



**UNIVERSITY  
OF ALBERTA**



2023-24

# Annual Report

Sustainability Council

# Sustainability Council Members



**Robert Summers,**  
Academic Director



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



**Arlene Oak,**  
Academic Advisor for the  
Certificate in Sustainability



**Greg King**



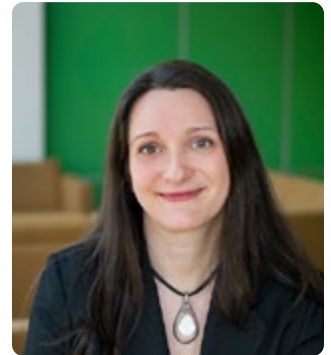
**Ken Caine**



**Lianne Lefsrud**



**Anita Dey Nuttall**



**Candace Nykiforuk**



**Guillermo Hernandez  
Ramirez**



**Matthew Wildcat**



**Rhonda Breitreuz**

# Table of Contents

<b>Our Mission</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Message from the Academic Director</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Academics</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Experiential Learning</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Engagement and Events</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Leadership and Active Citizenship</b> .....	<b>27</b>



# The Sustainability Council is an academic leadership unit that works with all faculties to **spark learning, discovery, and citizenship for sustainability.**

Students gain access to courses and hands-on learning experiences that lead to impactful careers. We develop and support sustainability-focused programs and courses across the University and also create opportunities for academics to engage in central discussions on researching and teaching sustainability issues.

**The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.**

# Message from the Academic Director

**It's been another great year for sustainability at the University of Alberta! We are proud to rank 6<sup>th</sup> (out of 2,152 institutions) globally in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings (THE IR) and 28<sup>th</sup> globally (out of 1,395 institutions) in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Sustainability Rankings. These achievements highlight our commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**



**CHECK OUT OUR  
SDG INFO HUB**



I am pleased to note that our academic programs are continuing to do well. The Certificate in Sustainability continues to have more than 500 students enrolled. Interest in our sustainability (SUST) courses such as SUST 201 and 202 remains high, with both courses nearly at full capacity this year. As the instructor for SUST 201, I have observed the section was full with 300 students, which really made for an exciting and engaged class. If all goes well, we will start to offer both Fall and Winter sections for these courses. Additionally, the Master's of Sustainability degree is in the proposal stage with College of Natural and Applied Sciences (CNAS) as the key partner. We are hoping to launch that degree, along with the associated graduate SUST classes, by Fall 2025.

On the experiential learning front, we continued to deliver the Adaptation Resilience Training program, which offered 27 full-time, eight-month internships in climate change adaptation to recent graduates and current students. We were also very pleased to see our Sustainability Scholars continuing to do great work with students undertaking applied research projects with a number of different employers. We continue to look for new opportunities to expand our student internship programs in sustainability.

I want to take a moment to thank Riley Tjosvold, Hussain Al-Rikabi, Elyse Fortier, and Justis Allard-Hagan for their contributions over the past few years as they have moved on to new opportunities. I want to welcome Shannon Heaney and Evonne Tran who have joined us in the last few months. We have an absolutely fantastic group of staff who are key players in all of the success that the Sustainability Council has had over the years.

Lastly, I want to discuss the year ahead. After spending a few years building the groundwork, we are pushing forward with a transformational agenda. Our goal is to harness the strengths of the institution in advancing sustainability-focused education. The new Master's in Sustainability degree is a part of this, but we are also supporting a number of programs on campus that have a strong focus on sustainability as well as other programs seeking to integrate more sustainability learning into their curriculum. It is an exciting time for us, and we look forward to engaging with folks across the University. We welcome your engagement and encourage you to reach out to us.

Sincerely,

**Robert J. Summers**

# Academics

**An important part of the Sustainability Council's mission is to support sustainability-focused learning. To achieve this goal we work with departments and programs across campus to support sustainability teaching and learning in their programs; additionally, we develop and offer sustainability-focused programs and courses.**

Some of our key initiatives include the Certificate in Sustainability, our sustainability (SUST) courses, support for sustainability-focused student research, support for the reinvigoration of the BA Environmental Studies Degree program, and the development of a new course-based Master's of Sustainability degree.

## 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 publicly. The Certificate in Sustainability is a valuable credential for any student wanting to kick-start a career or pursue graduate studies in sustainability.

Students enrolled in the Certificate in Sustainability are required to complete one core course, one focused course, two related courses, an integrative project, and a presentation. They must also attend 12 hours of approved sustainability lectures, tracked using an online Google form.

As part of their certificate requirements, students presented their integrative projects to various audiences through in-person posters or oral presentations at several events. These included the *Foundations Summit for Sustainability & Leadership* (October 2023), *Agri-Food Innovation Student Pitch Competition* (November 2023), *Festival of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities* (March 2024), *Campus Sustainability Leaders Awards* (April 2024), and *Augustana's Student Academic Conference* (December 2023). Throughout the year, many

students also completed Instagram and YouTube video presentations that were featured on the Sustainability Council's social media channels. Each of these online and in-person presentation opportunities offered students the chance to share their work and meaningfully engage with a broader audience.

Throughout the academic year, we maintain communication with enrolled students through email and a regular newsletter. These communications include important dates for certificate completion and showcase opportunities for students to participate in sustainability initiatives. We also conduct frequent online information sessions to educate both current and prospective students about the significant benefits and requirements of the Certificate in Sustainability.

The academic advisors play a vital role in ensuring the success of the certificate students. They were very busy throughout the 2023-24 academic year. From July 1, 2023 to May 15, 2024, 133 students were assigned to the advisors. Since certificate students come from across the University, there are several academic advisors on

the North Campus, Campus Saint-Jean and Augustana. In the Fall 2023 term, we onboarded a new academic advisor for Augustana, Varghese Manaloor (Augustana – Social Sciences), who replaced Brandon Alakas. Guillermo Hernandez Ramirez (Renewable Resources, ALES), Arlene Oak (Human Ecology, ALES), Natacha Louis (Campus Saint-Jean), and Sarah Pelletier (Campus Saint-Jean) are the other academic advisors, and they continued to support our students as they advanced their integrative projects over the 2023-24 academic year. Howie Harshaw, the certificate’s associate director, supported the program by providing guidance, reviewing course addition and exception requests, and hosting meetings with the academic advisors.

In the 2023-24 academic year, 94 students successfully completed all certificate requirements and graduated with the Certificate in Sustainability.

**CERTIFICATE ENROLMENT BY FACULTY**

Most certificate students belong to the faculties of Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences (ALES), Arts, Engineering and Science. Fewer students are from Augustana, the Alberta School of Business, Campus Saint-Jean, Education, Kinesiology, Sport & Recreation (KSR), and Native Studies. We are actively working to increase enrolments in these underrepresented faculties.

We are working with the College of Natural and Applied Sciences (CNAS) to set up the Certificate in Sustainability in the Academic Advisement Report (AAR) tool, which will enable students to automatically track the completion of certificate requirements. We expect that the certificate will be set up in AAR by the Fall 2024 term.

