacity this year, with 32 volunteers participating. The group spans various disciplines which include: nursing, kinesiology, agriculture, business, engineering, science, education, public health, and arts.



Internships with the Sustainability Council

Sustainability Council internships offer part-time work experience to undergraduate and graduate students over the course of the academic year. Interns learn through applied project-based work, communications/marketing work, outreach activities, by leading volunteers, and through engagement with senior Sustainability Council staff and University of Alberta faculty, staff and students. Our internships are investments in promising students and frequently lead to careers in sustainability. Note that many of these internships are partially supported through external grant programs. Many of our interns are former Sustainability Council volunteers.



**Hussain Al-Rikabi,
2nd-year Intern and
MSc Immunology
Student**

In 2021-22, Hussain Al-Rikabi (MSc Immunology) returned for another year as Senior Intern - Communications and Marketing. He coordinated event helpers for Sustainability Awareness Week, managed our sustainability programming at the Alberta Student Leadership Summit, supported our Lecture Series, and managed website/social media content. Sarah Alemu, a previous Office of Sustainability intern, joined the team again in the fall of 2021 after Kaila Belovich's departure. Sarah, a Sustainable Development Goals Intern, was instrumental in completing the second Times Higher Education Impact Rankings submission and collecting/organizing additional data sets for SDG Reporting.

Some previous Office of Sustainability/Sustainability Council interns have now risen to sustainability leadership positions in organizations such as Leadnow, Creative Destruction Lab, Canadian Pacific Railway, RecycleSmart, the Government of Alberta and the University of Alberta.

Action Plan for Experiential Learning

The Sustainability Council recently established a staff position in support of sustainability-focused experiential learning. This position is for two years and is supported primarily through grant funding. Our plans are to continue to operate our existing experiential learning programs while seeking increased funding and partnerships to expand the opportunities available to students. We currently offer approximately 50-60 paid internships for students and support approximately 100 volunteer opportunities within the Sustainability Council and with Sustain SU. We have secured two additional years of funding for ART (\$2.285 million in total), which will allow us to continue these adaptation-focused work placements through 2023-24.

We are working towards integrating our programs with work-integrated learning opportunities on campus, such as Arts Work Experience, the Engineering Co-op Program and the Science Internship Program. One step we have taken in this regard is to work with our ART partners to allow not only recent graduates into the program, but also current post-secondary students.

A key responsibility of our Experiential Learning Coordinator will be to identify and pursue funding and partnership opportunities to sustain and expand our ability to offer these experiential learning opportunities. Options for funding include large partnerships such as the ART program, smaller partnerships directly with employers, philanthropic support, and smaller individualized grants such as those provided by Mitacs and EcoCanada.



Engagement and Events

Sustainability Council events connect students, staff, faculty and anyone interested in sustainability; they raise awareness of sustainability and the SDGs while empowering researchers to disseminate knowledge to new audiences; and they encourage engagement with the exemplary sustainability-related work being done at the University of Alberta.

42

sustainability
events in
2021/22

Of all of our initiatives, those related to engagement and events have been the most impacted by the ongoing pandemic. With that noted, we have continued to adapt by moving most of our initiatives online and found success in new ways that allowed us to offer our largest slate of events, and draw in large and geographically diverse audiences.

These initiatives include Sustainability Awareness Week, our online Lecture Series, the Alberta Student Leadership Summit (ASLS), and an annual SDG-focused International Week event held in partnership with University of Alberta International (UAI) and the City of Edmonton.

Sustainability Awareness Week

Held annually since 2008, Sustainability Awareness Week (SAW) presents five days of engagement and learning opportunities for the campus and surrounding community. This week-long event series focuses the campus community's attention on sustainability issues. The Sustainability Council plans, coordinates and promotes SAW, and our partners deliver roughly half the events. By providing student groups as well as campus and community partners the opportunity to present their work, we are also building the capacity of university and community sustainability champions.

SAW was held Oct. 25-29, 2021. The theme for SAW 2021 was: "Resilience, Intentionality, and Uplifting Our World," with specific emphasis on diving deeper into the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The aim was to elevate participants' knowledge of sustainability initiatives, research and issues.

This year, the Sustainability Council increased awareness of the SDGs by highlighting how each event was connected to a particular goal. Each day featured three to four events connected to one or more of the SDGs. SAW events covered a total of 10 different SDGs. Six events were connected to SDG 3-Good Health and Well-being, while SDG 2-Zero Hunger and SDG 11-Sustainable Cities and Communities were connected to five events each. The rest were connected to a range of two to four events.

