

Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee *2022 Annual Report*

*By Brad Harasymchuk, ESAC Chair
(2022/2023)*

Purpose of ESAC

The Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC) is dedicated to providing evidence-based advice with regard to environmental sustainability policies and practices that foster a sustainable future and lead to health and economic benefits for the University community. The ESAC will act to promote dialogue and discussion on issues related to the environment and sustainability. The ESAC is also committed to fostering environmental literacy, sustainable development, and environmental responsibility at Thompson Rivers University that can serve as a model for others. See our [Terms of Reference](#).

Responsibilities of ESAC

1. To advise the Board of Governors and Senate regarding the development, operation, and continuous evaluation of sustainability-related policy at TRU, including the current TRU Strategic Sustainability Plan.
2. To investigate environmental sustainability-related issues of concern at TRU and make recommendations to Administration, the Board of Governors and Senate within their respective areas of responsibility.
3. To communicate and collaborate with the Sustainability Office on environmental sustainability issues.
4. To advise the Accreditation Steering Committee and report on mission fulfilment in relation to one of TRU's core themes, Sustainability.

Introduction

Thompson Rivers University's Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee had another great year in fulfilling its purpose locally, nationally and globally. In the last academic year, ESAC, has worked closely with the TRU Sustainability Office to champion sustainability. ESAC's membership is made up of a highly engaged group of students, faculty, staff and administrators who are dedicated to sustainability and are active participants in six subcommittees (Core Theme Planning, Zero-Waste, Sustainability Education in the Curriculum, Awards, Sustainable Purchasing and Biodiversity) which plan and execute many of the environmental sustainability related activities and events at TRU and in the community.

A quick overview of this work includes:

- An 86% rate of mission fulfillment for the core theme of Sustainability
- Continued implementation of Bird Strike protective window coverings on Clocktower, OLARA, and budget is allocated and planning has started for OM and CAC
- TRU is no longer purchasing a variety of single use non-compostable items (e.g., bags, cutlery, straws, stir sticks)
- TRU [Zero-Waste Plan](#) (2022-2027) completed
- Facilitation of sustainability events such as Trash Bash (biggest ever), Energy Dance, Tree Planting, and Solar Table Competition
- Progress toward development of an interdisciplinary sustainability course with a local Indigenous focus
- Completion of the 2022 STARS report for sustainability tracking, submitted this Fall
- 14 staff Ambassadors and 9 student Ambassadors are stewards of sustainability on campus and share knowledge with peer members
- The Sierra Club once again named TRU as one of North America's top "Cool Schools" coming in 3rd place, just behind University of California Irvine, and Arizona State University. Rankings are based on sustainability courses, campus green initiatives, and environmental engagement.
- TRU still holds a Platinum Stars rating (STARS = Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System) through the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). This year was busy in preparing the current STARS report and we are eager to receive the results in December.

ESAC Membership 2021/2022:

Christine Miller – Chair, Faculty, EDSW
Tina Matthew – Vice Chair, Executive Director, Office of Indigenous Education
James Gordon – Manager of Sustainability Programs
Robyn Hollas – Director of Ancillary Service
Warren Asuchak – Director of Facilities
Scott Blackford – General Counsel
Christine Adam – Deans Council Rep
Dipesh Prima – Appointed by the Board
Lilian Kwan – Appointed by the Board
Elder, Mike Arnouse – Appointed by the Board
Jana Noskova – Faculty, SOBE
Meng Sun – Faculty, SOBE
Carolyn Ives – Faculty, CELT
Brad Harasymchuk – Faculty, EDSW
Pete Hrkac – Staff, IPE
Sarah Martin – Staff, OSEM
Thamindu Widyaratne – TRUSU Rep
Gabriela Rivera – TRUSU Rep
Alana Hoare – Accreditation Liaison Officer
Lora Sartori – ESAC Support and Admin
Vacant – JOHSC Committee Rep



Winners of the Solar Picnic Table contest along with TRU Sustainability staff.

Reports of Subcommittees

Core Theme Planning Subcommittee: Mission Fulfilment

The Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee is one of the Senate Mission Fulfilment Committees responsible for reporting on institutional effectiveness based on key performance indicators and measures of success.

Core Theme Planning Subcommittee

The Core Theme Planning Subcommittee meets monthly to work on mission fulfillment planning and reporting. The outcomes of the work done by this subcommittee contribute to planning and accountability in tracking TRU's mission, vision, values, and strategic change goals. Specifically, the subcommittee identifies outcomes, indicators, and targets for tracking achievement of TRU's goal to *Lead in Sustainability* and our value of *Sustainability*:

TRU recognizes how the health of our societies, cultures, and ecosystems rest upon wellness of people, biodiversity, and wise stewardship of precious and finite resources. As a world leader in sustainability, TRU knows that the well-being of generations to come is shaped by what we do today.

