

**UW Sustainability Strategic Plan Consultation  
 Student Focus Group , February 17<sup>th</sup>, 5:00pm-7:00pm  
 Summary and Emerging ‘Next Steps’**

**Focus Group Participants:** Marlow Brownlee, Andrea Globa, Katie Haig-Anderson, Ginger Boyer, Katrina Derbecker, Christopher Clacio, Kaeleigh Ayre

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

<b>Discussion Question</b>	How did you find out about the Campus Sustainability Office?
<b>Participant Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Survey</li> <li>• Friends</li> <li>• Student group fair in September</li> <li>• UWSA</li> <li>• Through campaigns/programs such as bottled water ban, Diversity, compostable containers</li> <li>• Posters</li> <li>• Pamphlets</li> <li>• Presentations</li> <li>• Bulletin boards</li> <li>• Takeout Without in class presentation</li> </ul>

<b>Discussion Question</b>	Where do you get your news about what’s going on on campus?
<b>Participant Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook (x 2)</li> <li>• Womyn’s Centre</li> <li>• Uniter</li> <li>• Email (x 3)</li> <li>• Google alerts</li> <li>• Internet</li> </ul>

<b>Discussion Question</b>	One thing you like or don’t like about UW Sustainability right now?
<b>Participant Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visible improvements (x 3)</li> <li>• I see compost &amp; recycling bins around</li> <li>• Visible projects/programs (x 4)</li> <li>• Was a factor in my decision to come to UW (x 2)</li> </ul>

<b>Discussion Question</b>	Students are invited to be involved in these ways: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Campus Sustainability Council</li> <li>b. Working Groups</li> <li>c. Passive participation (i.e. using the systems in</li> </ol>
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	<p>place)</p> <p>d. Through participation in student groups (EcoPIA, GESA, Ice Riders, UWSA)</p> <p>What are the barriers/challenges to participating in these various ways? Are there ideas for solutions to these barriers? Other ways of getting involved?</p>
<p><b>Participant Comments</b></p>	<p>Current means of involvement are not working.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “I don’t think the 4 ways work on a broad scale. Passive participation is recognized. I didn’t know anything about the other 3 ways of getting involved.”</li> <li>○ “Campus Sustainability Council is working but could be improved – there has to be a way to increase concern within the student body. I am not sure what that is. The working groups are not working as far as I can tell – increasing involvement at this level takes more of a commitment. I’m not sure about passive participation. I’m really inclined to say that participation in student groups (EcoPIA, GESA, Ice Riders, UWSA) is working but I don’t have a lot of exposure to the groups.”</li> <li>○ “The efforts of the Council is effective, however [the student involvement part] is unreliable. It depends on student participation. Working groups are not as effective, are not common knowledge. They need more campus publicity.”</li> </ul> <p>Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Time</li> <li>● Knowledge/awareness.</li> </ul> <p>Solutions to barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Make participation academically relevant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Committee participation should count towards classes, projects, grades, research, and practicums. “It’s motivating, and makes you care more.” “Tie sustainability projects and committee membership into curriculum and practicums”</li> <li>○ Faculty (as well as student) research could be campus based.</li> <li>○ “Sustainability=interdisciplinary practice therefore adopt interdisciplinary academics [be the change!]”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Make participation enjoyable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Foster culture of sustainability (art, music, culture, love).”</li> <li>○ “Have weird, funny, outside the box projects.”</li> <li>○ “Make it fun, have games, challenges (eg. Campus Commuter Challenge).”</li> <li>○ “Make sustainability beautiful and artful.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>Especially important because people think that green practices are dirty, or require living a really Spartan, luxury-less life.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Interactive fundraising raises awareness about student groups.”</li> <li>○ “Promote, don’t blame – party, pop culture, etc...”</li> <li>● Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Audit postering practices &amp; regulations”</li> <li>○ “Not a lot of representation in the theatre building”</li> <li>○ “How to join groups is not well advertised/known”</li> <li>○ “Signage is confusing”</li> <li>○ “Not enough recycling/compost stations”</li> <li>○ “Needs to be convenient.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<b>Discussion Question</b>	Are there opportunities for student group activities and CSO activities to better support each other?
<b>Participant Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Critical mass is already present in individuals in all of the different groups – they just need to be brought together. “Get different groups working together, show how sustainability is a universal goal today (EcoPIA, LGBT*, Womyn’s Centre etc...)”</li> <li>● Contact student group leaders at the beginning of the year and have them present sustainability programs/clubs/groups.</li> <li>● Students from different groups should work together and organize an event. Having people from different groups would draw even more people into the event.</li> <li>● Students like meeting off campus at pubs or at people homes for potlucks. Meetings that revolve around socializing.</li> <li>● Different groups could give presentations on different angles of sustainability, ie. Womyn’s Centre could give a presentation on eco-feminism, etc. Wednesday of Womyn’s week in March could have an event that crosses over both issues of women and sustainability.</li> <li>● Involve all departments, not just the usual suspects. “Is there some way you could get other student groups involved, other than obvious ‘environmental’ choices? I bet there are psychology, and chemistry, and business and English students who care about sustainability (etc...)”</li> </ul>

<b>Discussion Question</b>	We would like to update our sustainability vision and mission. Time permitting, at the focus group meeting. What are your initial impressions of the following (participants were not given these in advance).
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	<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>
<p><b>Participant Comments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use fewer adjectives and big words (such as ‘pedagogical’)</li> <li>• Like the words ‘interacting’ and ‘living laboratory’ (they indicate a transitory, changing understanding).</li> <li>• Two people liked the second vision better due to words ‘interacting’ and ‘living laboratory’.</li> <li>• One person liked the first vision better due to its brevity.</li> <li>• Faculty (as well as student) research could be campus based.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Next Steps</b></p>	<p>It is clear that current avenues for student engagement in UW Sustainability initiatives are not working and that students rarely feel equipped to comment on the University’s substantive sustainability performance.</p> <p>It is also clear that there are many ideas for making UW Sustainability relevant and meaningful part of student campus life and for making it possible for student’s to make even stronger contributions to campus sustainability.</p> <p>There was significant enthusiasm about the prospect of establishing better ways of connecting different student groups together through a sustainability lens. This would enable students to contribute to the</p>

development of the University's sustainability vision while also allowing them to maintain their existing relationships to their 'home' student groups.

One idea is to establish a 'Student Sustainability Council' that would:

- Act as a networking forum through which students with involvements throughout the University can collaborate on Campus Sustainability issues/initiatives and carry information back to their constituencies.
- Provide a venue through which students can propose particular priorities, concerns, or issues to be developed and brought to the Campus Sustainability Council.
- Act as a link between the governance structures of the UWSA and those of the Campus Sustainability Council to ensure that the efforts of both related to campus sustainability are coordinated and mutually supportive.

The current plan is to arrange a follow up meeting with interested focus group participants and with relevant individuals from the new UWSA after UWSA elections are complete in March 2011.