More than
2400
attendees

107

students
presented
their work

Lecture Series

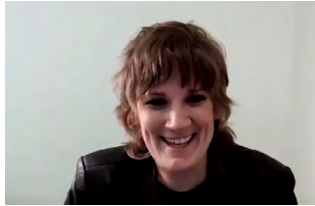
Some of our lectures this year:



**Val Napoleon -
Indigenous Law and
Public Legal Education**

The Sustainability Lecture Series continued to grow in 2021-22, becoming one of our primary event series. With the guidance and input of the Sustainability Council Research Steering Committee, we brought a variety of speakers to our audience.

Sustainability Council staff have become experts at delivering online events smoothly and effectively. This year we took advantage of the online format by bringing in a greater number of speakers from outside Alberta, including higher-profile speakers such as Indigenous legal scholar Val Napoleon and sustainable fashion blogger and activist Aditi Mayer. Our audience reach expanded as well. While most of our attendees are University of Alberta students, staff and faculty, we also reached over 200 community members. Not all of our audience was in Alberta either; our talks were attended virtually by over 100 people outside of Canada.



**Stephanie Chute-Ibsen
- Dishing the Dirt on
Soil Invertebrates and
Sustainability**

We also expanded our programming through partnerships. We provided support and funding to external organizations when we sponsored Kate Raworth, the Parkland Institute's fall conference keynote speaker. We also provided funding and promotional support to the University of Alberta Drama Department's climate change theater action series. We worked to create events which were both interesting and relevant to attendees, including hosting a climate-focused mayoral candidates debate in the run-up to the 2021 Edmonton municipal election. In the spring, we collaborated for the book launch of *Right Research: Modeling Sustainable Research Practices in the Anthropocene*. We also worked to expand the disciplinary range of our speakers, paying special attention to host speakers from the STEM fields, such as Jude Kong and Ginger Gibson. Our 14 events this year drew in an audience of approximately 1200 and featured 18 speakers.

International Week



**Sherilee Harper
- Climate Change
and Public Health;
International Panel on
Climate Change Report**

International Week (I-Week) is an annual event organized by University of Alberta International's (UAI) Global Education Program. I-Week hosts a variety of speakers and presenters who draw participants' attention to international issues and the SDGs. The Sustainability Council partners annually with UAI to provide funding and organizational leadership for one of the I-Week keynote speakers.

This year we were pleased to bring economist Stephanie Kelton as the opening virtual keynote for I-Week 2022. Sustainability Council staff were the lead coordinators for this event, which was jointly funded by the Sustainability Council, UAI and a grant from the City of Edmonton. This sold-out event was attended by 260 people.

Alberta Student Leadership Summit

Since 2021, the Student Sustainability Summit has been integrated as a Sustainability Stream of the Alberta Student Leadership Summit (ASLS). This year, the Sustainability Stream sessions covered topics such as fair trade, mental health and leadership, climate organizing, marine climate science, and sustainable employment. The Sustainability Stream of the ASLS conference aims to provide students with the tools, resources and networks they need to join the next generation of sustainability leaders.

ASLS 2022 was a four day, nationwide leadership conference open to both high school and post-secondary students. The theme was Sustaining Momentum, and the sessions included topics from four streams: sustainability, community organizing, governance and leadership fundamentals. Prominent Indigenous leaders presented both the opening and closing ceremonies as well as a keynote speech. In addition to the Sustainability Council providing funding for the event, there were two Sustainability Council-run sessions in which Certificate in Sustainability students presented their projects and a separate session in which ASLS attendees were invited to play an interactive sustainability Kahoot! game.

The 13th annual summit took place from Jan. 26-29, 2022. Two hundred sixty-three people registered online. There were 60 speakers in total, including the lunch sessions, and a total of 27 hours of programming throughout the week.

Students presented their “Three Minute CIS” talks at the ASLS



Aadhavya Sivakumaran



Alyssa Schatz



Hannah Holzer

**Additional presenters
(photos missing):**

Matthew Elphick

Victoria Meeker

Wongani Munthali



Ilahinoor Mehta



Madelyn Smith



Matthew Boonstra

LEADERSHIP AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

As one of Canada's leading universities, the University of Alberta has an important role to play in the transition to a more sustainable world. As a unit, the Sustainability Council works to ingrain the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and sustainability into our governance, research and teaching.

