

Academic Working Group on Sustainability

Annual Report FY2021

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG

Campus
Sustainability Office

Members of the Academic Working Group on Sustainability FY2021

Alex Tepperman (Chair) – Criminal Justice

Amelia Curran – Criminal Justice

Kevin Walby – Criminal Justice

Yvonne Vizina – Education

Michael Link – Education

Sarah Zell – Urban and Inner-City Studies

Julie Chamberlain – Urban and Inner-City Studies

Patricia Fitzpatrick – Geography

Ben Nobbs-Thiessen – History/Mennonite Studies

Joseph Wasylcia-Leis (administrative support) – Campus Sustainability Office

Background on the Academic Working Group on Sustainability

The University's Academic Working Group for Sustainability (AWGS) was first established in 2012 as part of the objectives outlined in the new Campus Sustainability Strategy. At the end of this document, we have appended both the goals from the strategy that most concern the AWGS and the appendix sections from the strategy that outline some responsibilities held by the AWGS. Since then, the group has contributed to projects like the Sustainability Course Inventory, the Student Sustainability Leadership Program, and the Richardson College for the Environment Speaker Series. However, group member turnover and the demands of teaching and research during the pandemic stalled the group's work in the Fall 2020 Semester.

In November of 2021, the AWGS was renewed with the arrival of nine new members. Over the last several months, the group has engaged in meaningful discussion about the intersections between course curricula, research programs, knowledge mobilization, student leadership and learning, sustainability, social justice, environmental justice, and Indigenous justice at the University of Winnipeg. Through these discussions and research in several directions, the AWGS developed a clear understanding of why the group exists and how it hopes to accomplish its goals.

Progress and Possibilities: 2021-2022 and Beyond

The AWGS met once a month between October 2021 and April 22. These meetings were essential for onboarding new members and building a collective understanding of the group's raison d'etre. Several members also attended a workshop hosted by AASHE on the incorporation of sustainability concepts into courses across different academic departments. Through these meetings, the members developed a new mission statement which encompasses the original intent of the group established by the Campus Sustainability Council

and provides direction for our future initiatives. The current mission statement reads as follows:

The Academic Working Group for Sustainability is an advocacy body that provides opportunities for faculty, students, and community to be leaders in sustainability education and research. We work to ensure that sustainability and other ideas relating to social and environmental justice, and Indigenization remain central to teaching, research, and learning at the University of Winnipeg.

In the coming academic year, the AWGS will pursue the following goals:

- 1) Host workshops that help interested faculty to integrate sustainability concepts into courses across many departments, drawing on models for faculty engagement and development established by other universities.
- 2) Develop a collaborative research project led by AWGS members and supported by Campus Sustainability Office staff that tracks the impact of these workshops.
- 3) Advocate for sustainability as a key issue in future administrative strategy and mandates like the Integrated Academic and Research Plan.
- 4) Provide academic oversight to the existing Student Sustainability Leadership Program and related activities like a student leadership retreat.
- 5) Explore the possibility of establishing a sustainability-related alternative credentialing program at the University of Winnipeg

The AWGS will continue to grow our membership and offer opportunities for UWinnipeg faculty to engage with each other and develop initiatives pursuant to our new mission and goals.



Alex Tepperman
Chair, Academic Working Group on Sustainability