

**CASE STUDY/
SUSTAINABILITY
+ RESIDENCE
COORDINATORS**

UBC Campus Sustainability Office



a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

2008 / 2009

CASE STUDY/ SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATORS (SC) AND RESIDENCE SC (RES SC)


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Abstract

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UBC'S SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR (SC) PROGRAM & ITS YOUNGER SISTER, THE RESIDENCE SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR (RES SC) PROGRAM, WERE CREATED TO BRING SUSTAINABILITY LITERACY AND PRACTICES TO STAFF, FACULTY AND STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY.

BOTH PROGRAMS WERE BUILT USING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT CYCLE AND INCORPORATE COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL MARKETING IN THEIR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE CAMPAIGNS.

RESULTS INCLUDE: REDUCED ELECTRICITY USE AND WASTE CREATION, INCREASED ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION USE, LEARNING AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES AND JOB SATISFACTION.

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Q:
WANT TO KNOW HOW TO GET
THE **MOST** OUT OF ONE
OF **THESE?**

Hint: The answer is on the back.

A:
DOUBLE-SIDE YOUR DOCUMENTS

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60% recycled paper
40% recycled content
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www.res.sc.ubc.ca

Changing behaviour is a difficult task. The UBC Sustainability Office (SO) recognizes that if culture change was easy, it would be done by now. The two programs outlined in this case study have been honed over time. They are part of UBC's approach to creating a culture of sustainability by engaging staff and faculty in sustainable practises in their workplaces and students in their residences.

Context/

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The University of British Columbia was Canada's first university to adopt a Sustainable Development Policy (Policy 5). The policy, which was approved by the Board of Governors in 1997, calls for the university to demonstrate the means to a sustainable community on its campuses. This includes working to increase the literacy and practice of sustainability among faculty, staff and students. The UBC SO was formed in 1998 as part of the Department of Land and Building Services to coordinate efforts towards policy implementation, with funding provided by energy savings from the office's initiatives.



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Story

ACTING AS EARLY SUSTAINABILITY ADOPTERS, SCS BECOME THE SOCIAL LINKS THAT ENABLE POSITIVE CHANGES TO TAKE PLACE IN THEIR DEPARTMENTS

SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR (SC) PROGRAM

The SC program was launched in the fall of 1999 to bring sustainability practices to UBC's numerous departments. Developed in partnership with UBC Waste Management and UBC Trek Program Centre (a transportation demand management program), the program has grown from a small grassroots campaign to a major force of change, with 140 SCs currently working as volunteers across campus.

Developing the Model

The development of the SC program was largely guided by the principles of community-based social marketing described in Doug McKenzie-Mohr's book *Fostering Sustainable Behaviour*. Community-based social marketing draws heavily on research in social psychology. This research indicates that initiatives to promote behaviour change are most effective when they are carried out at the community level and involve direct contact with people. Acting as early sustainability adopters, SCs become the social links that enable positive changes to take place in their departments. With a small time commitment of two to four hours per month during work time, SCs model new behaviours, provide colleagues with information about the impacts of their daily activities, help individuals identify alternatives and offer tools to make sustainability easier.

The program is structured around three major themes, with a new theme featured every two to three months during the school year.

Energy Reduction (October to December)
Materials Reduction (January to March)
Transportation Alternatives (March to May)

Each theme has its own online toolkit containing a number of different tools. For each theme, the SCs select and incorporate the most appropriate tool into their unit's daily activities. At the heart of each tool are easy-to-follow steps, which the SCs can carry out at their convenience and adapt as necessary.

Networking opportunities and volunteer recognition integrated

Lunch-time events, where SCs from the various departments come together, are also key components of the program. At the beginning of each theme a kick-off lunch introduces the tools and provides information and materials for the SCs to take away with them.

In addition to the kick-off lunches for the various themes, the Sustainability Office (SO) hosts three to four educational lunches each year. Recent events include: a workshop on active transportation and energy efficiency at home, a seminar on carbon offsets, a green building tour, a workshop on emotional intelligence and a presentation and working session on sustainability purchasing. The kick-off and educational lunches provide opportunities for SCs to meet and chat with others in the group, and to make cross-campus connections with other like-minded people. Furthermore, SCs have the chance to share ideas, give input on the program and ask questions. Lunch is provided and the events are designed to be fun, interesting and motivational. The SCs are recognized for their efforts on an ongoing basis, and each May there is an appreciation lunch for SCs and their supervisors.

Training and on-going support provided

Training is provided for incoming SCs over two mornings and covers a range of topics including: a review of the SC's role; an introduction to the toolkits and calendar of events; an introduction to community-based social marketing and how to motivate

behaviour change; an overview of sustainability initiatives at UBC; and lessons from a panel of experienced SCs. SCs are also provided with monthly e-news updates with information about sustainability events on and off campus, news items, tips and other pieces of interest.

