Canadian Bureau for International Education

Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals at Canadian Universities

A Snapshot of Activities, Initiatives and Strategies Adopted by Institutions Across the Country

Created by the International Relations Professional Learning Community (IR-PLC)

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MESSAGE FROM CBIE

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of all global citizens. These goals were adopted by all United Nations (UN) Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since 2015, these global goals have been translated and embedded into the strategic direction of institutions at national and local levels. Through research, teaching and learning, and community engagement, education institutions play a critical role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2020 as the global community grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing cleavages and inequalities across and within nation-states, CBIE convened community conversations on the vital role education institutions can play in helping to make a difference to local and global societies across all dimensions of life and community.

This report stems from one of those vibrant community exchanges from late last year. It provides a snapshot of Canadian universities' work to embed the SDGs in their strategic planning and core operations. The institutions' inputs offer insight into how international education leaders and practitioners can practically and strategically advance progress toward the SDGs through their internationalization efforts and institutional frameworks.

Suffice it to say; there is considerably more work to be done in Canada and around the world to meet the UN's call to action. CBIE will use its platform to continue this conversation and support Canada's education institutions in contributing to the sustainable development agenda. This report is the first of an intended series that will highlight the initiatives of education institutions across the full spectrum of the sector in Canada. We hope that this report and the subsequent reports will inspire other institutions that seek to creatively and compassionately advance this important work.

We would like to thank the contributing institutions and authors to this report, as well as the past co-chairs of the International Relations Professional Learning Community (IR-PLC), Carol Zachs and Julio Sevilla, for their leadership.

Canada's international education sector has an important role to play in contributing to sustainable development. Our community grows when institutions and institutional colleagues are able to engage and explore critical conversations that seek to foster a more inclusive and sustainable future for all.

Larissa Bezo
President and CEO
Canadian Bureau for International Education

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in different cultures and contexts serve as change agents for sustainability. As society faces colossal challenges related to social injustice, environmental degradation, gender inequality, inclusive education and affordable healthcare, HEIs must take action. HEIs can build new cross-sectoral partnerships, access new funding streams and provide students, faculty and staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to motivate and empower them to embrace the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all aspects of their lives.

HEIs serve as hubs of discovery and provide the necessary knowledge, evidence base, technologies, and solutions. Using interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches, they are able to build capacity in lower-middle-income countries and island states by supporting businesses and developing solutions to positively address challenges in local and global communities. However, implementation of these actions requires HEIs to conjure a spirit of multilateralism to enable growing trust and inject positive energy between its partners and collaborators. The COVID-19 crisis has accelerated inequalities and widened the gap of economic disparity, prompting the question of whether the pandemic has led to a multilateralism crisis.

HEIs can shape the international agenda and drive collective action to achieve global peace and prosperity. However, realizing such a vision requires systemic transformation and a holistic whole-of-institution approach. Education stakeholders, partners and learners must work together to construct a common vision of sustainability, with the SDGs as endpoints. By embedding, integrating and implementing SDGs in an institution's core operations and plans, decision-making and policies, research, teaching, learning, and governance, HEIs can become powerhouses for sustainable transformation. Though not an exhaustive list, this report offers examples of universities in Canada taking action to advance sustainable development.

OVERVIEW OF INITIATIVES
Advancing the SDGs at Canadian Universities

STRATEGIES AND ORGANIZATION

- ► Map SDGs activities
- ► Undertake a Voluntary University Review (VUR) to map activities and assets around the SDGs
- ► Implement SDG strategies and plans
- ► Establish SDG working groups
- ► Launch SDG websites
- ► Recognize faculty and student efforts related to the advancement of the SDGs
- ► Develop SDG toolkits for students and professors
- ► Establish dedicated SDGs offices

POLICIES OPERATIONS

- ► Implement environmental policies on campus
- ► Incorporate policies on equality and non-discrimination on campus
- ► Increase awareness of and engagement with the SDGs across the institution
- ► Establish SDG hubs
- ► Implement zero waste policies on campus