Reporting, Reputation and Rankings

The Sustainability Council undertakes sustainability reporting and tracking through the Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) and through co-leading the annual submission to the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings (IR). Our being ranked 11th in the world out of more than 1400 institutions for our contribution to the SDGs was a highlight for the Sustainability Council as it allowed us to celebrate the impact that our researchers and students are having at a local and on a global scale.

STARS is led by Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy Management and Sustainable Operations) and both the Sustainability Council and E&CA (formerly EMSO) collaborate closely on this reporting effort that involves both units' staff. As of 2020 the university has maintained its gold rating and the next submission is slated for 2023.

The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings (IR) seek to capture and assess world universities' success in advancing and delivering the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For the IR, the university successfully submitted data for all 17 SDGs. This year we jumped from 64th place to 11th place out of more than 1,400 universities worldwide. For both submissions, the dedicated submission team was composed of key Sustainability Council and University of Alberta International (UAI) staff, who collaborated with E&CA (formerly EMSO) primarily in data gathering with Facilities and Operations.

There are several benefits to using the IR to publicly identify and publicize the university's efforts in advancing the SDGs. These include:

- Enhancing the university's reputation and performance in other rankings.
- Providing university leadership with an additional sustainability tracking and reporting mechanism.
- Driving internal momentum for sustainability research and initiatives.
- Helping to raise awareness of the SDGs across the institution.

SDG Working Group

In September of 2019, the Sustainability Council and UAI formed an SDG Working Group. The goals of this group are to highlight SDG-related work happening at the university and to build broad awareness about the goals on campus. More recently, E&CA (formerly EMSO) has joined the working group.

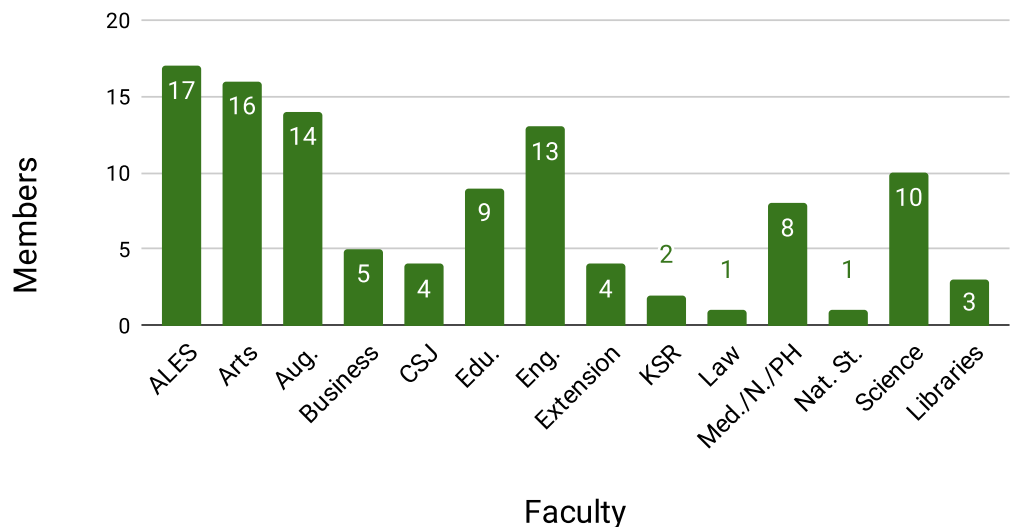
The activities of the Working Group in the last year include, amongst others: elevating the importance of the SDGs at the university; profiling the IR results institutionally; advancing SDG priorities on campus (e.g. communications, reporting, etc); strengthening partnerships and collaborations (on and off campus); launching the SDG Info Hub; and supporting students who are engaged in SDG work. Furthermore, the SDG Student Alliance was officially formed as a new student club/group. It has close to a dozen engaged students.

Affiliate Network

Launched in the fall of 2019, the Sustainability Council’s Affiliate Network is an interdisciplinary community of academics ranging across all disciplines and career stages who are integrating sustainability into their teaching and research and looking to connect and collaborate with like-minded academics and researchers. Joining the network allows affiliates to receive notices about opportunities for funding, networking, collaboration, and opportunities to be involved with Sustainability Council programs.

The Sustainability Council is raising the profile of sustainability research at the University of Alberta, and affiliates have the opportunity to be featured in articles and videos that are shared on the Sustainability Council’s various media channels to an audience across the university and beyond. As we return to more normal, in-person operations, the affiliates will be given more opportunities for interaction, such as research forums, networking socials, charrettes and working groups. The Sustainability Council is uniquely placed to build bridges across disciplines.