RESIDENCE SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR (RES SC) PROGRAM

A sister program was created in 2003 to engage undergraduate students living in residence. The Residence Sustainability Coordinator (Res SC) program is a joint initiative between the SO and UBC Housing and Conferences. It aims to network like-minded students in UBC's two junior residences (Place Vanier and Totem Park), promote student leadership and initiatives and educate students about sustainability.

The program, which is coordinated by a student employee at the SO. Res SCs are asked to devote three to four hours per week: one hour for regular weekly meetings plus two to three hours for independent and group work. Meetings occur in the evening to accommodate students' schedules.

In 2007/08, the following sub-committees of Res SCs were set up in each residence:

- Waste, Consumption and Education
- Water, Energy and Ecology
- Food and Community

Each committee focused on various events and campaigns, sparked from ideas presented by the program coordinator or the Res SCs' own interests. Examples of initiatives that took place in 2007/08 were: setting up a composting program in one of the residence houses and holding a competition among floors; organizing "stuff swaps" where students dropped off unwanted items (magazines, clothing, etc.) and picked things up for free (with leftover items donated to charity); and holding film nights and coffee houses. There were ample opportunities for Res SCs to connect with each other and with other student groups on campus.



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SCS HAVE HELPED DECREASE SINGLE-OCCUPANT VEHICLE TRIPS BY 14 PERCENT BY PROMOTING ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION.

UBC's 150 SCs demonstrate how the collective impact of individual actions can make a big difference and enhance the sustainability of the university in many ways.

- In 2006/07, diverted 2,700 metric tonnes of waste from the landfill through composting or recycling.
- In 2006/07, reduced paper use by 27 percent since our 1999 baseline year, despite a 30 percent increase in students. This represents a 41 percent reduction per capita. The use of recycled paper has increased by 19 percent since our baseline.
- Since 1997, decreased single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips by 14 percent, even with a 32 percent increase in the daytime population on campus.

SCs have been instrumental in helping UBC achieve these benchmarks. SCs:

- Promote proper composting and recycling practices in their departments;
- Encourage their departments to double-side or reuse paper when printing. SCs also help to promote sustainable purchasing choices, such as buying paper with recycled content;
- Help to identify and promote alternative transportation choices and campaigns on campus.

