This issue of the Good News celebrates the accomplishments in all three focus areas of the University of Alberta’s Office of Sustainability: Outreach & Engagement, Teaching & Research, and Facilities & Operations. Guided by the Sustainability Plan, this year saw continued success and growth in many annual events like Sustainability Awareness Week and Eco Move Out, as well as the launch of new programs and initiatives like the Green Spaces Certification Program and the university’s next generation Energy Management Program called Envision. The university also received a number of recognitions, including the title of Greenest Employer for the fourth consecutive year and a Green Key rating of “3” for its Lister Conference Centre and Guest Suites.
Sustainability Awareness Week

Sustainability Awareness Week 2012 produced over 7,500 connections at 49 workshops, tours, and events. Coordinated by the Office of Sustainability, the event was made possible through the commitment, enthusiasm, and hard work of 35 campus organizations and 23 community organizations.

Green Spaces

Developed in 2012, the university’s Green Spaces Certification program launched and certified its first space in March of 2013. The program is a three-level, voluntary certification process that encourages people on campus to adopt sustainable practices and green their operations. Program participants complete a series of sustainable actions outlined in a checklist, which is customizable based on the needs of their space. Once completed, the area becomes recognized as a Green Space with either Bronze, Silver, or Green & Gold certification. Currently, the Green Spaces program certifies both offices and events. Certification for labs is coming soon with the support of Fisher Scientific.

Sustainability Speaker Series

In collaboration with campus and community partners, the Office of Sustainability hosted three more leaders for the Sustainability Speaker Series. Thomas Homer-Dixon, Raj Patel and Adria Vasil addressed packed houses, exploring issues of food security, health and wellness, and energy transition.

Student Sustainability Summit

In January 2013, the third annual Student Sustainability Summit brought post-secondary students from campuses across Edmonton together to participate in sessions with local community leaders and panels on topics, such as social justice, sustainable food systems, change management and local economies.

Taking Action on Waste at Residences

The Office of Sustainability, Facilities & Operations and Residence Services piloted the Waste in Residence project in the Graduate Residence and East Campus Walk-ups, which tracked the volume and contamination in the recycling and organics bins biweekly for one year. During this time, contamination in two of the three targeted recycling streams decreased by approximately 15 per cent. 756 compostable bags were distributed for use between January and April 2013 in the two target residences and 15 per cent of residents opted to rent a set of personal recycle and organics bins.

Eco Move Out

Students moving out of residence this spring can be proud to have kept over 8.5 tonnes of electronics, non-perishable food and toiletries, clothing, household items, books and more out of the landfill. Currently in its second year, Eco Move Out donation and recycling program is a strong collaboration with Residence Services and other on- and off-campus partners. It is the foundation for the upcoming Green Res project.

ecoREPS

The Office of Sustainability’s ecoREPs program continued to help green the offices of staff, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students. With lunchtime workshops and staff support, ecoREPs are given the tools and resources to launch sustainability projects within their own offices. ecoREP alumni have started composting in Lister, organized the CAPS Career Closet, among other initiatives.

OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

PHOTOS

1. Sustainability Assistant, Tori Smith shows off some of UAlberta’s sustainability features during Sustainability Awareness Week.
2. Graduate student, Sascha Bachmann receives the first ever Green Spaces Offices certification for the Silviculture Laboratory.
3. Raj Patel presents a lecture on food systems to a packed room, as part of the Sustainability Speaker Series.
4. Students participate in an interactive session at the 2013 Student Sustainability Summit.
5. A peek at an East Campus Village and Graduate Residence recycling station.
6. Sustainability Intern, Yasir Ali shows off just a small fraction of the donations collected as part of Eco Move Out 2013.
Green Purchasing

Green purchasing is outlined in the Sustainability Plan as one of the key strategies for advancing the institution’s sustainability leadership and performance. This year, the Office of Sustainability distributed 500 USB flash drives (pictured right) to work units across campus. Not only did these flash drives, with casing made from wood reclaimed from used shipping pallets, provide an example of a product that embodies the University of Alberta’s green purchasing principles, but they also contained documents and resources to encourage both staff and faculty to get involved with sustainability by greening their purchasing decisions.

One Simple Act on Campus: Living Art

Living Art was a special One Simple Act on Campus collaboration between the Office of Sustainability and Visual Communication Design students. The design students used a variety of items that might normally end up in the landfill to design sustainable and functional projects (pictured left), such as a can crusher crafted from scrap wood and old plumbing pipes; and a wine rack constructed from pallets.

GREEN PURCHASING SUCCESS

With the support of the Office of Sustainability and Supply Management Services, Edmonton Clinic Health Academy (ECHA) switched to use 30% recycled content paper.