Affiliates by Faculty



Campus Sustainability Grants

The Campus Sustainability Grants program is funded by recouped energy savings and managed by E&CA (formerly EMSO). Supported projects fit into the “campus as a living lab” model of using university infrastructure and programming as a test bed for sustainability innovation. The Sustainability Council supports the program with promotions and a seat on the adjudication committee. Details about some of the funded projects can be found on the E&CA (formerly EMSO) website. Some of the grants provided this year are as follows:

- We’re Ready! Community Disaster Preparedness pilot workshop
- Advancing Sustainability in the Undergraduate Organic Chemistry Laboratories
- Sustainable LED Lighting in the Fine Arts Building Gallery
- Indigenous Language Revitalization in Schools (Cree)
- Eco-friendly management of the invasive European elm scale on campus
- Water Recirculation in Undergrad Inorganic Chemistry
- X-Cite Mercury to LED light upgrade for microscope
- Campus Alberta Student Conference on Health

Kule Scholar Program

The Sustainability Council partnered with the Kule Institute to support the first iteration of their Kule Scholar Program with a focus on Climate Resilience in the 21st Century. Five scholars received support so that they could collaborate to explore “Climate Resilience in the 21st Century” and share their work with others. A series of lectures and events were supported through this program, including the following events (some of which were jointly offered with our Lecture Series).

- Dr. Fiona Foley: Art, Activism, and Global Crisis - Nov. 2021
- Climate Change Theatre Action - Nov. 2021
- Sherilee Harper: Discussion on the IPCC report - Mar. 2022
- Public Talk and workshop by Dr. Theresa May on Ecodramaturgy, Climate Theatre, and Engaging Decolonization in the Classroom and on Stage - Feb. 2022
- Care Work & Post Carbon Futures - May 2022
- Ecofeminist Degrowth & Feminist Green New Deal - May 2022



Campus Sustainability Leaders Awards

The Campus Sustainability Leaders Awards (CSLA) are presented annually by the Sustainability Council and E&CA (formerly EMSO). Awarded since 2012, this program recognizes engaged students, faculty and staff for their dedication, impact and active citizenship within the campus community. These outstanding individuals all contribute to building a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable world. Recognition affirms the work that often happens behind the scenes and under the radar, and it inspires the next generation to follow in these footsteps. Past winners come from various disciplines and demonstrate the wide array of champions, innovators and change agents contributing to a brighter and more sustainable tomorrow both on campus and within the far-reaching community.

This year we received a total of 15 nominations. Four volunteer judges participated in the awards adjudication committee, namely one student, one full-time staff and two faculty. Sustainability Council and E&CA (formerly EMSO) staff also sat on the committee.

The committee met twice to review the nominations and decide on the winners in each category: student, support staff and faculty. The winners were selected at the committee meeting on Mar. 25, 2022 and officially announced mid-April 2022.

For the first time this year, we presented two of the university's outstanding students with the Michael Rawson Clark award in commemoration of the late sustainability champion. Michael's contributions to campus sustainability have been detailed on our [Medium page](#).

The 2022 CSLA Winners are listed below:

- **Greg King** - environmental science professor at the University of Alberta Augustana Campus.
- **Emily Williams** - second-year education student and co-host of *Becoming Less*, a podcast by Waste Free Edmonton that is focused on sustainability. (Michael Rawson Clark)
- **Debbie Preston** - the BioSci storeroom administrator at UAlberta North Campus.
- **Priscilla Ojomu** - third year psychology student and a member of the ACGC's Global Connect Program. (Michael Rawson Clark)

CSLA Winners

Emily Williams (top left)
and Debbie Preston
(top right)

Greg King (bottom left)
and Priscilla Ojomu
(bottom right)



Key Partnerships

The Sustainability Council acts as a key connector with regards to sustainability across campus. On campus, we engage with university leadership centrally as well as at the college, faculty and department levels. We also partner with Facilities and Operations, UAI and other groups such as the Kule Institute.

We then connect the university with others through our membership in the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), a nonprofit with global reach; the Energy Transition Leadership Network (City of Edmonton led); and the Canadian College and University Environmental Network (national). The university is an institutional member of SDSN, and faculty, staff and students can utilize tools like SDSN Mobilize and the SDG Academy to connect, learn and seek funding opportunities. The Sustainability Council participates in SDSN Canada's member meetings; creates member relationships; seeks new opportunities for University of Alberta faculty, staff and students; and gains knowledge of best practices.

Further, we maintain a network of external partners, including NGOs, private companies, activists, municipalities and others, for our various programs. We frequently help bridge connections between our researchers, students and these groups.