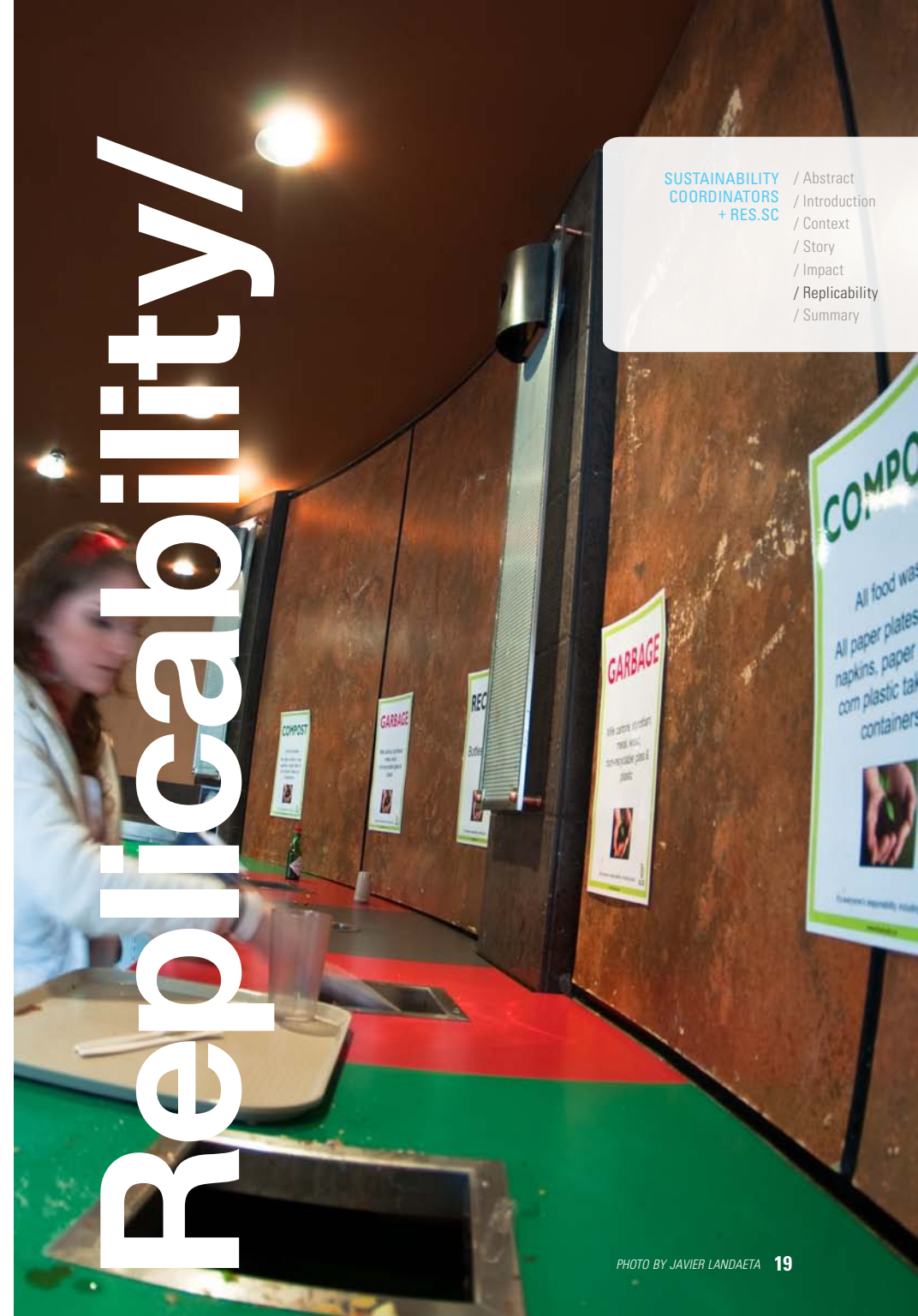
In addition,

- A 2007 study indicated that SCs save the university approximately \$75,000 annually in electricity reductions.
- The SC Program builds a sense of community and improves workplace satisfaction. In the SO's most recent survey (summer 2007), 96 percent of SCs found the program enriching and would recommend it to a friend.

The Res SC program, which involved 53 students in 2007/08, also contributed to savings in energy, waste and water consumption and provided students with important learning, networking and leadership experiences. In the SO's evaluation survey, Res SCs said that the most effective campaigns were the composting competition and the coffee house/open mic nights. Furthermore, 40 percent of those who will not be living in residence next year said that they would like to join another student group related to sustainability.

Replicability!

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THE SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR PROGRAM RELIES ON A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES.

The SC program's motive – creating behaviour change through networks of local experts – is inherently adaptable to a variety of organizational settings. The program model follows the traditional volunteer management cycle: program planning; position development and design; recruitment; screening and interviewing; orientation and training; support, supervision and motivation; recognition; and evaluation. In order to build a solid program that successfully brings sustainability into an organization, the program coordinator should have a background in volunteer management and use all eight of these principles.

The program coordinator should also follow the principles of community-based social marketing ranging from addressing target group needs and evaluation to designing a strategy that identifies barriers and benefits and uses behaviour-change tools. At UBC, the involvement of stakeholders in the development of these tools has been critical to the practicality of the measures UBC asks SCs to implement. Soliciting input on operational issues involved in using recycled paper, printing double-sided documents, and switching off computers and lights has been vital.

The Sustainability Coordinator program relies on a partnership between managers and employees. When new SCs are registered, they are required to have the permission of their manager. This is a necessary measure because of the volunteer's time commitment (two to four hours per month, during work time) and the changes he/she would be making within the work environment. UBC's Board of Governors approved the staff time allowance when the program was developed.

Funding needed for the SC program includes: catering and room rental costs for the luncheons and training sessions; design and printing costs for stickers and posters;

and salary costs for the program coordinator. Once in place, the program requires a program coordinator working three days per week.

The RES SC coordinator, a student employee, works up to ten hours per week during the school year, and approximately one month full-time over the summer, with staff supervision.

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FUTURE

Over the coming year, the SC program will develop in the following ways:

- Improving the integration of SCs who work outside the main UBC Point Grey campus (eg: Robson Square downtown campus and UBC Teaching Hospital Sites) to help them address their unique barriers to sustainability.
- Piloting a new ‘sustainability snapshot’ tool to help better evaluate the sustainability practices in SC departments.
- Developing new tools in Climate Action and Local Food.
- Updating the UBC Sustainable Purchasing Guide and adding new sections on sustainable furniture choices, water, sustainable conference and event planning and extended producer responsibility.
- Offering an enhanced training series on behavioural change, conference planning and sustainable purchasing.
- Working with Waste Management, Plant Operations and Supply Management to develop an online furniture reuse program

The Res SC program will grow by:

- Expanding the program to several of the senior residences
- Continuing to involve an internal chairperson for each separate residence to coordinate meetings and initiatives

CONCLUSION

Large-scale changes in behaviour require the combined efforts of many individuals. When combined, individuals making small choices, such as turning off lights and monitors, using reusable cups and commuting responsibly, really do add up. The SC and Res SC programs offer models for how to motivate sustainable behaviour through networks of local experts and could easily be adapted for a wide variety of settings.