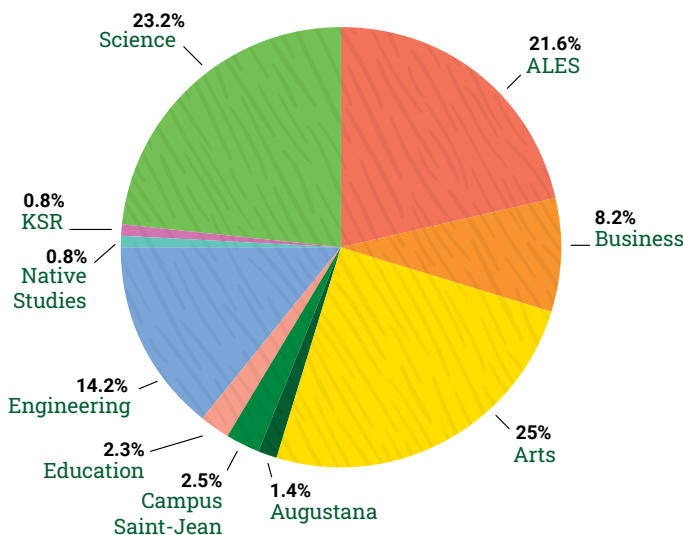


Figure 1. Certificate enrolment by faculty in the 2023-24 academic year.

**STUDENT INTEGRATIVE PROJECTS IN 2023-24**

45

Instagram presentations and YouTube videos shared on our official social media accounts.

**Disclosure or Deception? A Word Frequency Analysis of Sustainability Reports** by Evan Saunders

**The Role of Intergenerational and Multi-Family Housing in Sustainability** by Hussein Awada

**Remediation to Reconciliation: The Incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge in Land Remediation Engineering in Canada** by Jared Oakes

I took SUST 202 and participated in the Community Service Learning (CSL) placement. This course widened my perspective on the importance and challenges of sustainability that I can apply in both my personal and professional life. The quality of education I received through both the course and CSL placement will always stick out as a highlight of my undergraduate degree.

Taylor Martin, BSc in chemistry and biology, Third-year student



# Sustainability Course Offerings

## 2023-24 HIGHLIGHTS

- Students from **over 30 different degree programs** enrolled in SUST 201 and 202
- Approximately **355 students enrolled** in SUST 201 and 202 in 2023-24 and **surpasses 370 students** for the 2024-25 year
- **Three offerings each of SUST 201 and SUST 202, and one offering of SUST 300** in the last three academic years

One of the ways that the Sustainability Council has bolstered sustainability learning on campus is launching new sustainability (SUST) courses, the first of which went live in Fall 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 they introduce students to alternative ways that scholars and policymakers approach such challenges.

During the last three academic years (2020-21 through 2023-24), the Sustainability Council developed and offered its first suite of SUST courses, including three offerings each of SUST 201 and SUST 202, and one offering of SUST 300.

## SUSTAINABILITY COURSES

### **Introduction to Sustainability**

**SUST 201**

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.

### **Global Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals**

**SUST 202**

This course critically examines the evolution of development, sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Multiple dimensions and actors in international development are covered. Students are able to gain an understanding of the interconnectedness of the SDGs and the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development.

### **Topics in Sustainability**

**SUST 300**

Topics for this course vary and it may be taken more than once for credit provided no topic is repeated.

### **Directed Study in Sustainability**

**SUST 410**

Directed research or study in an area of sustainability defined by the student and a supervising instructor. It may be used to fill the integrative project requirement of the Certificate in Sustainability. Registration requires approval of the Sustainability Council.

Collectively, about 355 students enrolled in SUST 201 and 202 in 2023-24, and the courses were very well received by students. Both courses were nearly at full capacity. We are working on offering additional sections in future years to meet the growing demand for sustainability courses. The first SUST 300 course, which was on the topic of Environmental Conflict and Social Ecological Systems, was offered in Fall 2023. Enrolments for the 2024-25 Fall and Winter terms for SUST 201 and 202 are now over 370 students. We are hoping to be able to offer an additional section of SUST 201 in the Winter 2025 semester for the first time.

An integral component of our strategy involves facilitating students' access to these courses within their respective degree programs. To achieve this goal, we have collaborated extensively with programs



and departments university-wide to incorporate these courses as core requirements or approved options for students across disciplines. Our efforts have yielded overwhelmingly positive responses from nearly all the programs and departments with which we engaged. Consequently, several programs underwent modifications in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 academic calendars to integrate SUST courses.

The two SUST courses (201 and 202) are core courses in the BA Environmental Studies degree program, core courses in the Certificate in Sustainability, and electives in the Certificate in International Learning and Certificate in Global Citizenship. The courses were added as approved program electives in many Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences (ALES) degree programs (e.g., BSc Agriculture – Sustainable Agricultural Systems and BSc Agriculture – Animal Science). SUST 201 was added as both an Impact of Technology on Society (ITS) and Complementary Studies (CS) elective for engineering students, and SUST 202 was included as a CS elective. SUST 201 and 202 are electives in the Elementary Education program, and SUST 201 is an elective in several Secondary Education programs (e.g., Major teaching subject in Biology, Chemistry and General Science) and Science programs (e.g., Biological Sciences Major/ Mathematical Sciences Minor). Students in the Arts and Science Faculties will have access to the SUST courses as open options in their programs. As a testament to these efforts and the wide interest and reach of these courses, students in SUST 201 and 202 came from more than 30 different degree programs across the University. We will continue to work to expand access to these courses.

DEVDU 201 and 202, two French-language courses that cover material aligned with SUST 201 and 202, have been developed at Campus Saint-Jean. DEVDU 201 was offered at Campus Saint-Jean for the first time in Spring 2023. DEVDU 202 was cross-listed with SC PO 364/SOCIE 364 in Fall 2023. Augustana updated AUENV 220 in Winter 2023 to become more of an introduction to sustainability, and it added some content from SUST 201 and 202.

In the Winter 2024 term, 10 SUST 202 students participated in Community Service-Learning (CSL) placements with three organizations. Students stocked shelves and provided client support at the Campus

Food Bank, designed a social marketing campaign, and created social media content for the Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology (CAWST). Additionally, students who volunteered for the Climate Change and Global Health Research Group presented to fifth-grade students on climate change and public health and brainstormed networking events for the organization's Climate Conversation Series. Students reported that their CSL placements offered valuable and engaging experiences, allowing them to apply course concepts and develop skills outside the classroom.

Next up will be the development and launching of new graduate level SUST courses. These are expected to be in place for Fall of 2025 and will be available to graduate students across the University.

## Sustainability/ Sustainable Development Goals Across the Curriculum

The Sustainability Council continues to work on the integration of sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across academic disciplines. This includes the rollout of a small pilot grant for Sustainability Across the Curriculum, SDG integration across curricula, the delivery of SDG-themed guest lectures, and the upcoming engagement for undergraduate programs that address environmental sustainability.

In 2023-24, we disbursed two \$5,000 Sustainability Across the Curriculum pilot grants to Lianne Lefsrud (Chemical and Materials Engineering) and Jeff Birchall (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences).

Lianne is working on rolling out a practical Sustainable Design course, namely ENG M 680 / CME 494/694 / H GEO 581. In the course students will work in



**2024 FURCA award winners for outstanding sustainability research, from L to R: John-Paul Cooper, Mason D'Souza, Jacey Brassington, Hussain Alhussainy and Rian Hoyla.**

multi-disciplinary teams on a sustainable design project to positively impact the local community. It focuses on translating the SDGs into real-world applications through lectures and collaboration with local subject matter experts alongside guided practice with sustainable development tools. Promotions are currently underway to boost enrolment and the course is expected to be offered for the first time in the Winter 2025 term.

Jeff is working on rolling out a practical planning course, namely PLAN 485: Advanced Topics in Planning: Climate Change Adaptation for Communities. The objective of the course is to provide students with an opportunity to explore some of the practical and nuanced characteristics of climate change adaptation as it relates to urban and regional planning, and community wellbeing more broadly. Planning is currently underway for this course.