MEASURING PROGRESS

- ► Participate in the:
  - Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings
  - Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS)
  - UI GreenMetric World University Rankings
  - Sierra Cool Schools
  - Princeton Review's Green College Honor Roll
- ► Adopt KPIs related to the SDGs
- ► Draft an annual report on progress towards achieving the SDGs

NETWORKS AND COLLABORATIONS

Join the:
- ► Sustainable Development Solutions Network Canada (SDSN Canada)
- ► Decade of Action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- ► Montreal Carbon Pledge
- ► University Climate Change Coalition
- ► U7 Alliance
- ► Talloires Declaration
- ► Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS)
- ► Association of Pacific Rim Universities
- ► Interdisciplinary Sustainability Research Network
- ► Global Compact Network Canada
- ► The Global Research Initiative

EDUCATION

- ► Stimulate collective SDG action among faculty and students
- ► Develop student exchanges and summer programs focused on the SDGs
- ► Increase awareness of and engagement with the SDGs beyond campus
- ► Incorporate the SDGs in curriculum

RESEARCH

- ► Develop a research seed fund to launch collaborative SDGs projects
- ► Encourage joint interdisciplinary research related to the SDGs
- ► Champion sustainability-related research

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- ► Deliver experimental learning programs and engagement with the community to solve real-world challenges
- ► Participate and launch initiatives related to sustainable cities and communities
- ► Establish "Sustainability Living Labs"
- ► Promote and support sustainability-related start-ups

PARTNERSHIPS

- ► Build the SDGs into national and international partnership activities
- ► Partner with international organizations to advance the SDGs
- ► Partner with government agencies to advance the SDGs

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

- ► Mobilize knowledge for the SDGs
- ► Organize events in partnership with community organizations to advance the SDG agenda
- ► Participate in advocacy activities

1

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
Carlos Vargas-Pedroza, International Outreach Manager

Carleton University's Sustainability Plan (2020-2025) is based on key themes that aim at embedding sustainability into leadership, teaching and learning, research and engaging with the community. This comprehensive approach moves away from a solely operational focus and builds on current progress. The recommendations of the *UN's Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* are at the core of Carleton's guiding principles. The SDGs are directly linked to all future actions as they provide a clear focus to mobilize the university community. Sustainability is one of the three core pillars that inform Carleton's direction in research, education, and operations.

Examples of SDG initiatives implemented by Carleton University include:

▶ Carleton ranks 1st in Ontario, 2nd in Canada, and 57th in the world in the 2020 *UI GreenMetric World University Rankings*.
▶ Carleton works with governments and industries on numerous initiatives. For instance, the newly developed advocacy network, *Efficiency Canada*, has its headquarters in Carleton's Advanced Research and Innovation in Smart Environments building and works jointly with the faculties of Engineering and Design and Public Affairs to conduct research on policy, regulations, engineering, and business.
▶ Energy efficiency is the focus of several labs and research centres at Carleton, such as the Building Performance Research Centre, the Urbandale Centre for Home Energy Research, the Energy and Emissions Research Laboratory, the Human-Building Interaction Laboratory and the Northern Nomad (net zero) Tiny House.
▶ Since 2005, Carleton has reduced greenhouse gas carbon emissions by 35% and energy use intensity by 21%. Carleton introduced a program to certify all new and major renovations for sustainability features and performance.
▶ Carleton achieved "Silver" in the 2020 *Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) assessment*.
▶ The university's dining services purchases 25% of its food supplies from local and humane food sources. Two of the largest dining centres on campus are zero waste certified, diverting 90% of all waste from landfills through an extensive recycling program, changes to packaging, and a ban on plastic straws. Carleton campus is Fair Trade Certified.

With the Sustainability Plan (2020-2025), Carleton aims at ensuring that all its graduates are exposed to sustainability principles through every degree program and other campus community projects. Carleton University's focus on collaborative interdisciplinary research, including social, environmental, and economic impacts, continues to grow. Numerous faculty and students conduct research on energy, the environment, climate change, and the Arctic across various disciplines. Carleton also offers several undergraduate programs focusing on sustainability, including two in Engineering and one in Architecture, as well as a master's program in Sustainable Energy (Engineering and Public Policy).

