

Students' Positionality in the University of Calgary Certificate in Sustainability Studies

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Certificate in Sustainability Studies

- An **interdisciplinary** embedded certificate in Sustainability Studies
 - One of the first of its kind in Canada, officially launched Fall 2017
 - Focus on applied research and experiential learning that address real-world sustainability topics & challenges
 - Taken in conjunction (embedded) with most* undergraduate degree programs at UCalgary
 - No additional cost to students
 - Students will graduate with the knowledge and skills to become sustainability leaders in their careers and communities



Program Learning Outcomes

1. Develop foundational knowledge of concepts and theories relating to sustainability
2. Identify and critically examine sustainability issues from multiple perspectives and disciplines (interdisciplinary)
3. Identify ethical issues in the field of sustainability and use an evidence-based approach to evaluate them
4. Experiential learning as the basis of curriculum



Research & Program Interest

The crucial importance of each student's personal identity in achieving sustainability learning outcomes

The value of collaborative work in students' understandings of the complexity of sustainability issues

The vital role of students' recognition of their positionality, privilege, and cultural backgrounds in conducting sustainability research



Collaborative Work

Collaborative nature of the program engages students in sharing their personal experiences, allowing for a deeper engagement with complex sustainability issues. By disrupting the top-down model, students' identities become essential and central in sustainability education and learning.



Collaborative Learning Opportunities

“Group work, working with faculties on an issue helped me understand and get a variety of perspectives on issues”

“Like working in groups because it’s what you would do in the real world. It’s helpful for learning”

“We live in a multicultural country but are still in our cultural niches. [The course] taught me how to sit and talk in society”

“... working together with other people with different perspectives and understandings ... really brings this asset to the table. Since a lot of us come from different degrees, it helps us understand outside perspectives, and think outside of the box. We all bring very different useful things to the table and complement each other.”



Student Positionality

“It is my belief that the lessons and discussions conveyed within SUST 501 underscored the need for implementing cultural and ethical solutions to social, economic and environmental problems by seeking solutions that do not simply apply band-aid fixes to systemic problems, but also utilize compassion, empathy, humility, and dignity in their implementation”

“My position within our society, but also the world as a whole has afforded me a sort of blissful ignorance to the impacts of my actions”

“Starting to lose my culture, and I think sustainability kind of put me back. I didn’t think these classes would connect everything so well. It helps you understand your own roots”

“Addressing our own biases, and learning how to address them, and how they stand in the way, and the different lenses we see issues. Privileged to be in university discussing these issues. How to help out in a good and sustainable way rather than just butting in.”