TEACHING & RESEARCH

This focus area promotes and advances sustainability in academic programs and activities. Our staff includes an Academic Director appointed by the Provost to provide leadership from within the academy, as well as student support. Faculty, staff and students at the University of Alberta already conduct a considerable amount of research related to sustainability and there are also many sustainability related courses and co-curricular activities on campus. We are seeking to expand the number of students who graduate with exposure and competencies related to sustainability.

Curriculum Development Workshops

From June 12 – 14, 2012, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and the university provided a workshop to provide training and collaboration opportunities for higher education faculty in curriculum development that integrates sustainability as an academic focus and pedagogical process. U.S. and Canadian higher education personnel had the opportunity to participate in a 2.5 day workshop at the University of Alberta facilitated by Thomas Kelly (UNH) and Maria Woolson (Middlebury). The workshop focused on using the campus as a learning and living laboratory for sustainability solutions through interdisciplinary curriculum development.

Meet the Academic Director

Naomi Krogman became the Academic Director of the Office of Sustainability in August 2012. She is also a Professor of Environmental Sociology in the Department of Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology. She has done research on sustainable consumption, environmental policy implementation, integrated and collaborative resource management, gender, environmental change and development and social impacts of resource development. She teaches courses on social theory about environmental change and sociology of environment and development. She currently holds a position as a Provost’s Fellow, to examine the quality of graduate student and post-doctoral supervision at the University of Alberta. For the past four years, Naomi has also served as an elected member of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance. She believes professors should be engaged with various communities of interest and practice to learn from others and share what they know in a face-to-face manner.
Facilities & Operations

Waste Audit

The 2012 Waste Audit turned campus into a living laboratory for students in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Targeting organic waste from on-campus food services, students audited seven major buildings, including SUB and HUB. Based on the audit’s preliminary results, the university’s overall diversion rate for 2012 is estimated at 40 per cent, only a short distance from the 2015 goal to cut waste in half. Following back-to-back years of successful auditing, the university is developing methodologies to continue with annual waste audits.

Envision

Launched in 2012, Envision is the next generation of the university’s Energy Management Program that has saved $288 million and two million tonnes of greenhouse gases since 1975. By implementing energy efficiency and conservation measures across campus, the program saved the university $14.3 million in energy-related fees for the 2011-12 year alone. Already, solar and wind energy projects are generating close to 400 kW on campus, and new solar arrays are being added to new constructions. Envision is projected to prevent 30,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and save $35 million over seven years.

LEED Silver Certification

The Graduate Residence in East Campus Village was awarded a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver designation by the Canada Green Building Council in February 2013. LEED is used to benchmark and recognize the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. The project, comprised of four new buildings along 87 Avenue and 110 Street, was recognized for meeting or exceeding performance in five key areas of human and environmental health—sustainable site development, water efficiency, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

BOMA BEST

Facilities & Operations has been working to earn BOMA BEST certification for a number of buildings on North Campus. The program, which is offered by the Building Owners and Managers Association of Canada (BOMA), critically assesses six key areas of environmental performance and management: energy, water, waste reduction and site, missions and effluents, indoor environment, and environmental management system. Buildings are rated on four levels, starting at Level 1, with Level 4 being the highest level of achievement.

In order for a building to qualify, it needs to meet 14 BEST practices, complete the BOMA BEST assessment modules, and go through third-party verification. Four buildings have been added to the university’s current list of 15 BOMA BEST certified buildings, and five more campus buildings are on track to receive certification by the end of 2013.

Current BOMA BEST certified buildings

North Campus
- General Services Building – Level 2
- National Institute for Nanotechnology – Level 2
- Students’ Union Building – Level 2
- Triffo Hall – Level 3
- Katz Group Centre – Level 2
- Li Ka Shing Centre – Level 2
- Heritage Medical Research Centre – Level 2
- National High Field Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Centre – Level 2
- Augustana Campus
- Auxiliary Building – Level 2
- Classroom & Science Building – Level 1
- Convocation Centre – Level 2
- Facilities Building – Level 2
- Faith & Life Centre – Level 2
- Forum Building – Level 3
- Founders Hall – Level 1

PHOTOS

1. Student staff, Salim Hammoum sorts waste as part of the audit.
2. Inside view of the heating plant that operates as part of Envision.
3. Outside view of the heating plant at night.
4. The newly LEED-certified Graduate Residence.
The Sustainability Plan

Signed off by the Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) and the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) in January 2012, the Sustainability Plan marked a major milestone in our efforts to improve sustainability at the University of Alberta. It has collated the many strategic goals, initiatives and practices that guide the University of Alberta’s efforts in environmentally-, socially- and economically-sustainable leadership in the next few years. Some of the strategies are quick wins and involve incremental changes to existing practices. Other strategies require deep changes to policy and governance approvals. Approximately 76 per cent of the strategies identified in the plan are in progress or completed.

Campus Achievements 2012–13

Want to get involved in campus sustainability?

Visit us online at sustainability.ualberta.ca to learn more about our projects and to subscribe to our monthly Sustainability eNews.

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