Research funding at Carleton has increased more sharply in the last year than at any other comprehensive or medical university in the country. This opportunity will enable researchers to maintain and strengthen their research at home and internationally.

2

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Julio Sevilla, International Projects Manager
Jason Manning, Executive Director, Academic Policy, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives, Office of the Provost

Concordia University has made an institutional commitment to advance the SDG agenda and has implemented a series of strategies and actions to support the implementation of the SDGs. As part of these strategies, Concordia is undertaking a Voluntary University Review (VUR) and is participating in the _Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings_. In addition, the university has joined the _Decade of Action for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Canada (SDSN)_ and _the University Global Coalition._

Beyond its campus, Concordia has partnered and engaged with the community by proposing innovative activities, such as the SDG Lab for Montreal and Québec. As a result of these efforts, a new collaboration has emerged as the multi-stakeholder _Consortium Accélérer 2030 pour le Québec_ to increase awareness about and spur action toward global goals. Concordia University's efforts have been recognized by different organizations. For example, in the 2020 _THE University Impact Rankings_, Concordia placed among the top 20 institutions in the world for contributions to SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities and SDG 13: Climate Action.

The SDGs provide Concordia with a framework to direct its engagement and efforts and frame its specific objectives. It offers the university a structure to advance its academic engagement and interconnectedness with others, advance and measure social impact, and work in partnership with communities, networks, governments, and businesses on sustainable futures. Concordia is positioned to advance the SDGs through learning and teaching, research, organizational governance, culture and operations and external leadership.

In October 2020, Concordia made an institutional commitment to join the _Decade of Action for SDGs_. This commitment builds on pledges to divest from fossil fuel industries, make 100% sustainable investments and achieve carbon neutrality, aligned with the university's Sustainability Action Plan. It also reinforces the university's continuing efforts to decolonize and indigenize the institution, address anti-back racism, and confront systemic bias in all its forms.

Concordia has also joined SDSN Canada and the University Global Coalition. To build its SDG strategy, the university will follow the lead of Carnegie Mellon University and undertake a [Voluntary University Review (VUR)](). This process maps activities and assets around the SDGs to develop strategies that deepen efforts in research, teaching, engagement, and university operations.

One potential element of the Concordia SDG strategy may be to create an SDG Lab for Montreal and Québec, modelled on the *SDG Lab* in Geneva, Switzerland. The aim is to create a home base for collective action on the SDGs locally and provincially. Early signs of the collaborative potential for the SDGs are emerging in Québec. In early 2020, a group of non-profit organizations, private companies, foundations, and citizens' groups formed the *Consortium Accélérer 2030 pour le Québec* to increase awareness about and spur action toward global goals. In October, Concordia collaborated with *Accélérer 2030* and other allies to host a [virtual event]() focused on 'building back better' around the SDGs in Québec. An action plan for the province is taking shape based on the connections made at this event.

To realize the potential that the SDGs present for coordinated action around sustainable futures, Concordia will employ the SDGs as a roadmap for the university's social impact and public engagement activities and as a basis for deepening its partnerships with other universities, local communities, governments, and businesses.

3

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Shaheen Nanji, Executive Director
Carol Zachs, Director – SFU International

Simon Fraser University (SFU) has a vision to be the leading engaged university defined by its dynamic integration of innovative education, cutting-edge research, and far-reaching community engagement. SFU is mobilizing for the goals through teaching, research, engagement, policies and practices. In the 2020 *THE Impact Rankings*, SFU ranked 19th in the world among 760 institutions from 85 countries, 1st for SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities; 4th for SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, 7th for SDG 14: Life Below Water, and 9th for SDG 13: Climate Action. SFU is currently bringing together leads from across these areas at the university to develop a plan to strategically advance the institution's efforts to support the achievements of the SDGs.

