



SUSTAINABILITY AT UBC

Sustainability defines UBC as a university. Through our collective efforts in education, research, partnerships and operations, the UBC Sustainability Initiative (USI) advances sustainability on our Vancouver campus and beyond. *Our goal is to commit, integrate, demonstrate and inspire.*

At UBC, we embrace sustainability as a societal conversation about the kind of world we want to live in, informed by an understanding of the ecological, social and economic consequences of our individual and collective actions. We build the case for sustainability because we believe it is necessary—the consequences of unsustainability are devastating—it is the right thing to do ethically and in terms of distributive justice, and it is desirable in itself, offering the possibility of a better life for people and the planet.

COMMIT. PIONEERING APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is the responsibility and commitment of our entire community. As a public institution with considerable land, assets and utilities, we have a unique role to play in leveraging the teaching, research and operations that are at the core of our existence to address the critical issues of our time. We can take action in ways that others cannot by advancing debates, technologies, instruction, and discoveries that support a more sustainable future. By setting clear priorities, we continually measure progress in meeting our goals.

Examples of our accomplishments:

- In 1997, UBC was the first university in Canada to adopt a sustainable development policy and, a year later, to open a campus sustainability office.
- In 2007, UBC met its Kyoto targets of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emission on core academic buildings by six per cent below 1990 levels, this despite a floor space increase of 35 per cent and student enrolment increase of 48 per cent between 1990 and 2007.
- UBC's GHG reduction targets are the most aggressive among the world's top 40 universities. We commit to reducing GHG from 2007 levels by 33 per cent by 2015, by 67 per cent by 2020, and 100 per cent by 2050.

INTEGRATE. REACHING ACROSS BOUNDARIES

UBC has long embraced an interdisciplinary approach, and the USI applies that same thinking to how we address sustainability. The magnitude of opportunities within sustainability demand partnerships and collaborations that extend beyond traditional boundaries of disciplines, sectors and geographies. We invite participants across the academic and operational areas of the university as well as the larger community to join the conversation. We can best achieve our objectives through inclusion.

Examples of our accomplishments:

- *In 2010, the UBC Sustainability Initiative was established and began its groundbreaking work of integrating UBC's academic and operational efforts in sustainability across the whole campus and all of its programs.*
- *UBC offers over 25 programs and over 350 course options in sustainability, allowing students across disciplines and faculties to include sustainability within their studies. Fellowship and funding programs support faculty in further developing curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students.*
- *UBC has Memoranda of Understanding with the City of Vancouver, BC Hydro, the National Research Council, the University Neighbourhood Association, and Modern Green Development.*

DEMONSTRATE. UBC AS A LIVING LABORATORY

The entire UBC campus is an experiment in sustainability. We are inhabitants of a 402-hectare city in which we can test, learn, teach, apply, and share the outcomes of our inquiries. As an inquiry-driven community, we study our own behaviours and discoveries to advance sustainability scholarship inside and outside of UBC.

Examples of our accomplishments:

- *UBC is treating the campus as a single system and developing a truly integrated energy, water, waste and food system on campus.*
- *UBC is investing \$150 million in four "living laboratory" projects to meet our climate change goals: continuous building optimization in partnership with Pulse Energy and BC Hydro; the Centre*

for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS) in partnership with Honeywell, Haworth and BC Hydro; the BioEnergy Demonstration and Research project in partnership with Nexterra and GE Electric; and steam to hot water conversion, one of the largest projects of its kind in North America.

- *UTown@UBC is transforming UBC's Vancouver campus from a commuter campus into a vibrant, complete community where students, faculty, staff and others can live, work and learn. Over 50 per cent of households on campus are occupied by someone who works or studies at UBC. Twenty-nine per cent of undergraduate students and 24 per cent of full-time graduate students are housed on campus in residences. Since 1997, transit ridership to and from campus has increased by over 200% to 63,000 trips per day.*

INSPIRE. A PLATFORM FOR CHANGE

UBC is an exceptional learning environment that sets the stage for transformational dialogues and discoveries in sustainability. We create new opportunities for learning that inspire our community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and partners. This community generates personal and University-wide contributions that accelerate sustainability within and beyond the gates of UBC.

Examples of our accomplishments:

- *The Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability is North America's "most sustainable" building and a flagship facility for sustainability dialogue, demonstration, teaching and research.*

- *UBC is establishing learning "pathways" that will allow any student, regardless of their degree program, to have access to an education in sustainability. Our intent is to equip students with the competencies and capacities that enable them to contribute to the co-creation of a sustainable future.*
- *Our Memoranda of Understanding with partners include student internships in China, and the Greenest City Scholars in which graduate students assist the City of Vancouver in reaching its sustainability goals.*