



University of Toronto

Office of the Assistant Vice-President, Campus and Facilities Planning

FOR INFORMATION

TO: Planning and Budget

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AGENDA ITEM: 5

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

The Sustainability Office Annual Report

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Planning and Budget Committee is responsible for monitoring planning activities and documents.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The Sustainability Office continues to meet the objectives identified in “Stepping-Up” including enhancing the student experience through very successful student engagement, interdisciplinary collaboration between students and faculty throughout many divisions of the University that link teaching and research and by promoting scholarship and education in a highly relevant and timely subject.

Initially funded through a grant from the Toronto Atmosphere Fund the Sustainability Office has secured funding from the Student Experience Fund. Together with contributions from Campus and Facilities Planning, Facilities and Services, UTM and UTSC, sufficient funds are in place to maintain core operations of the Sustainability Office for three years.

The Sustainability Office is a unique unit within the University of Toronto, reporting to both the Vice-President and Provost, and the Vice-President, Business Affairs. Its mandate, to reduce resource consumption by developing projects, policies and programs and creating a culture of sustainability at the University, is achieved by harnessing faculty research, student energy and ideas, and staff dedication. The Sustainability Office works with Facilities and Services to develop inventories of energy use and retrofit projects to conserve energy.

The Sustainability Office also continues to enjoy a large amount of media attention through press articles and publications in addition to attracting ever increasing numbers of participants to widely publicized events.

This year grant applications totaling greater than \$1.2 million were submitted to many agencies, indicating the level of commitment to student driven initiatives.

Each campus has enjoyed significant success in outreach to the University of Toronto, municipal, national and international communities. Numerous projects and initiatives that address sustainability are underway at all three campuses, enhanced by the integration of research, learning and implementation. These initiatives use the University as a living laboratory to test a myriad of sustainability strategies, an approach that has proven to be successful in engaging students, faculty and staff while at the same time improving campus sustainability. The Sustainability Office collaborated in the lighting and chiller retrofit project approved last year, and now being implemented, just to illustrate one of the many significant contributions.

Three successful student led initiatives were established which have been institutionalized at the University. The first – a unique, community-based energy conservation campaign known as “ReWire” – empowers students, staff, and faculty to reduce their energy usage through simple changes in lifestyle and technology. The second – a student-run bicycle network known as “Bike Chain” – provides free bicycle maintenance and training workshops to the campus community. The third – a paper conservation campaign known as ReSource – aims to radically reduce the paper the University uses every year. All of these initiatives, based in the Sustainability Office, are also rigorously monitored research projects, engaging both students and faculty in practical and theoretical investigations of conservation on campus. It is primarily through these research projects that the Sustainability Office interacts with the Centre for Environment – by engaging students from the Centre for Environment (and from elsewhere on campus) in project work through independent study and regular courses, work study employment and through summer and part-time winter jobs for undergraduate and graduate students. There is also collaboration with the Centre for Environment on a major collaborative Sustainable Energy Solutions research project.

This year, a Sustainability Board was established, bringing together representatives from each campus to better co-ordinate tri-campus planning with existing on-going initiatives on the UTM campus and new programs on the UTSC campus, and implementation of energy and resource conservation efforts. The development of a tri-campus Sustainability Plan will set ambitious targets for the next three years.

The main reason for the success of the Sustainability Office continues to be the dedication, knowledge, and resourcefulness of students, staff and faculty at each campus.