SFU students are prepared to make an impact; the institution has a commitment to research and knowledge mobilization that benefits society and seeks equity and mutuality in engagement and partnerships. The SDGs connect SFU's vision to these important globally shared goals to address the issues of the times.

The challenges faced are global and complex. SFU's values are grounded in knowledge creation and mobilization, its track record of serving as interlocutor and mobilizer across disciplines and sectors, and its deep focus on impact. The following examples showcase how SFU is mobilizing for the goals.

▶ The Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD), a research unit of SFU, uses the resources and talents of the university to deepen understanding and create solutions to advance sustainable development. Initiatives include a forum on food, climate change and migration and international projects such as the Sustainable Cities International Internships Program in South America and Africa.

▶ SFU's social innovation hub, RADIUS, builds programs to collaboratively develop, test, and accelerate innovative responses to tough social problems. The Refugee Livelihood Lab, for example, aims to facilitate systems change toward migrant justice.

▶ SFU's Semester in Dialogue is a one-semester, full-time program designed to inspire students with a sense of civic responsibility and encourage their passion for improving society.

- The Pacific Water Research Centre promotes and mobilizes research that addresses water issues on multiple scales ranging from local communities to national and global. Its Secured Futures initiative is a long-term project that aims to develop an understanding of the complex interactions and trade-offs between food, water, energy, natural and cultural resources as the world transitions toward a low-carbon economic future.
- The new Sustainable Energy Engineering program aims to graduate globally-minded professionals ready to provide technology-based solutions to the challenges we face from climate change.
- Renewable Cities is a global program of SFU's Morris J Wosk Centre for Dialogue with a mission to support cities through the transition to 100% renewable energy and increased energy efficiency.

SFU is currently bringing together leads from across these areas at the university to develop a plan to:

- Better map and evaluate progress towards the SDGs;
- Expand opportunities for teaching and learning, including through academic programs such as the Centre for Sustainable Development and with those involved in applied and work-integrated learning;
- Deepen academic research and dissemination of knowledge within and across disciplines and through institutional initiatives such as the Community-Engaged Research Initiative (CERi), the Big Data Initiative, and the Strategic Partnerships Hub;
- Work across sectors and internationally through dialogue, partnerships and deep collaborations on key initiatives such as the Centre for Dialogue and RADIUS (social innovation incubator);
- Ensure policies and practices support the achievement of the SDGs, building on the work already being undertaken by the award-winning Sustainability Office; and
- Use the SDGs as a framework and way to mobilize international relationships and ensure a decolonized approach grounded in equity, diversity, and inclusion principles and led by SFU International.

4

UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL

Nathalie Pelletier, Chargée de projets internationaux, Direction des affaires internationales

Université de Montréal (UdeM) is greatly involved with SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being through its "Unité de santé internationale" (International Health Unit), which is a major Canadian francophone university centre dedicated to global health expertise. Its mission is to contribute to improving the health of populations in developing and transitional countries. Aligning with SDGs and ensuring equity, the centre works collaboratively with communities and health networks and in partnership with government authorities to improve the health of populations. Using innovative approaches, the Unit aims to strengthen health systems by offering technical support in different regions of the world.

In collaboration with its global partners, other units at Université de Montréal are contributing to advancing the SDGs in the following ways:

▶ Working on SDG 2: Zero Hunger with *TRANSNUT* – a WHO collaborating centre on nutrition changes and development;
▶ Advancing SDG 4: Quality Education, with several professors and researchers involved in projects in Africa to improve the quality of education;
▶ Contributing to SDG 5: Gender Equality through the *Hygeia Network*, which promotes the empowerment of women in the Francophonie through various initiatives;
▶ Partnering on SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth with *Observatoire de la Francophonie économique* and the *Centre interuniversitaire de recherche en analyse des organisations (CIRANO)* to provide high value-added university knowledge that contributes to strategic decision-making of governments and other organizations in stimulating economic growth;
▶ Working on SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities with the *Observatoire Ivanhoé Cambridge du développement urbain et immobilier* which supports research in developed countries as well as emerging economies on topics related to political, economic and environmental dimensions of urban development and real estate; and
▶ Collaborating on SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions with the *Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network* that strives for a better understanding of peace operations by generating relevant exchanges, research, publications, and conferences.