As part of *Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week*, we held a panel discussion titled, *Building SDGs Into Curriculum*. The panelists represented a cross-section of faculty members who have integrated the SDGs into their curricula. They included: Breanne Aylward, Public Health; Greg King, Augustana; Leo Wong, Business; and Mustafa Gül, Engineering. The panelists discussed their initial steps in integrating SDGs, shared key takeaways from

the process, and offered ideas on how to help bring the content to life in the classroom.

The Sustainability Council's project planner – SDG Engagement worked on integrating SDG content in the classroom through the delivery of SDG-themed guest lectures. Both lectures were delivered in Winter 2024 and spanned different disciplinary areas. One lecture was for the Augustana course, AUENV 220 (Applications in Sustainability) and focused on SDG reporting and rankings. The other lecture was for NU FS 377 (Introduction to Population and Public Health Nutrition), and centered around University of Alberta programs that address SDG 2 – Zero Hunger.

Over the next year, we will be engaging with undergraduate programs across campus that address environmental sustainability. We plan to facilitate discussions based upon the idea of being 'One University' where programs become increasingly aware of one another and, ideally, where they coordinate their course offerings and facilitate access into courses for one another. In addition to improving access and the breadth of our offerings, we expect that new partnerships could form to allow for more program specializations and even new programs forming.

## Support for Student Research

### FESTIVAL OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES OUTSTANDING SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH AWARDS

The *Festival of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (FURCA)* is the annual campus-wide celebration of undergraduate research. Organized by the Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI) team, the event showcases the research and creative achievements of undergraduate students across all disciplines. As an annual sponsor and collaborator, the Sustainability Council identifies sustainability-focused projects across all faculties and awards up to \$250 per project for outstanding research in sustainability.

In 2024, *FURCA* received 139 abstracts, 27 of which were for sustainability-related projects.

*FURCA 2024* was held from March 12–14, 2024. Two judges from the Sustainability Council selected three outstanding projects, resulting in a total of five winners. These projects showcased innovative approaches and integrated systems thinking across the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability. The 2024 winning projects and their respective winners are:

- **Mason D'Souza** who conducted a study to quantify the emissions associated with the pyrolysis of Polyvinyl Chloride, identifying an important research gap related to the widespread practice of burning plastic waste.
- **Jacey Brassington and John-Paul Cooper** who used rigorous methodology to identify air quality concerns

for commuters using the Edmonton Light Rail Transit system.

- **Hussain Alhussainy and Rian Hoyla** who examined the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals from a critical disabilities perspective, highlighting a lack of consideration for the perspectives and challenges of people with disabilities in achieving these goals.

## Support for the BA Environmental Studies Program

The BA in Environmental Studies, a partnership between the Faculties of Arts, Science, and Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences (ALES), is an interdisciplinary degree program focused on environmental sustainability. Although the degree has successfully attracted and graduated students, it has faced governance challenges due to its complex institutional structure.

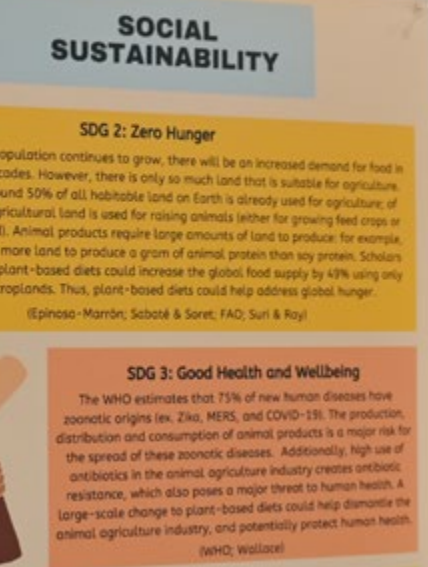
After reviewing similar programs elsewhere, we determined that there was untapped potential for the BA Environmental Studies degree. Working with the faculties involved in the program, the Sustainability Council helped re-establish the BA Environmental Studies program committee and provided the committee with support to evaluate the current degree program and advance calendar changes to update its curriculum; the calendar changes were incorporated in the 2023-24 academic calendar.

We promoted the program during the *Week of Welcome*

The sustainability emphasis in my degree has inspired me to pursue careers in environmental policy and land-use planning, and consider a master's degree. Graduating without a set career path can be daunting, but I find the diverse opportunities for Environmental Studies graduates incredibly rewarding due to the valuable transferable skills gained.

Maren Miller, BA environmental studies, Graduated June 2024





**Hannah Rennie, a Certificate in Sustainability student who had presented her integrative project with a poster during Celebrate Sustainability 2024.**

Photo credit: Hussain Al-Rikabi

and *Open House* events. Additionally, we supported the Environmental Studies Students Association (ESSA), which serves students enrolled in the Environmental Studies program through the Arts and ALES faculties. Established in September 2022, ESSA aims to foster a sense of community and bring together students within the program. The Sustainability Council co-organized a pizza gathering in September 2023, which enabled Environmental Studies students to meet members of ESSA, the program committee, and other Environmental Studies students.

During *International Week (I-Week)*, ESSA collaborated with the Council and University of Alberta International on an *I-Week* keynote panel. Additional details on this collaboration are available in the section below dedicated to *I-Week*.

## Course Based Master's of Sustainability Degree

In partnership with the College of Natural and Applied Sciences, a steering committee was formed in May 2023 to begin planning and developing an interdisciplinary, course-based sustainability master's program that includes several streams. We are currently nearing the completion of a proposal for a new program and expect to have some components of this in place as early as Fall of 2025. This program will have tremendous impact and will draw upon our expertise across the institution. While the four core sustainability courses will be offered through the Sustainability Council, the concentration courses will be offered by units across the institution.

**The Certificate in Sustainability (CIS) gave me an interdisciplinary perspective on climate change, complementing my Commerce background in Natural Resources, Energy, and the Environment. It deepened my understanding of the economic, environmental, social, and equity considerations crucial to real-world climate strategies. I have no doubt this experience helped me secure a position on the City of Edmonton's climate team.**

Ron MacLean, BCom in natural resource energy and the environment, Graduated 2024



# 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.



2023-24 ART and Sustainability Scholars Program Highlights

24

partner organizations

37

interns

34k+

experiential learning hours worked

## 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, non-profit, 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.

In 2023, we continued our partnership with Mitacs by facilitating applications for the Mitacs Business Strategy Internship (BSI) program. The BSI program offers two matching funding options: \$10,000 and \$15,000. For accepted projects, the partner organization contributes \$5,000 or \$7,500, respectively, and Mitacs matches this funding. For Spring/Summer 2023, we established 12 scholar positions with four different hosts, 11 of which were funded by Mitacs. These positions cover a range of topics, including the role of micro-mobility in city planning with the City of Edmonton, beaver management in the City's natural areas, greenhouse gas data metrics and analysis with O'Hanlon Paving, and a review of construction, renovation, and demolition waste best practices with the Town of Canmore. The Sustainability Council

serves as the employer for Sustainability Scholars, reducing the administrative burden for our hosts. According to our established wage rate, scholars would work approximately 359 hours on \$10,000 Mitacs projects and 539 hours on \$15,000 Mitacs projects. However, there is one exception: the Enerflex project titled *Assessment of Green Hydrogen Production Technologies* was fully funded by the host organization and not supported by Mitacs.

