

**UW Sustainability Strategic Plan Consultation  
Faculty Focus Group , February 16<sup>th</sup>, 12:30 to 2:30, 3C33  
Summary and Emerging ‘Next Steps’**

**Focus Group Participants:** Alan Diduck, Environmental Studies; Joanne Boucher, Politics; Sandra Tomsons, Philosophy; Rod Hanley, Dean of Science.

**CSO (Campus Sustainability Office) Staff present:** Alana Lajoie-O’Malley, Kisti Thomas.

<p><b>Discussion Question #1</b></p>	<p>In the sustainability survey, you were asked a question about the integration of academic teaching and research into the University’s sustainability plans. Ideas presented in the survey were: A comprehensive database of sustainability-related research on campus; The encouragement of research directly related to the University's sustainability performance; A registry of sustainability-related research project proposals on campus and/or in the community for students and/or faculty to consult as they develop their research agendas; Integrating campus-based sustainability work/research into student coursework. Following up on that question:</p> <p>To what extent would you support and/or like to be involved in such integration?</p> <p>How, if at all, do you see yourself involved in planning and participating in it?</p> <p>What are your concerns about this kind of project?</p> <p>Ideas/concerns we have heard so far include: A potential connection to the Richardson College for the Environment; Informal faculty participation by simply accessing resources made available to you by the Campus Sustainability Office (i.e. database of ongoing sustainability research projects); Faculty participation in a working group charged with integrating academics with sustainable operations (I would like to be part of working group); Concern that support for current research not be compromised.</p>
<p><b>Participant Comments</b></p>	<p>Potential exists to build strong linkages with the Richardson College for the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “The RCFE could have an important role in furthering the integration agenda, because of its inter/transdisciplinary and cross-faculty mandate.” “make it clear that this includes disciplines from sciences, social sciences, arts/humanities and business. In other words, every unit at UW has potential involvement, if there is interest.”</li> <li>○ “RCFE connection and the availability of a course sequence</li> </ul>

(minor?).”

- “Strong connection to RCFE (lots of brainstorming can be done here!)”

Uncertainty about implications and logistics of academic integration:

- “Are people raising questions re: academic objectivity/research? Is that the sense of some of the comments? Or is it funding issues?”
- “Cross-faculty coordination of opportunities for integration would be helpful.”
- “I’m confused – I support the notion of integration of teaching etc... but am not sure how this would be possible or affect what I teach... or is it meant to? Or should it?”
- “I can see obvious connections with some programmes/faculties but not others.”
- “A big challenge with further integration is reconciling other legitimate claims to foundational knowledge status (eg. Evolution, politics, philosophy).”

Required resources/structures to facilitate integration:

- “Need commitment to getting additional funding to support this research.”
- “Establish working groups so faculty can discover how they can work together for collaborative research.”
- “Get CSO involved in research grants (lots of brainstorming here!).”

There are indeed opportunities for service learning and internships:

- “The service [learning] component is obvious.”
- “Students should participate in the CSO through internships and coops (a student could develop a marketing plan for the CSI).”
- “I think this would be a good way to ‘market’ or ‘sell’ CSI to business, Indigenous studies, politics and other programmes which would like to offer hands on opportunities to their students.”

Other comments/ideas:

- “You might consider the possibility of CSO staff and faculty collaborating on this. Incorporating an explicit and visible research component into the operations of CSO would establish its academic status. This is important so that it is seen as more than an office to make UW green. By showing how it facilitates teaching, and research you demonstrate that CSO is part of the heart of what we do. Furthermore, you can get at the other piece of what we are, which is community service. CSO can be a link for Departments and faculty members to the community. It takes time to make these connections, but CSO can do so while spreading its message out into the community and in the process connecting community groups and individuals with faculty and departments which could work together to forward CSI.”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Adding a set of goals for CSO over the next 5 years gives focus for buy in.”</li> <li>○ “[Make campus-based sustainability learning] part of existing courses.”</li> <li>○ “[Create] a new sustainability stream within a department (or RCFE).”</li> <li>○ “Ultimately – Department of Sustainability.”</li> <li>○ “I would like to be directly involved. I see my role being both as a participant and administrator of strategic plans.”</li> <li>○ “CSO resources [to support sustainability research &amp; learning]: yes.”</li> <li>○ “[Establish] support for an MA in Environmental Studies – interdisciplinary.”</li> <li>○ “[Create] a research chair in environmental ethics (or values analysis).”</li> <li>○ “[Academic opportunity] for an ethical assessment of old &amp; new sustainability plan.”</li> <li>○ “[Opportunity for the] creation of a sequence of environmental ethics courses for students in Politics, Indigenous Studies, Global College, Business, etc...”</li> <li>○ “Establish a ‘green course’ for all UofW students.”</li> </ul>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<p>The key ‘action items’ coming out of this discussion were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Follow up on the possibility of establishing some form of group of academics to develop a faculty-endorsed plan aimed at appropriately integrating academic teaching, learning and research into the University’s sustainability plans.</li> <li>(2) Further discuss with Dean of Science (Rod Hanley) potential CSO linkage with RCFE.</li> <li>(3) CSO to continue to seek opportunities to work with Deans and departments to investigate opportunities for academic integration.</li> </ol>