Within the institution itself, Université de Montréal's greatest strength lies in its landscape management and biodiversity initiatives, which contributes to SDG 15: Life on Land. UdeM received a perfect score for these two elements in the 2020 *Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS).* With the main campus being located on Mount Royal, it is essential to protect its biodiversity. To this end, UdeM is one of the rare universities to have a biodiversity advisor in its ranks. This advisor collaborates with the building's department to implement the university's Life on Land initiatives.

Université de Montréal has played a leading role in adopting a vision statement that embraces equity, diversity and inclusion in 2019, one that aims to reduce inequalities within each of its missions (student recruitment, support to success, diversity training, human resources, governance, knowledge/research, and citizenship engagement). Equity, diversity and inclusion are also considered key components of the university's development and an asset in the pursuit of excellence in each of its areas of intervention.

University de Montréal's strategy on sustainable development 2021-2023 commits the university to take action on each of the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, moving forward, for each SDG, Université de Montréal has set itself one or more objectives specific to its activities related to training, research, and community services.

5

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Danielle Scott, Director, International Relations, University of Alberta International

The University of Alberta (U of A) has an internationalization plan which embraces and promotes the SDGs at the university level. U of A participates in the *Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS)* and offers a Certificate in Sustainability. U of A recently created a dedicated website for the SDGs, joined the *Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)* and participated in *THE Impact Rankings* for the first time in 2021. The Global Education Program implemented through the international office has events focused on the SDGs. U of A is currently exploring the development of toolkits for students and professors, so opportunities can be shared across the campus.

The SDGs are part of the University of Alberta's International Strategic Plan and the international office's strategy. U of A International (UAI) formed an SDG working group with the University's Sustainability Council to jointly work on increasing awareness of and engagement with the SDGs across the university. Activities have included the following:

- ▶ Launching an SDG website;
- ▶ Joining the *Sustainable Development Solutions Network Canada*;
- ▶ Securing the support of senior leadership for participation in the *THE Impact Rankings* and taking responsibility for the submission; and
- ▶ Building SDGs into international partnership activities.

In the last few years, UAI's Global Education Program has focused its International Week on the SDGs. The current need to hold online events is allowing for a broader geographical scope for speakers and audiences. The Sustainability Council undertakes many activities related to SDGs, including participating in *Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating System (STARS)* and coordinating the certificate in sustainability. The SDG working group is currently exploring future priorities, including developing SDG toolkits for students and professors, canvassing information from across campus about work being done on SDGs, and sharing opportunities about SDG-related funding and events.

6

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Emily MacDougall, Director, Global Partnerships

The University of British Columbia (UBC) believes that universities have the potential, and bear responsibility, to bring knowledge, talent and convening power to address, along with other global institutions, the pressing development needs of the planet and help build a more just, prosperous, and sustainable world. UBC is proud to rank 1st in Canada and 7th globally in the 2020 *THE Impact Rankings*, including 1st in SDG 13: Climate Action, 1st in SDG 14: Life Below Water, and 3rd in SDG 15: Life on Land. UBC is committed to lead in sustainability through teaching, learning and research, campus as a living lab projects, as well as progressive policies and plans to guide sustainable operations, infrastructure, and community development.

UBC's Global Engagement Strategy aims to develop strong partnerships and global networks that weave together complementary knowledge and expertise to address pressing global issues and to advance progress on the SDGs. For example, UBC is using the campus as an innovation platform and pioneering student programs with international partners to explore the challenges of sustainable cities and communities. CURE is a global collaboration to mobilize talent, knowledge and experience across disciplines, colleges/universities, community organizations, cities, and corporations to drive inclusive urban prosperity, innovation and development. UBC also collaborates with partners under the *Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS)* and the *Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU)* on projects that address challenges to marine life and conservation. UBC hosted the *University Climate Change Coalition Summit* in 2019 that brought together leaders across sectors to discuss higher education's role in limiting global greenhouse gas emissions and associated temperature rises to under 2°C.