## Adaptation Resilience Training

The Adaptation Resilience Training (ART) program is primarily supported by Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (AEPA) and administered by the Sustainability Council. ART is a multi-year initiative focused on deepening our understanding of climate change adaptation and highlighting the relevance of adaptation across diverse 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 current post-secondary students an opportunity to gain experience.

After a successful cohort in 2021-22, the Sustainability Council received additional funding for the program allowing for two further cohorts, namely cohorts 3.0 and 4.0. The fourth cohort of ART project assistants were hired between September and November 2023. In the 2023-24 cohort, 27 project assistants worked with 19 organizations across Alberta for a duration of eight months. Their work spanned diverse topics, including engaging Alberta farmers on regenerative agricultural practices, conducting adaptation planning in various municipalities and Indigenous communities, developing resilient utilities infrastructure, and assessing watershed health. Working with ClimateWest, three project assistants created and presented posters based on their work at the *ClimateWest Forum: Building Climate Resilience*, held in Edmonton and online, on May 8–9, 2024.



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## I-STEAM Pathways Program

As stated on the I-STEAM Pathways Program website, I-STEAM aims to “[provide] research experience for First Nations, Métis and Inuit undergraduate students in environmental fields including science, environmental engineering, environmental law and policy. [It also aims to foster] systemic change through the incorporation of Indigenous values and worldviews in environmental policy and planning.”

I-STEAM is coordinated by a team of professors from the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Science, with administrative support from various staff. In 2023-24 the Sustainability Council joined forces with this team to help administer the delivery of the 2024 I-STEAM program. At various stages, and in varying capacities, select Council staff members worked with the I-STEAM project team to help with the following: host and intern application and adjudication processes, program promotion on social media and at university-specific events, and assistance in the summer programming.

I-STEAM places Indigenous undergraduate students in paid summer internship positions working with researchers from the University of Alberta, and other partner institutions coordinated by the National Research Council. I-STEAM interns work from May to mid-August each summer on environmental research projects which are relevant to Indigenous communities.

Both supervisors and interns are provided with an orientation session and check-ins throughout the summer, as well as a final celebration event at the end of August. Students are also provided with professional development opportunities including an *Academic Career Day*, *Industry Interaction Luncheon*, and a professional development day focused on working with land and water. **In 2024, 23 interns are working with 20 different researchers and their teams on various projects, including:**

- Understanding Host Traits That Impact Lodgepole Pine Tree Resilience to Mountain Pine Beetle
- Solid Waste Management: Practices and Challenges in the Indigenous Community of Alberta



Photo credit:  
Hussain Al-Rikabi

Sustainability Council interns for the 2023-24 academic year from L to R: Andrew Batycki, Shirin Kaviyanifar, and Carolina (Lina) Neri Mercado.

- Photonic Integrated Circuit CO and CO<sub>2</sub> Sensors for Wildfire Detection and Monitoring
- Sustainable Local Food Production in Remote Communities

## 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 gain valuable skills by supporting applied projects, communications, marketing, and outreach activities. They also have the opportunity to develop leadership and workplace skills by overseeing volunteers and engaging with senior Sustainability Council staff, as well as University of Alberta faculty, staff and students. Our internships are investments in promising students and frequently lead

to careers in sustainability. Often, our interns are former Sustainability Council volunteers.

For the 2023-24 academic year, three Sustainability interns joined our team:



**Andrew Batycki** (BSc in civil and environmental engineering) worked with us to conceptualize, plan, and deliver our first-ever offering of *SDG Week*. Beyond this project, he supported data collection for the rankings, namely Times Higher Education Impact Rankings (THE IR) and the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Sustainability Rankings. Andrew also liaised with a partner at RWTH Aachen to host a joint lecture series on sustainable cities, as the January segment of our *Lecture Series*. Andrew will be starting a Master of Environment and Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan in Fall 2024.

**I am proud of the work I have done as an intern, the meaningful connections I have made, and the possibilities ahead!**

Carolina Neri Mercado, BSc in environmental and conservation sciences, Graduated June 2024





### Carolina (Lina) Neri Mercado

(BSc in environmental and conservation sciences) joined us for a second year as an intern, after supporting Sustainability Council programming for several years as a volunteer. Lina coordinated the Campus Sustainability Leaders Awards nomination and judging process, and planned the first-ever *Celebrate Sustainability* event; this event served as a venue to recognize recipients of these awards, along with our numerous program partners. Lina also

led the programming for the Sustainability Central activities at *Week of Welcome*, supported data collection for THE IR, and planned the *Intro Fair for SDG Week*. After finishing her undergraduate degree, Lina started working with Ecotrust Canada as a program coordinator.



**Shirin Kaviyanifar** (BCom in entrepreneurship and innovation) worked on the Council's *Lecture Series* by recruiting speakers and delivering lecture events. In the fall semester, she collected and collated data for THE IR and Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) – sustainability ranking and rating projects. Shirin also sat on the planning committee for *Celebrate Sustainability*, supporting the asynchronous activity creation and coordinating volunteers. Shirin is going into

the last year of her business degree.

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, Alberta Municipalities, the Government of Alberta, and the University of Alberta.

## Volunteer Program

The Sustainability Council (SC) Volunteer Program is a hub for sustainability-oriented volunteer opportunities on campus. We work with campus partner organizations to provide them with volunteers to support their sustainability initiatives, while creating varied and meaningful volunteer opportunities for students on campus.

Additionally, we provide support to and foster collaboration with Sustain SU's Volunteer Program, enhancing the range of opportunities

**I've always wanted to do something where I could make a positive difference towards people and the planet. Through organizing events and lectures, I've had the chance to interact with people doing incredible work in the field of sustainability. These experiences have inspired me to continue working to develop my own knowledge and shown me I can have an impactful career not confined to one discipline.**

Andrew Batycki, BSc in civil and environmental engineering, Graduated June 2024

available for students to engage with sustainability. Between the SC Volunteer Program and Sustain SU's Volunteer Program, the council supported more than 110 active volunteers in 2023-24. Between all volunteer teams in Sustain SU in 2023-24, more than 1,000 sustainability ambassador hours were spent on volunteering activities. Sustain SU also supported a total of 22 community workshops in 2023-24, with more than 200 participants. There were also an additional 31 Campus Gardens volunteers, totaling more than 350 hours volunteered.

Many of our past volunteers have identified these experiences as an important step in advancing their academic and career goals in the field of sustainability. In the 2023-24 period, we established a new method of administering the program that



focused on maintaining an active pool of volunteers and disseminating opportunities through a monthly newsletter. This newsletter also features professional development, training, and other pertinent opportunities both on- and off-campus. Moreover, we hosted a successful volunteer appreciation event in March 2024.

In the 2023-24 academic year, 32 Sustainability Council volunteers from various faculties—including Science, Arts, Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences, Kinesiology, Sport and Recreation, Engineering, and Business—contributed to 10 different events.

## Campus as a Living Lab

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 and initiatives to advance opportunities for students. As such, CALL is currently implemented through the following programs and initiatives, directly and indirectly: Campus Sustainability Grants, run by Energy & Climate Action; Sustainability Scholars, Adaptation Resilience Training Program (ART), and Certificate in Sustainability, all three run by the Sustainability Council (ART is funded and supported by the Government of Alberta); and the Undergraduate Researcher Initiative (URI) Campus as a Living Lab Stipend, a collaboration between URI, Energy & Climate Action and the Sustainability Council. In the coming year we will work collaboratively with Energy & Climate Action to streamline access to CALL opportunities and to further create connections and contacts to facilitate this work, university-wide.

### CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS

Managed by  
Energy & Climate Action

The Campus Sustainability Grants program is funded by recouped energy savings and managed by Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy Management and Sustainable Operations). 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. In 2023-24, Mustafa Gül (Engineering), a collaborator on several Sustainability Council programs (e.g., Lecture Series, SDG Curriculum Panel, etc), sat on the adjudication committee. Details about some of the funded projects can be found on the Energy & Climate Action website.

### The following projects were funded in 2023-24:

- Reducing Single Use Plastics for Golden Bears & Pandas Athletics
- Dissemination of Information on a Renewable Energy Source: Hydrogen
- Exploring the Potential of Bioremediation for Environmental Restoration in an Undergraduate Ecology Laboratory
- Replacing Gas Powered Mini-Bikes with Electric Pedal Bikes in the Service Corridor (Completed)
- Replacing Drawing Studio Lighting with Sustainable LED Lighting (Completed)
- Promoting Wellness and Sustainability Through Smart Aeroponic Gardening
- Sustainable Procurement of Laboratory Accessories Through 3D Printing
- Greening Undergraduate Microbiology Labs with Practical Hardware

On June 4, 2024 Energy & Climate Action hosted a successful *Campus Sustainability Mixer*. It was an opportunity to learn about innovative projects from Campus Sustainability Grant recipients and connect with sustainability-minded colleagues from all corners of our campus community.

# Sustainability Scholars, Adaptation Resilience Training Program and Certificate in Sustainability

Sustainability Scholars are current University of Alberta graduate students who complete four-month applied sustainability research internships. Some of these projects focus on experiential learning with a campus-centric approach. An example of a Campus as a Living Lab (CALL)-oriented Scholars project from the Spring/Summer 2024 cohort is the *University of Alberta Zero Waste Process Map*, managed by Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy Management and Sustainable Operations).

Adaptation Resilience Training (ART) Project Assistants (PAs) complete eight-month, full-time internships working on climate adaptation projects with organizations based throughout Alberta. We collaborate with University of Alberta partners for these opportunities, some of which qualify as CALL projects. For example, in the 2023-24 ART cohort, a PA was working with Energy & Climate Action on *Campus Buildings and Climate Adaptation*. In this case, the PA is using the infrastructure as a test bed for innovative adaptation actions and recommendations.

With the approval and guidance of an Academic Advisor, Certificate in Sustainability undergraduate students complete an integrative project. These projects vary widely, with some being more applied and others more research-oriented. Some certificate students utilize CALL.

**In 2023-24, two examples of CALL-oriented student integrative projects are:**

- **Stronger and Stronger: United Nations Sustainability Goals and How the University of Alberta can be More Sustainable:** For this project, a student investigated options for improving the University of Alberta's Times Higher Education Impact Rankings

results. Based on this work, the student looked into the installation of high-efficiency toilets on campus and then connected with campus grounds and maintenance staff to find out how this could be implemented.

- **How Can Sustainability Principles Be Applied to Chemistry Laboratories at the University of Alberta to Decrease Improper Chemical Waste That Will Improve the Environment and Health of Society?:**

For this project, two students investigated common waste disposal mistakes in University of Alberta chemistry laboratories. They then researched and compiled information on safe chemical disposal techniques, using this information to create simple posters for display in chemistry labs. Finally, they delivered a presentation in a chemistry lab on safe chemical disposal techniques.

## Undergraduate Researcher Initiative Campus as a Living Lab Stipend

Along with the Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI) and Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy Management and Sustainable Operations), we provide undergraduate students the opportunity to conduct paid, sustainability research with an on-campus focus. In 2023-24, five applications were considered for funding but no stipends were awarded. For 2024-25, we will be making a push to raise awareness of the URI CALL Stipend to encourage undergraduate students to apply.

# Engagement and Events

Sustainability Council events are designed to play a number of roles in the University of Alberta community. Our events connect students, staff, faculty and community members who are interested in sustainability.



2023-24 at  
a glance

33

sustainability events  
in 2023-24

2.3k

attendees at  
our events

119

students presented  
their work

Our events raise awareness of sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 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.

This year has seen a shift to hybrid or fully in-person events; given there's still a sizable audience that joins events virtually, our aim was to offer hybrid events whenever possible.

Our initiatives this academic year included: participation at *Week of Welcome* and *Open House*, the *Lecture Series*, the *Foundations Summit for Sustainability & Leadership (FSSL)* (new this year), *Collaborative Events with the City of Edmonton*, an *International Week* event held in partnership with University of Alberta International and Environmental Studies Students Association, and *SDG Week* (new this year).

## Sustainability Central at Week of Welcome

The Sustainability Council hosted a table during fall student orientation between September 5–8, 2023. Situated in Main Quad, tabling was conducted alongside Sustain SU and Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy Management and Sustainable Operations) to create "Sustainability Central." The goals for this week included promoting the Sustainability Council's programs and



Abbie Herbert hosting an SDG 4 (Quality Education) themed table during SDG Week 2024 where she talked about Zero Waste at the University of Alberta.

events to new and returning students, and incentivizing responses to a sustainability literacy assessment.

A total of six volunteers and seven staff members delivered outreach during *Week of Welcome*. By the end of the week, 860 people visited the Sustainability Council's table, there were 327 newsletter sign ups, 344 surveys were completed, and 146 people indicated an interest in volunteering with the Sustainability Council.

## Open House

On October 14, 2023, the Sustainability Council hosted a table at *Open House*, an annual event that allows the community to learn about the University of Alberta's faculties, programs, and services. Our goal was to engage with prospective students and raise awareness about how the council integrates sustainability into academic pathways. Given that most attendees are future undergraduate students, we focused on promoting the undergraduate Certificate in Sustainability and raising awareness of the Environmental Studies BA degree program.

To achieve this, we engaged with parents and prospective students, distributed bookmarks and other print materials about Sustainability Council programs, and ran a Plinko game. Two staff members and five volunteers interacted with 406 attendees. We handed out approximately

350 Certificate in Sustainability bookmarks and collected contact information from 32 prospective students interested in the certificate.

## Sustainable Development Goals Week

### 2023-24 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Over 470 attendees** engaged throughout the week
- **Nine events** organized across campus
- **Partnered with 14 organizations** to bring the events to life





Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week is a national initiative spearheaded by the Sustainability Hub at the University of British Columbia, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and Colleges and Institutes Canada. The goals for this week include promoting awareness of the SDGs, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and integrating the SDGs into post-secondary education, research, and operations. From March 4–8, 2024, the Sustainability Council organized the University of Alberta's first iteration of *SDG Week*. With *SDG Week* scheduled to occur one month after *I-Week*, we collaborated closely with the organizers of *I-Week* to establish a connection between the two events. Our aim was for attendees to apply the knowledge gained during *I-Week* by taking action during *SDG Week*.

*SDG Week* builds upon the achievements and collaborations established during *Sustainability Awareness Week (SAW)*. In collaboration with groups within the University of Alberta community, we organized multiple events, each dedicated to advancing one or more SDGs. These events were carefully curated to incorporate interactive elements, empowering participants to take tangible action toward the SDGs. The *SDG Week Intro*

*Fair* served as the inaugural event, featuring ten partner groups, each representing a different SDG. Attendees, including students and other members of the University of Alberta community, had the opportunity to delve into discussions surrounding the SDGs and connect with various University of Alberta groups dedicated to sustainability. Additional events throughout the week included workshops, guided tours, trivia sessions, a film screening, and a sustainability case competition.