During the 2021/2022 academic year, TRU achieved 86% in mission fulfillment with respect to sustainability-related goals and indicators. See below for the status of individual indicators:

Table 1: Identification of Mission Fulfilment Range

Indicator # and descriptor	Prior Year Value	Current Value	Mission Fulfilment Range
1.2 Plan for Carbon Neutral and Net Zero Campus (Greenhouse Gas Emissions)	3,379 (\$83,625)	3,341 (\$83,525)	Not achieved
1.3 Eliminate Single-Use Plastics and Other Single-Use Items	1	1	Minimally achieved
1.4 Integrate Sustainable Purchasing Throughout Campus Operations measured by the number of Sustainable Purchasing Workshops delivered	8	8	Achieved
1.6 Building Design and Construction is mindful of Biodiversity and protecting native species measured by application of 3M Feather Friendly window film	1	1	Minimally achieved
2.2 Student Ambassadors are stewards of sustainability on campus and share knowledge with community members	0	9	Achieved
2.3 Staff Ambassadors are stewards of sustainability on campus and share knowledge with community members	0	14	Achieved
3.2 Percentage of undergraduate baccalaureate degree students who complete the Citizenship Institutional Learning Outcome course with a minimum of C grade or better.	87.6%	87.6%	Minimally Achieved

Through the Core Theme Planning process, this subcommittee was able to identify:

Strengths	Opportunities	Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Installing Bird Strike protective window coverings around TRU• Sustainability related events and programs - Trash Bash, Tree Planting, the Zero Waste program• Global recognition around environmental sustainability (AASHE and Sierra Club)• Implement the 5-year Zero-Waste Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase the number of student and staff ambassadors• Increase participation in active and alternative commuter transportation• Continue to reduce single-use non-compostable plastic items on campus• Increase partnership with the City of Kamloops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Move forward with plans for the Low Carbon Energy District System• Development of an interdisciplinary sustainability course with an Indigenous focus• Work towards an EDI focussed purchasing framework• Create the best bicycle commuting incentive program in a Canadian university

More information regarding Mission Fulfilment and the Core Theme Sustainability is available online: <https://www.tru.ca/about/tru-mission-statement/themes/sustainability.html>

Zero Waste Subcommittee

The Zero Waste Subcommittee is committed to the reduction of waste on campus. This includes over 20 different waste streams including from commercial, residential and general campus waste. This subcommittee is made of a group of collaborative, hard-working individuals working towards the zero-waste goals.

The Subcommittee developed a [Zero-waste plan](#) with the goal of 50% diversion from landfill from the campus and residential waste streams over the next 5 years.

Sustainability Education in the Curriculum Subcommittee

The Sustainability Education in the Curriculum sub-committee (SECS) reports to the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC) and is committed to providing TRU faculty and programs with evidence-based curriculum and teaching practices to foster sustainability-related content, processes, and practices within courses and programs. SECS also encourages faculty and programs to engage with and integrate the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into curriculum and assess progress towards achievement of them. See the following for the [Terms of Reference](#).

Awards Subcommittee

The Awards Subcommittee is responsible for advertising, selecting recipients and disbursing funds for sustainability-related awards including the Tom Owen Award and the Environmental Sustainability Achievement Awards, open to faculty, staff and students. Embedded are the [terms of reference](#).

This year's award recipients are:

- Staff Award – Natalie Yao
- Student Award – Cole Perison
- Student Award – Patricia Siqueira
- Student Award – Behnaz Bahroudi

Also, the Tom Owen Award was increased from \$500 to \$1000 to better align with the Environmental Sustainability Achievement Awards.



Patricia Siqueira, winner of the Environmental Sustainability Achievement Award

Sustainable Purchasing Subcommittee

This subcommittee is in its second year and is dedicated to ensuring sustainable purchasing practices. A [sustainable purchasing guide](#) was created for staff and faculty to consider sustainability in their procurement decisions. Sustainable procurement looks at three key areas of environmental, ethical and social implications. A total of 10 [purchasing fact sheets](#) have been created to help staff and faculty in making more sustainable purchases. A Sustainable Purchasing Workshop was created by the Procurement Department and Sustainability Office staff and was presented to eight offices/departments on campus; with the goal of presenting it to 8 more each year until all offices/departments are done.

Biodiversity Subcommittee

This subcommittee is in its second year and is dedicated to preserving and increasing biodiversity on campus. A few highlights from the subcommittee include:

- The Bird Strike Film project is ongoing. Installation continued with OLARA, Clocktower, OM and CAC.
- The [TRU Tree Program](#) continued and saw the planting of 51 big trees and 51 small trees on TRU's campus.

An agreement was signed with Spa Hills with a focus on further reduction of food waste, with TRU now being able to compost paper towel and many paper take-out containers, among other products.



TRU Tree Program team planted 102 trees around campus

Looking Ahead

ESAC is excited to move forward and not only maintain its high standard for mission fulfillment but move forward in promoting environmental sustainability at TRU and in the community. Some of the areas that have been targeted are as follows:

1. Reporting for STARS rating is performed on a three year cycle and the Sustainability Office is busy completing a report due later this fall. Our goal is to maintain our STARS Platinum rating.
2. Maintain the focus towards achievement of the six priorities set out in the 2020-2025 TRU Campus Strategic Sustainability Plan:
 - a. Plan for carbon neutral and net zero campus carbon emissions
 - b. Eliminate single-use plastics and other single-use items
 - c. Integrate sustainable purchasing throughout campus operations
 - d. Conserve potable water
 - e. Advance sustainability performance of the campus built environment
 - f. Champion sustainability beyond campus for a global impact
3. In addition to these priorities, over the next year ESAC will also strive to:
 - a. Promote our ambassador programs
 - b. Move the environmental sustainability course through the course approval
 - c. Develop EDI focused sustainable purchasing practices across campus
 - d. Increase biodiversity on campus

ESAC will continue to work closely with the Sustainability Office to further TRU's Strategic Goal of Sustainability and strive for 100% Mission Fulfillment, guided by TRU's Vision Statement and Campus Strategic Sustainability Plan, which is integrated with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The global climate challenges are real and change needs to happen and I am certain TRU, with the assistance of ESAC, is up to the challenge.



Brad Harasymchuk

Chair, Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee 2022/2023