

Climate Action

The Case of UBC


Kurt Hübner

Outcomes

- Impact Ranking 2020
- UBC No 1 in terms of climate action
- UBC No 7 overall

2018/19 Fast Facts

VANCOUVER

38% 
reduction in absolute
GHG emissions since
2007

156 
additional below-
market rental units
under construction

49% 
reduction in absolute
water use since 2000

27 
wellbeing projects
supported through
strategic initiatives fund

687 
sustainability-related
courses

66% 
of trips by sustainable
modes of transportation

374 
faculty researching
sustainability-related
topics

26 
student-led groups
participated in Student
Sustainability Council

OKANAGAN

41% 
reduction in absolute
GHG emissions
since 2013

14% 
reduction in absolute
water use since 2013

14% 
increase in waste
diversion rate since
2010

62% 
of trips by sustainable
modes of transportation

RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT: Endowment Policy

- ☐ The Board is asking the Administration to conduct the necessary legal and financial analysis to explore full divestiture from fossil fuels of all endowment and other funds under the Board's control, and bring that analysis back to the Board in an expedient manner

- ☐ On November, 22nd, the Endowment Responsible Investment Policy Committee recommended the transfer of \$381 million from the Great Trek Endowment into the low-carbon, fossil fuel-free Sustainable Future Pool (SFP), which currently holds \$30 million

- ☐ The transfer is conditioned on the Board receiving an asset-liability financial study and legal opinion that assures the move won't cost UBC money and is legally permissible.

- Early start
- Jumping on the 'climate policy train' as campaign leader
- Medium-term strategy
- Invest now and earn economic benefits later
- Image aspect
- Greening as way to attract students

- “Universities play a pivotal role in advancing sustainability through knowledge production, engaged learning and research, convening dialogues, forging partnerships, catalyzing innovation through demonstration projects and being an agent of change that helps scale-up sustainability beyond the campus boundaries. UBC’s sustainability activities helped to elevate its brand and reputation globally which has, in turn, helped efforts in recruitment and

retention of high quality students, faculty and staff, as well as securing a range of research and infrastructure funding.”

- Source: UBC Sustainability –
[Current Status and Strategic Opportunities](#)
DECEMBER 2019

THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA

Next Century Strategic Plan: “Pursuing excellence in research, learning and engagement to foster global citizenship and advance a sustainable and just society across British Columbia, Canada and the world”

- ☐ Aggressively pursuing UBC’s sustainability agenda:
 - ☐ Helps strengthen UBC’s global leadership in addressing societies most urgent needs helps advance many of UBC’s Strategic Plan and the UN Sustainable Development Goals
 - ☐ Builds capacity of students to become positive change makers and influencers
 - ☐ Continues to attract and retain high caliber students, staff and faculty
 - ☐ Helps advance regional, provincial and federal sustainability policy goals
 - ☐ Elevates UBC’s brand and reputation as a sustainability leader (locally and globally)
 - ☐ Attracts investment, funding and partnerships
 - ☐ Creates an ‘ecosystem’ of Campus as a Living Lab projects that advance research, applied learning and operational sustainability which can be scaled beyond the campus

- Those goals and motivations make clear that 'sustainability' is simultaneously a goal and a tool
- Increasing attractiveness for students and faculty as well as for donors by means of creating a sustainable operation of the university
- Being climate neutral until 2050 as a policy to motivate faculty with the Living Lab, to cooperate locally, provincially, nationally and internationally

Limits?

Constraints and Opportunities

- Present costs and future benefits: scissor effect may undermine policy implementation
- UBC's budget depends from provincial transfers and tuition fees, in particular international tuition
- Changes in the political-economic environment are a potential problem for ambitious sustainability policies (COVID 19 as an example)
- Support of faculty needs permanently negotiated by means of open and transparent communication
- Living Lab as a driving core of connecting students and faculty with the 'outside world'