The Sustainability Council team focused on planning the *Intro Fair*, the curriculum event, and the film screening. Other events were organized with the support of partner groups with the goal of creating a program of events representing most SDGs. There were 470 attendees who attended an *SDG Week* event and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. In 2024-25, we will be exploring strategies to increase engagement across all sessions.

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## EVENTS

Join us throughout the year for a variety of engaging events.

[uab.ca/oiw](https://uab.ca/oiw)

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Photo credit: Evonne Tran

Attendees listening to an in-person lecture from Runa Das, as part of the Lecture Series.

## Lecture Series

The Sustainability Council's ongoing *Lecture Series* explores local and global perspectives on sustainability, equity, and climate action. Researchers and practitioners from the University of Alberta and beyond offer presentations within their respective fields ranging from engineering, ecology, public health, poetry, Indigenous studies, and nanotechnology.

During the 2023-24 academic year, we transitioned the majority of our *Lecture Series* events to a hybrid setup. In cases where a speaker was not located in Edmonton or preferred to deliver the talk online, we offered the event over Zoom. The lectures included a large slate of speakers from across Canada and beyond, which enriched our series with a variety of perspectives.

The Sustainability Council played a role in the planning, organizing, and execution of 19 lectures. Of these, 10 were spearheaded exclusively by the Sustainability Council. Additionally, other lectures involved collaborations with RWTH Aachen University, Ontario College of Art and Design, ATLAS (EAS Graduate Students' Society), Department of Human Ecology, Department of Philosophy, and Sustain SU. By expanding our partnerships with stakeholders to host sustainability-focused lectures, we are enhancing our capacity, broadening our audience, and fostering valuable collaborations.

Building upon a long-standing partnership between the University of Alberta and RWTH Aachen University, the joint *Lecture Series* with RWTH Aachen featured four speakers, two from Germany and two from Canada, who spoke on the topic of sustainable cities. These lectures had higher than average attendance and were a great opportunity for learning across institutions.

The *Lecture Series* drew a wide-ranging audience of students, staff, faculty, and community members, with over 800 attendees engaging

across 19 lectures that featured 23 speakers. This significant engagement highlights the importance and relevance of the *Lecture Series* in promoting sustainability education and awareness across a diverse audience.

### A few featured guest speakers this year:



**Jen Rae,**  
The Role of Culture & the Arts in the Climate Emergency



**Runa Das,**  
Canada's Households and the Zero Carbon Transition



**Stephen Wong,**  
Tackling Critical Evacuation Challenges with Human-Centred Approaches



CLICK FOR FULL PLAYLIST





Right: Charles Marohn, founder of Strong Towns as a keynote speaker for an event

## Collaborative Events with the City of Edmonton

### STRONG TOWNS

As stated on the Strong Towns website, “Strong Towns is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit media advocacy organization. [They] produce content that analyzes the failures of the post-war North American development pattern while giving citizens the knowledge and tools to start making our places better today.”

The Sustainability Council partnered with the University of Alberta School of Urban and Regional Planning, Councillor Michael Janz, and Councillor Ashley Salvador to host Strong Towns Founder and President Charles (Chuck) Marohn for a multi-day event on building financially resilient communities. Along with the aforementioned hosts, the events were sponsored by the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board, City of Edmonton Planning and Environment Services, and the Alberta Real Estate Foundation. Here are some highlights for these two very successful events.

### **BUILDING A STRONGER TOWN: AN EVENING WITH CHARLES MAROHN – DEC. 13, 2023**

This evening session included a 60-minute keynote from Chuck and an interactive Q&A period. In his keynote, Chuck addressed the challenges

created by the North American pattern of urban development and shared the Strong Towns approach to solving these issues. We had over 350 attendees from the campus and broader communities.

### **WORKSHOP: BUILDING A STRONGER TOWN WITH CHARLES MAROHN – DEC. 14, 2023**

This was the second co-hosted event, attended by 50 participants. This more intimate gathering began with a short presentation by Chuck followed by breakout discussions on actions we can take today to build sustainable communities.

**The Sustainability Council also partnered with Ward papastew City Councillor Michael Janz on three events between**



From L to R: Ashley Salvador, Charles Marohn, Michael Janz, and Robert Summers, at the Dec. 14th, 2023 Workshop with Chuck.

**March and June 2023. Here is a brief summary of each of these events.**

### **TRANSIT CAMP 2023 – MARCH 18, 2023**

*Transit Camp* is an Edmonton community summit on safer, more frequent and better public transit. The inaugural town hall-style event was convened by City Councillor Michael Janz in partnership with, amongst others, the Sustainability Council, Parkland Institute, Climate Justice Edmonton, Taproot Edmonton, Working Families Edmonton, and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 569. With more than 350 attendees, the first iteration of this event was a huge success. The event included a keynote from Carrie Hotton-MacDonald from the Edmonton Transit Service, talks from other stakeholders in Edmonton's public transit space, a visit from Mayor Amarjeet Sohi, and two breakout rooms discussing different transit-related issues. The Sustainability Council provided space sponsorship, pre-event and day-of logistical support, and cross-promoted the event on our social media channels and at the University of Alberta more broadly.

### **BIKE MONTH 2023 KICKOFF – JUNE 3, 2023**

The Sustainability Council partnered with Michael Janz again to cross-promote his Bike Month 2023 Kickoff event. The event included a showing of *Motherload*, a documentary film that uses the cargo bike to explore its central themes, a "Cargo Bike Show and Tell" where attendees could try out different cargo bikes, and a fundraiser in support of local non-profit Bike Edmonton.

### **BETTER BUILDINGS FOR BETTER COMMUNITIES: AN EVENING WITH MICHAEL ELIASON – JUNE 29, 2023**

A total of 125 people including University of Alberta

faculty, staff, students, and members of the public attended a special guest lecture and Q&A with Seattle-based architect and green building expert Michael Eliason. Michael is a thought leader on various topics including sustainable city planning, green building, co-housing, and point access blocks. The Sustainability Council provided pre-event and day-of logistical support and cross-promoted the event on our social media channels.

## **International Week**

*International Week (I-Week)* is a yearly event orchestrated by the University of Alberta International's (UAI) Global Education Program. It serves as a platform for a diverse array of speakers and presenters, directing participants' focus towards international issues and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Annually, the Sustainability Council collaborates with UAI, offering financial support and organizational guidance for a keynote speaker during I-Week.

In Fall 2023, the Sustainability Council engaged in discussions with the Environmental Studies Students Association (ESSA) and other students regarding eco-grief, a topic that resonated deeply with several ESSA members. This collaborative effort allowed us to seamlessly merge programming areas and explore a student-driven theme of interest. Following ESSA's expressed interest in hosting an event on eco-grief, we facilitated their connection with our partners at UAI, with whom we typically collaborate for the *I-Week* keynote. Together, ESSA and UAI successfully planned and delivered a keynote panel event on eco-grief during *I-Week 2024*. Titled *From Sorrow to Solutions: Addressing*





Photo credit:  
Evonne Tran

*Eco Grief Through Action*, the event featured Chris Turner, a leading voice in Canada on climate solutions and the global energy transition, alongside Stephanie Olsen from Refugia. Held in-person on Feb. 5, 2024 on campus, the event garnered 140 registrations and attracted an audience of 80 attendees.

## Foundations Summit for Sustainability and Leadership (FSSL)

Since 2021, the *Student Sustainability Summit* has been integrated as a sustainability stream of the *Foundations Summit for Sustainability and Leadership (FSSL)*, formerly the *Alberta Student Leadership Summit (ASLS)*. FSSL is run by Sustain SU, with collaboration and sponsorship support from the Sustainability Council. The summit is open to both high school and post-secondary students from across Canada. Sessions include topics from two streams: sustainability and leadership fundamentals. The sustainability stream of the summit aims to provide students with the tools, resources and networks they need to join the next generation of sustainability leaders.