<b>Discussion Question #2</b>	<p>How would you like to see yourself involved in planning and carrying out the University’s <i>operational</i> sustainability efforts? What barriers exist to your being involved at the moment? Ideas we have heard so far include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. As an Eco-Rep (as is currently the case)</li> <li>c. By participating in inter-departmental challenges</li> <li>d. As an information ‘hub’ for students – announcing sustainability events in your classroom, including a sentence about the Sustainability Office on your course outlines, inviting Sustainability Office staff to your classroom at the beginning of the year to inform students about how to use the ‘green features’ of our campus etc...</li> <li>e. As part of working groups charged with dealing with</li> </ol>
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	<p>various aspects of the University’s operational sustainability (as is currently the case)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f. By participating in a ‘green course delivery’ initiative</li> <li>g. By using the ‘green features’ of our campus (i.e. compost, recycling)</li> <li>h. Barriers include time and lack of knowledge of how to support current efforts</li> </ul> <p>What is your reaction to these suggestions? Do you have other suggestions?</p>
<p><b>Participant Comments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “I liked the idea of having a CSO rep come <u>into</u> classes at the beginning of the year.”</li> <li>○ “I can see participating informally, though this can mean many things (e.g. for students, in classes etc...).”</li> <li>○ “[by] being part of [academic] programme development.”</li> <li>○ “Faculty participation: difficult for immediate successes (#s of faculty); longer term successes possible with messaging and planning.”</li> <li>○ “Barrier: too little time.”</li> <li>○ “Barrier: collective bargaining agreement does not count ‘activism’ for promotion and tenure.”</li> <li>○ “Interdepartmental challenges are a good idea.”</li> <li>○ “I would like to be part of an information hub.”</li> <li>○ “Use the notion of ‘solutionaries’; combine education and solutions; focus on actions, choices, responsibility, and accountability.”</li> <li>○ “A ‘green course delivery’ initiative has potential take-up because of its obvious \$-savings implications.”</li> <li>○ “‘green course delivery’ – am terrible at this!”</li> <li>○ “Main barrier: not knowing what/how to help – the feeling that there are ‘experts’.”</li> <li>○ “Faculty are supportive of classroom presentations that explain how to use the University and what students can do to get involved.”</li> <li>○ “Alana should present at new faculty orientation sessions.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Next Steps</b></p>	<p>Shorter term possibilities for engaging faculty are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CSO staff can organize short visits to willing faculty members’ classrooms to provide sustainability orientations.</li> <li>○ CSO staff can work to create basic information sharing systems to establish faculty as information hubs for students.</li> <li>○ CSO staff can arrange to provide short orientations at new faculty orientations.</li> <li>○ CSO staff can create a better ‘user’s manual’ for the ‘green’ features of our campus.</li> </ul> <p>Mid-term possibilities for engaging faculty include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop and implement a green course delivery initiative.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop and implement a strategy to establish academically relevant coop/internship opportunities for students in the CSO.</li> </ul> <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not knowing how to help/what to do.</li> <li>○ Lack of incentive.</li> <li>○ Lack of time.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Discussion Question #3</b></p>	<p>We would like to update our sustainability vision and mission. What are your initial impressions of the following (participants were not given these in advance).</p> <p><b><u>Draft Vision/Mission #1</u></b>  <b>Vision:</b> The University of Winnipeg aspires to be a world leader in demonstrating and implementing the values, principles and practices needed to establish facilities that sustain healthy, prosperous human communities within intact and thriving natural environments.  <b>Mission:</b> This mission of the Campus Sustainability Office is to provide leadership and support to operational departments in contributing to the improvement of the University’s environmental, social, and economic sustainability performance.</p> <p><b><u>Draft Vision/Mission #2</u></b>  <b>Vision:</b> The University of Winnipeg aspires to be a living laboratory for sustainability. It will support the integration of, and dialogue between, sustainability researchers, teachers, learners, and campus operations staff to ensure that faculty and students benefit from the pedagogical and research value of our physical campus and that campus operations benefit from the academic excellence that sits at the core of the University.  <b>Mission:</b> This mission of the Campus Sustainability Office is to provide leadership and support to operational departments in reducing their environmental impact, to facilitate linkages between sustainability-related student learning, academic research, and campus operations, and to support sustainability-related academic dialogue among students and researchers.</p>
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<p><b>Participant Comments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sustainability mission statement will be critical. This would be an organizing principle for greater buy-in and participation. Three people like the second statement better.</li> <li>○ Faculty like the living laboratory idea, integration, and ‘turn into a healthy community’.</li> <li>○ Faculty like the part about ‘values, principles and practices’ that are a part of being a sustainable community.</li> <li>○ Faculty don’t like that there is no mention of health or human-environment connections in the second statement</li> <li>○ The first is more concise.</li> <li>○ The second implies the means to achieve the vision.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Give the mission statement, and then give an explanation of how (the means) you're going to do it.</li> <li>○ Positioning the CSI within the RCFE would help to integrate the CSI into senate, research, etc.</li> <li>○ Where the CSI is housed (within a faculty or college, having an academic or faculty at the head), such as at UBC.</li> <li>○ Have a faculty appointment to the CSI.</li> <li>○ Remove the word 'sustainability' before "teachers, student learners, etc."</li> <li>○ Staff shouldn't be dropped off/left out of the statement.</li> <li>○ The number 1 statements are clear and concise, but suffer from lack of scope (or breadth). The number 2 statements are more ambitious and innovative, but are potentially politically contentious, and perhaps a little wordy (I love brevity in planning documents).</li> <li>○ Vision statement number two and the second half of mission statement number two looks like it could be for the RCFE (or at least as we envisioned it back in the days of the university environment task force). Aligning yourself with the Dean of Science as he develops the RCFE might not be a bad idea (if he continues to pursue a transdisciplinary vision for the college, and not just a natural science vision).</li> <li>○ Additionally, parts of vision statement 2 are more like strategies (or means) rather than a vision or (ends).</li> <li>○ How about a happy, vague middle ground for the time being? How about inserting "and programs" after facilities in vision number 1? And inserting "and academic" after operational in mission number 2?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Next Steps</b></p>	<p><b><u>Post-Focus Group Draft Vision &amp; Mission</u></b></p> <p><b>Vision:</b> The University of Winnipeg aspires to be a living laboratory for sustainability in demonstrating and implementing the values, principles and practices needed to foster healthy, prosperous human communities within intact and thriving natural environments.</p> <p><b>Mission:</b> The mission of the Campus Sustainability Office is to (1) provide leadership and support to operational departments in reducing their environmental impact; (2) to facilitate linkages between sustainability-related learning, research, and operations and; (3) to support academic dialogue among students, faculty and staff to ensure that faculty and students benefit from the pedagogical and research value of our physical campus and that campus operations benefit from the academic excellence that sits at the core of the University.</p>