Action Plan for Sustainability Leadership and Active Citizenship

Over the next year and beyond we expect to continue the initiatives outlined above. We have established a new position, SDG Engagement Lead, to help advance these initiatives and to expand our efforts to support SDG integration across the university as a whole.

Our efforts at promoting awareness of the SDGs on campus, applying to the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, and building relationships and partnerships both on and off campus have set the Sustainability Council up for further success in this area. Over the past year, we have been engaged with university leadership regarding the need to advance a Climate Action Strategy for the institution. This fall, in partnership with others, we expect to push that initiative forward.

We will continue to work with leadership across the university to ensure that sustainability and the SDGs play a central role in institutional strategic planning. Continuing and expanding our commitments to sustainability in our institutional plan is critical for the long-term success of the university's sustainability efforts.

Over the past year, we established a small SDG Info Hub that outlines some of the key contributions that the university has made towards advancing the SDGs. We have recently been working with both the Strategic Communications and External Relations offices at the university to expand this initiative to create a much more comprehensive 'one-stop shop' for all things SDG related at the institution including: our stories (media stories); research labs, centres, institutes and projects; our institutional initiatives; and our courses and programs.

The SDG Info Hub will provide visitors to our website with a quick way to identify what research and other efforts are taking place at the University of Alberta for any SDG they are interested in. Note that this effort is being developed from data that we already collect for other purposes, so the creation of the online info hub is limited to the communications and digital work itself.

As noted above, our affiliate network effort has been limited in the past few years, but this year we look to bring people together (either in-person or online) to help to break down the barriers across our institution. Our new SDG Engagement Lead, along with our Academic Director, will be spearheading this effort.

As we look to the long term (beyond this next year) we are exploring other possible actions for the Sustainability Council. One such initiative could be to support the development of research groups and the production of working papers that help to disseminate knowledge from our academic community to policy makers, NGOs and the public at large regarding issues of sustainability. The School of Public Policy at the University of Calgary does this very effectively (though not with a sustainability focus). A similar initiative here at the University of Alberta with a sustainability focus could be an effective way to help researchers more directly share their work with a broader audience. Such an effort could be part of a newly-formed School of Sustainability or similar initiative.

Finally, we look forward to continuing to establish strong relationships with faculty, students and others across campus as we build momentum to support our institution's commitment to the SDGs at all levels. Relationships and communication are an important part of this. If you are interested in connecting, please reach out to us. We would be happy to hear from you. Our contact information is below.

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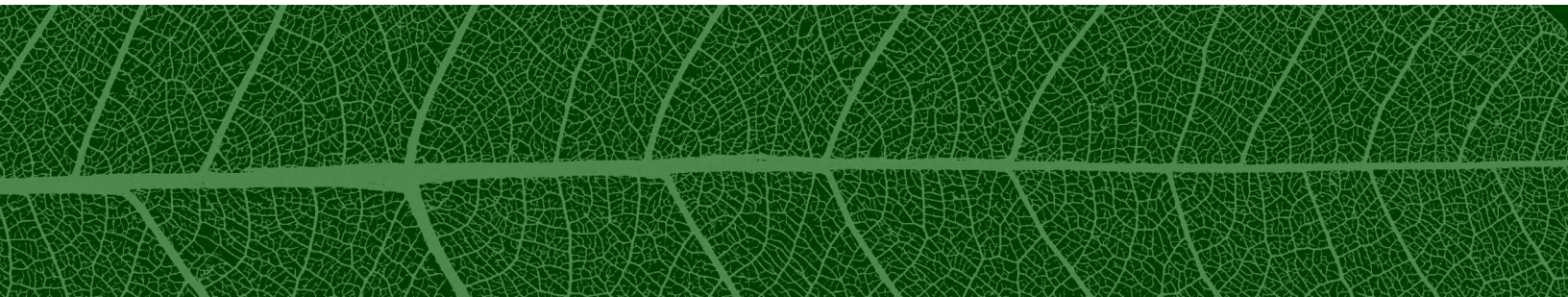


**Sustainability
Council office staff**

Back row, left to right: Riley Tjosvold, Maja Osmanagić, Jasmine Farahbakhsh, Apryl Bergstrom, Robert Summers

Front row, left to right: Akanksha Yeola, Bonnie Luo, Carolina Neri Mercado, Molly Thomas, Elyse Fortier, Hussain Al-Rikabi

Missing: Justis Allard-Hagan



Leading with Purpose.



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