*FSSL 2023: From Deliberation to Action*, took place in-person on Oct. 21, 2023 and had 84 attendees. This year's theme was chosen to motivate and equip students to act as change agents. By bringing together influential leaders, experts, and visionaries, FSSL aimed to create a platform for students to deliberate on pressing issues, exchange ideas, and ultimately drive real-world solutions. The sustainability stream sessions covered topics such as Edmonton's energy transition strategy,

and giving a voice to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) workers in the environmental justice movement. In addition to sponsorship support, the Sustainability Council ran a *Lecture Series* session and tabled at the *Involvement Fair*. The speaker for the *Lecture Series* session was Feng Qiu, an associate professor in the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences who addresses topics relating to sustainable agriculture and biofuel including the "Food vs. Fuel" dilemma and land-use change. The *Involvement Fair*, which took place over the lunch break, provided a space for campus organizations and student clubs to introduce themselves to the attendees. The Sustainability Council table promoted the Certificate in Sustainability and other programs.

*FSSL 2023* was the 15<sup>th</sup> annual summit and the second consecutive summit since the COVID-19 pandemic to be held in-person. In total, there were nine speakers, four panelists, and 11 hours of programming.

# 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 provides sustainability leadership and integrates the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals across the institution, and in our teaching and research.



2023-24 at  
a glance

6<sup>th</sup>

ranking globally for  
the Times Higher  
Education Impact  
Rankings

28<sup>th</sup>

ranking for the  
Quacquarelli  
Symonds (QS)  
Sustainability  
Rankings

43

key collaborative  
partnerships within  
and outside of  
campus

## Reporting, Reputation and Rankings

The Sustainability Council undertakes sustainability reporting and tracking by co-leading submissions to the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Sustainability Rankings, the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings (THE IR), and the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS).

In Summer 2023, the Sustainability Council, in partnership with University of Alberta International (UAI), jointly assembled the 2024 submission for the QS Sustainability Rankings. The University of Alberta was ranked 28<sup>th</sup> out of a total of 1,395 institutions (up from 118<sup>th</sup> out of 700 institutions in 2023).

In Fall 2023, the Sustainability Council, in partnership with UAI, jointly led

and submitted data to the THE IR. The THE IR seeks to capture and assess world universities' success in advancing and delivering the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In our fourth submission of this annual ranking, we provided data for all 17 SDGs, and jumped from 7<sup>th</sup> (out of 1,705 institutions) to 6<sup>th</sup> (out of 2,152 institutions). This continues the upward trajectory that was established in the first two THE IR submissions, in which we were ranked 11<sup>th</sup> (out of 1,406

institutions) and 64<sup>th</sup> (out of 1,118 institutions), respectively. This was a boon for the Sustainability Council as it allowed us to once again celebrate the impact of our researchers and students at a local and on a global scale. For all four submissions, the dedicated submission team was composed of key Sustainability Council and UAI staff, who collaborated primarily with Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy Management and Sustainable Operations) in gathering data from Facilities and Operations.

**There are several benefits to using the 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

The triennial STARS submission is being led by Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy Management and Sustainable Operations). The Sustainability Council and Energy & Climate Action collaborate closely on this reporting effort that involves both units' staff members. At the time of publication of this report, the Sustainability Council has completed the data collection, and uploaded all of the data for their credits of the submission. We anticipate that we will hear back about the rating by the end of 2024.

## Sustainable Development Goals at the University

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS WORKING GROUP

In September of 2019, the Sustainability Council and University of Alberta International (UAI) formed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Working Group. The goals of this group are to highlight SDG-related work happening at the University of Alberta and to build broad awareness about the goals on campus. The SDG Working Group includes voices from the Sustainability Council, UAI, and Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy Management and Sustainable Operations). More recently, a representative from the Office of the Vice-President (External Relations) joined the working group to assist with the communications and marketing of SDG progress more broadly at the University of Alberta.

**The activities of the SDG Working Group in the last year include, amongst others:**

- Elevating the importance of the SDGs at the University and profiling the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings results institutionally.
- Developing an institution-wide SDG Communications Plan in collaboration with the University of Alberta Strategic Communications team in External Relations. This plan will outline communications strategies to raise the profile of SDGs and demonstrate their connectivity and presence across the institution, within student, staff, and faculty audiences.
- Reviewing the data submission for the 2024 THE IR, where the Sustainability Council and UAI submission staff systematically assessed all of the indicators where progress depends on more significant steps to be taken, or long-term actions (LTAs). After submission, the submission staff prioritized the LTAs and the SDG Working Group met to do a preliminary review. This was followed by a meeting with senior staff members to gather suggestions on how best to proceed.
- Strengthening partnerships and collaborations (on- and off-campus) by organizing and hosting a joint lecture series on the topic of sustainable cities, in collaboration with international development staff at RWTH Aachen University.
- Supporting students and faculty who are engaged in SDG work through the SDG Student Alliance, resource and opportunity sharing, integrating SDGs across the curriculum, etc.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS INFO HUB

Following the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings (THE IR) collection of data on each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sustainability Council spearheaded the centralization of all data into a repository. In 2021, the Sustainability Council team developed the SDG Info Hub (formerly the SDG Dashboard) on the Sustainability Council website. The content on the Hub is organized by each SDG (1 through 17). The SDG Info Hub is meant to be a one-stop-shop, where current and prospective students, faculty and broader community members can peruse university-wide commitments, initiatives, related courses and programs, media stories, and university-wide progress on all SDGs. The SDG Info Hub is also used to provide evidence for the THE IR submission. Since its inception, there have been steps to improve the layout and content of the SDG Info Hub. Going forward, the team is working on layout and content updates to increase the website accessibility and bring key statistics in the form of infographics. Furthermore, we are collaborating with the Strategic Communications and External Relations offices and Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy Management and Sustainable Operations) to further build out and improve the pages. In the coming years we hope to expand the visibility of the SDG Info Hub and its impact.

## UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA-LED PANEL AT THE GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONGRESS

The University of Alberta led a very successful panel on *Global Pathways to Net-Zero* on June 11, 2024 at the *Times Higher Education's Global Sustainable Development Congress*. The Congress took place in Bangkok, Thailand from June 10–13, 2024. The Sustainability Council's operations director, Maja Osmanagić, moderated this panel which featured four panelists, namely: Sandeep Agrawal (School of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Alberta), Amit Kumar (Engineering, University of Alberta), Shobhakar Dhakal (Asian Institute of Technology), and Ashish Garg (Indian Institute of Technology). The following University of Alberta representatives were part of the delegation and

panel organizing committee: Cen Huang (vice-provost & associate vice-president – International), Andrea Smith (senior advisor, Portfolio Strategy, Office of the Vice President, External Relations), Maja Osmanagić, Sandeep Agrawal and Amit Kumar. Counsellor Cathy Hardman from the Canadian Embassy in Thailand provided the opening remarks for the event, highlighting Canada's contributions in this area. Cen followed Cathy with an introduction of the University's vital role, the timely topic area, and the moderator.

The sold-out event saw a room filled with about 55 attendees. All panelists, including Cathy and Cen, covered vital topics in energy transition, providing tangible examples from their work and areas of expertise. They explored various possible pathways, from the community to the international sphere, providing examples of both opportunities and challenges ahead of us. Once the panel discussions concluded, we followed with an engaging Q&A session with the international audience and further conversations with individual attendees.



