

SHECA

May 15, 2019



A Close Look at
UB's Trash Stream -
What can we recycle and
why are we throwing it out?

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT
BUFFALO

1998



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The Association for the Advancement
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2019 AASHE Conference & Expo

Co-Creating a Sustainable Economy

October 27–30, 2019 | Spokane, WA | aashe.org/conference



Thompson Rivers University



Land Acknowledgement

Collaboration & Partnership

- Within campuses between departments and academic programs and trying to do more with less
- Within communities between campuses, NGO's, and businesses and maximizing the win-win of the college or university gains as well as the business partner
- Between campuses such as Yukon and U of Alberta and how the extended communities of both institutions have benefited from this collaboration
- We heard about deriving meaningful relationships between partners, about having buy in and clear goals
- We heard that some collaborations are lighter touch while others are much more intensive

Challenges

- Resource constraints
- Capacity constraints
- Geographical challenges
- Lack of or not enough institutional support
- Reducing impact & footprint while institution's grow

Sustainable Campus Session

We heard about plans:

- Strategic plans
- Curriculum plans
- GHG reduction plans
- Waste reduction plans
- Energy efficiency plans

Data and Making Informed Decisions

- Whether it be related to a community-based-research project or transitioning to a cogen plant, we talked about processes for collecting data from students, faculty, community members and other resources to help our institutions make the most informed decision to arrive at the desired outcome
- We learned about contamination in recycling being a significant challenge but that staffing waste bins has been helpful
- We learned about how campuses are working to advance their own sustainability goals while integrating academics through engaging students in audits and research opportunities

Striving for Improvement & Learning from Peers

- We talked about metrics and how campuses are measuring their performance and striving for improvement
- Megan from Calgary mentioned STARS as a great resource for benchmarking and I'll reiterate the value the tool provides to not just benchmarking with peers but in understanding how the institution is actually performing (as opposed to what you think or hope)

Experiential Learning

- Linking theory with practical application
- Programs are helping students prepare for the work force and incorporate practical skills around interviewing, resume building, etc. into the core content of the curriculum
- From the Manitoba model we heard how the co-op model is a one-stop shop for students & employers; that both are gaining so much value from the program
- We heard from Vanier College that experiential learning helps students become professionals before they're even aware of it
- From U Calgary we learned about students' positionality, their social and political context, frames the way students interact and that they don't shy away from discomfort; in fact the faculty encourage it. Getting students to interact and better understand each other has added tremendous value to the certificate program.
- From EcoCanada we learned about the huge potential with indigenous students in environmental careers

Keynote

Some key pieces I appreciated from Ingrid's presentation are:

- While cost-benefit analyses provide a lot of value, there is something lost when we convert moral value into monetary terms.
- That “willingness to pay” perspective confuses wants & preferences with values and does not drive moral decision-making
- Move from Egocentric to ecocentric and to make values more explicit
- But also to understand core vs. negotiable values.
- Ingrid's call to bring into the classroom & curriculum interdisciplinary environmental education: from ecological sciences to gender to justice to sustainability

Today

Decolonizing Post-secondary Institutions

Indigenous Perspectives

- All my relations - how we are in relations not just with people but the land
- Seven Generations - learning from our ancestors and informing our decisions for today that will impact tomorrow
- Medicine Wheel Teachings
- Consider institution's philosophical underpinnings when initiating decolonization discussions
- “In a good way” - paying attention to ancestors & informing institutional decisions
- Past, present & future is evident in every moment

Look to Royal Commissions on Aboriginal Peoples

Implementing treaties is the ultimate decolonization force; they are respectful and reciprocal

4 Principles

1. Recognition
2. Respect
3. Sharing
4. Responsibility

For sustained reconciliation we're going to have to talk about racism.

Need to create life-long relationships with indigenous communities; no parachuting in and out (to be clear about motivations & intentions)

Keep Calm & Decolonize - restore indigenous worldviews

Indigenization

General Reflections

- Inclusivity
 - the theme of this conference, was integrated into the content of many presentations but I think it could be even more intentional in our work
 - DEI is a HUGE priority for AASHE and so many of our members campuses
- SDGs
 - I heard that these aren't really guiding strategy or decisions on campus; this is interesting and differs from many other events where I've heard from campuses that have reorganized all of their sustainability work using the lens of the SDGs
 - STARS 2.2. Alignment with SDGs
 - Times Higher Ed Ranking
- Faculty & staff collaboration
 - We can do more!
- Student Engagement.....



“Greetings from the Dandelion Liberation Brigade – an organization started at the University at Buffalo in Buffalo, NY for the liberation of all beings.

We the undersigned, hereby demand the halt of all chemical lawn spraying on UB grounds. Under no circumstances should aesthetics take priority over ecosystem and human health.

Therefore, until pesticides are eliminated from use, the University at Buffalo is deemed unsafe for the university community and surrounding areas.”

STUDENTS WIN BAN ON SPRAYING UB LAWN

By Dan Herbeck | Published May 9, 2000

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Score one victory for a group of environmentally minded University at Buffalo students who call themselves "the Dandelion Liberation Brigade."

University officials confirmed Monday that they have reconsidered an earlier plan and will not use chemical sprays to control dandelions at the Amherst and Buffalo campuses -- for this year, at least.

The university intended to hire an outside contractor to spray 30 acres of lawn in anticipation of graduation ceremonies this weekend. UB President William Greiner decided to abandon that plan, however, after an aggressive but peaceful protest last month by some students and university employees.





MIKE GROLL/Bufalo News

University at Buffalo student Neghan Fay and others rallied earlier this week to protest the university's plans for new housing on the North Campus in Amherst.

What does Sustainability in Higher Ed look like in the next 10 years?