**Maja Osmanagić, Operations Director of the Sustainability Council, attending the Sustainable Development Congress in Bangkok, June 2024.**





Robert Summers, Academic Director of the Sustainability Council, addresses affiliates at a networking luncheon.

## Affiliate Network

The Sustainability Council is uniquely placed to build bridges across disciplines. One of the ways we work towards this is through the 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. 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.

On Nov. 20, 2023, we hosted an Affiliates networking luncheon, where affiliates had the chance to meet and network with fellow affiliates over a catered lunch. Then, as part of *Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week* in March 2024, the affiliates were invited to attend a panel discussion on *Building SDGs into Curriculum*.

### AFFILIATES BY FACULTY IN 2023-24

- Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences

- Alberta School of Business
- Arts
- Augustana Campus
- Campus Saint-Jean
- Education
- Engineering
- Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation
- Law
- Libraries
- Medicine & Dentistry
- Native Studies
- Nursing
- Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Public Health
- Science



Photo credit: Hussain Al-Rikabi

Group shot of the 2024 CSLA winners taken during event, *Celebrate Sustainability* at the University Club on April 4, 2024.

## Celebrate Sustainability and Campus Sustainability Leaders Awards

The Campus Sustainability Leaders Awards (CSLAs) are presented annually by the Sustainability Council, in collaboration with Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy Management and Sustainable Operations). Established in 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 inspires the next generation to follow in these footsteps. Past winners, from diverse disciplines, are champions, innovators, and change agents contributing to a brighter, more sustainable future on campus and beyond.

This year we received a total of 21 nominations, through two selection processes. Four volunteer judges participated in the awards adjudication committee: one faculty member from Augustana, two University of Alberta staff members, and one Sustainability Council intern. The latter individual was also an event organizer. For the second year in a row, three award recipients were chosen in each category. Additionally, for the first time since 2019, Energy & Climate Action recognized an outstanding Green Spaces certified group. The award recipients were officially announced at the *Celebrate Sustainability* event on April 4, 2024. Energy & Climate Action supported the planning and delivery of this event and provided co-sponsorship. This event highlighted the efforts of

the winners, but also of the Sustainability Council's on- and off-campus partners, volunteers, and supporters. *Celebrate Sustainability* was held at the University Club, and hosted 90 guests. Alongside the ceremony, seven Certificate in Sustainability students presented their capstone projects.

To foster engagement and promotion of the awards program, we established the Sustainability Leadership Quizzes, a series of four asynchronous quizzes released weekly leading up to the *Celebrate Sustainability* event. The quizzes were intended to highlight past CSLA recipients and their accomplishments in order to increase public awareness of sustainability leaders at the University of Alberta.



## 2024 Michael Rawson Clark Award\*



**Heba Mahmood,** fourth-year undergraduate student, majoring in biology and psychology.



**Kairandeep Kaur Dhillon,** fourth-year undergraduate student majoring in psychology and minoring in biological sciences, taking the Certificate in Sustainability.



**Tianna Tanasichuk,** fifth-year undergraduate student in mathematics and biological sciences, taking the Certificate in Sustainability.

## Professor and Staff Awards



**Sarah Pelletier,** professor of chemistry, director of the Science Teaching Labs, faculty service officer, Campus Saint-Jean.



**Matt Kingston,** instructor, research assistant, Department of Strategy, Entrepreneurship and Management, Alberta School of Business.



**Climate Change and Global Health Education Team,** School of Public Health (L to R: Marina Banuet Martínez, Breanne Aylward, Tony Yuen, Hannah Bayne)

## Green Spaces



**Undergraduate Cell Biology Students' Association**  
From L to R: Clara Vicera and Sadie Vogel

\*In 2022, we established a CSLA student award category to commemorate the late sustainability champion, Michael Rawson Clark.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT MICHAEL'S CONTRIBUTION**






Photo credit: Evonne Tran

**Certificate in Sustainability students presenting their integrative projects at Celebrate Sustainability.**

## Key Partnerships and Sustainability Leadership

The Sustainability Council serves as a key connector for sustainability efforts across the campus and beyond. We actively engage with university leadership at the central level, as well as within colleges, faculties, and departments. Our collaborations extend to Facilities and Operations, University of Alberta International (UAI), Sustain SU, and other organizations, including the Kule Institute.

We extend the University's reach through our memberships in the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), a global non-profit; the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), a North American professional association; the Environmental Studies Association of Canada (ESAC); the national Canadian College and University Environmental Network (CCUEN); and the City of Edmonton-led Energy Transition Leadership Network. As an institutional member of SDSN, our faculty, staff, and students can access resources such as SDSN Mobilize and the SDG Academy for networking, learning, and funding opportunities. The Sustainability Council actively participates in SDSN Canada's member meetings, fosters member relationships, explores new opportunities for the University of Alberta community, and stays informed on best practices.

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

The Sustainability Council continues to lead across all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Sustainability Council's academic director, operations director, SDG project planner, and outreach and design coordinator continue to collaborate closely on advancing SDG integration, communications, reporting, and rankings, the latter in collaboration with UAI. We continue to build SDG awareness and integration in collaboration with the SDG Working Group and we foster continuous on- and off-campus partnerships. For example, the council actively participates in climate action work across the institution. Also, SDGs are now featured prominently in *Shape: The University Strategic*

*Plan 2023-2033*, which bolsters this continued effort.

Furthermore, as part of a small pilot grant, similar to the pilot grant for Sustainability Across the Curriculum, we are advancing the dissemination of 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. This pilot \$5,000 grant for 2023-24 supports Damian Collins, in the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, to produce a briefing paper style report on the importance of community housing towards the achievement of the SDGs. We expect this work to be completed and ready to share broadly in the Fall of 2024.

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.



# Thank You to Our Partners

## UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

AI4Society  
 Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (AEPA)  
 ATLAS (EAS Graduate Students' Society)  
 Augustana Campus  
 Buildings, Grounds & Environmental Services  
 Campus Food Bank  
 Campus Saint-Jean  
 College of Natural and Applied Sciences (CNAS)  
 Community Service-Learning (CSL)  
 Departments and Faculties across the Colleges  
 EcoCar Team  
 Energy & Climate Action (formerly Energy  
 Management and Sustainable Operations)  
 Engineers without Borders (UAlberta chapter)  
 English Language School  
 Environmental Studies Students' Association  
 Facilities and Operations  
 Future Energy Systems (FES)  
 Human Ecology Clothing Repair Cafe  
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 The Parkland Institute  
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 Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI)  
 University of Alberta International (UAI)

University of Alberta International's Global  
Education Program

University of Alberta Students' Union

University of Alberta Students' Union Bike Library  
and Workshop

## ADAPTATION RESILIENCE TRAINING AND SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS HOST ORGANIZATIONS

Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation

Athabasca Watershed Council

Bow River Basin Council

City of Calgary (various units)

City of Edmonton (various units)

Enerflex

EPCOR (various units)

Food Water Wellness Foundation

International Festival of Winter Cinema

NAIT

O'Hanlon Paving

Old Man Watershed

Organic Alberta

QUEST

SAIT

The Resilience Institute

Town of Bruderheim

Town of Canmore

Trout Unlimited Canada

University of Alberta Climate and Health Adaptation  
Network in Alberta

University of Alberta Energy and Climate Action

WaterSMART



## **Sustainability Council Office Staff**

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# Leading with Purpose.



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