Several other examples are listed below from content taken from President Ono's THE Op-Ed Article from September 2019.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities aims to "make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable." UBC uses the Vancouver campus as a "living lab" to explore and test new environmental, social, economic, and technological advances, some of which could be scaled up to move the needle on global sustainability. The campus is an innovation platform, demonstrating what cities around the world need to do. With total control of all the buildings, facilities, and construction, UBC can do things faster and has a greater ability to take risks.

UBC is also collaborating with other institutions on SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. For example, in the summer of 2020, 10 UBC undergraduate and graduate students collaborated with 30 peers from Yale-NUS College, the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, the University of Cambridge, and the Monterrey Institute of Technology on the inaugural Urban Resilience Summer Program in Chennai, India. Together they worked in virtual teams and on the ground, liaising with the city's chief resilience officer to tackle urgent issues affecting Chennai, including the threat of flooding and damage from hurricanes and cyclones, ageing and failing infrastructure, poverty, economic inequality and civil unrest.

UBC also contributes to SDG 14: Life Below Water naturally because of its location on the Pacific Ocean. For example, UBC partners with other institutions through the *Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS)*, a research and engagement network of four universities – UBC, the University of Victoria, Simon Fraser University, and the University of Northern British Columbia. *PICS* supports the co-generation of climate solutions research that decision-makers can use to develop effective mitigation and adaptation policies and actions in BC and beyond.

UBC is also working with partners in the *Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU)* to understand how best to protect the oceans and work together on other issues.

Contributing to SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals, UBC also joined with more than 40 universities to form the *U7 Alliance* under the patronage of French President Emmanuel Macron. This international alliance of university presidents discusses commitments that universities may make to address the most pressing global challenges in a multilateral context. The inaugural summit tackled issues including the key role of universities in a global world, climate change and cleaner energy, inequality and polarized societies, technological transformations, and community engagement and impact.

UBC's commitment to sustainability is also long-standing and historical. In 1990, UBC signed the Talloires Declaration, a 10-point action plan for incorporating sustainability into higher education. UBC was the first university

in Canada to adopt a sustainable development policy in 1997 and the first to open an office devoted to campus sustainability in 1998. Now, sustainability is deeply embedded across UBC.

This commitment to building a better world is also reflected in UBC's purpose as a university, to pursue excellence in research, learning and engagement to foster global citizenship and advance a sustainable and just society across British Columbia, Canada, and the world. UBC's Global Engagement Strategy articulates how UBC will contribute through its global engagement to this dual purpose of fostering global citizenship and building a better world. Particularly, two core themes are relevant in supporting the pillar of "Building a Better World":

▶ Theme 3 – Issues of Global Relevance
▶ Theme 4 – Developing Global Capacity

The Global Engagement Strategy provides a strategic framework that fosters responsible global citizenship of UBC and its students that responds to issues of global relevance, such as those called out in the SDGs. It builds the capacity to respond to critical issues through effective and sustainable partnerships and programs. The strategy aims to develop strong global networks that weave together complementary knowledge and expertise to address pressing global issues and help advance the SDGs.

7

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Andrea Delgado Morrow, Director, International Relations

The University of Calgary (UCalgary) is committed to advancing the SDGs. The 2020 Institutional Sustainability Report demonstrates UCalgary's progress through the lens of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and showcases accomplishments under all 17 goals. Some highlights include:

▶ One-fifth of all UCalgary researchers across 80% of departments are conducting sustainability-related research.
▶ There have been 46 sustainability-related start-ups launched by students, faculty, and staff.
▶ In the past year, 14,600 students have taken at least one of the more than 500 sustainability-related courses offered by UCalgary.
▶ The new Global Engagement Plan includes developing global partnerships and leveraging UCalgary's expertise in global development.
▶ For the fourth year in a row, UCalgary was named one of Canada's best diversity employers.
▶ The university has reduced its GHG emissions by 33% since 2008 and completed its first net-zero carbon building, the largest to date in Canada as of October 2020.
▶ UCalgary offers opportunities for students to work on the SDGs through International Development Week, Global Community Challenge, World's Challenge and the Teaching Across Borders program.
▶ UCalgary is a member of *Academics without Borders*, *Alberta Council for Global Cooperation* and the *Sustainable Development Solutions Network*.
▶ UCalgary has a certificate in Pluralism & Global Citizenship and launched the Pluralism & Global Citizenship webinar series.
▶ The Interdisciplinary Sustainability Research Network (ISRN) brings together researchers to understand their needs and goals to engage in (increased) interdisciplinary sustainability research on campus.

UCalgary has also participated in a number of ranking and award programs that include:

▶ Ranking 29th in the world for addressing the SDGs and 10th in the 2020 *Impact Rankings* for SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals (the only Canadian institution in the top 10 for that year).
▶ In 2020, UCalgary ranked 12th out of North American doctoral institutions and second among Canadian research institutions under the *Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating System (STARS).*

- UCalgary is also ranked 23rd out of 312 North American institutions by *Sierra's Cool Schools* for its environmental commitments.
- UCalgary was named to *Princeton Review's Green College Honor Roll*, which recognizes the top 30 schools in North America from among close to 700 institutions.
- Recipient of the 2017 *Global Compact Network Canada* SDG Award.

At the University of Calgary, sustainability is embedded across the highest-level plans and strategies, including Eyes High, the Academic and Research Plan, and supporting strategies and plans, including the Indigenous Strategy, the Institutional Sustainability Strategy, the Global Engagement Plan, and the Mental Health Strategy. UCalgary publicly reports progress on an annual basis, including 5-year trends.

In 2020, UCalgary contributed to SDG 2: Zero Hunger with a virtual seminar hosted by the School of Public Policy that explored the effects COVID-19 has on agri-food supply chains and the critical policy solutions required to help the sector rebound.

Contributing to Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, UCalgary is part of *The Global Research Initiative*, a network of global hubs for discovery, creativity and innovation in unconventional energy research. With partners in Western Canada, China, Mexico and the Middle East, this initiative is developing solutions for some of the most significant challenges facing the global energy industry and pressing issues confronting the environment.

Supporting Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, an 11 student team designed and installed a new solar energy system in an off-grid community in Peru. Led by a faculty member in the Schulich School of Engineering, the project was developed in conjunction with *Light Up The World*, a Calgary-based non-profit, *IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers), and Humanitarian Technology*, an international organization that partners with underserved communities to leverage technology for sustainable development.

UCalgary researchers also work toward Goal 13: Climate Action by setting sail on the Multidisciplinary drifting Observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate (MOSAiC) expedition in September 2019. This was the largest polar expedition in history. MOSAiC is an international consortium of scientists who revolutionize climate change research. The data gathered will be used by scientists around the globe to take climate research to an entirely new level.

8

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

Janine Denis, Partnership Development Specialist

The University of Ottawa (uOttawa) has an Office of Campus Sustainability with a dedicated information website. It hosts several initiatives and workshops throughout the year, including a RecycleMania event to increase awareness of sustainability issues, such as food waste and energy efficiency. UOttawa became the first Canadian university and only the second in the world to sign on to the *Montreal Carbon Pledge* and was the first institution in Ontario to become a bottled water-free campus. It hosts annual International Education Week events and several other conferences covering a breadth of topics to advance the SDGs. It also works closely with local communities through its Community Service Learning program. The pillars of the institution's strategic plan also address the broader framework of the SDGs.

The uOttawa Office of Campus Sustainability strives to have sustainability integrated into daily life on campus in as many ways as possible, big and small — from taking notes on scrap paper to designing more energy-efficient campus facilities. For example, during the annual RecycleMania event, the office hosts a series of living waste-free workshops that aim to teach students how to go about their daily lives in a way that reduces or eliminates all waste. These workshops include a field trip to local stores which accommodate waste-free living and a series of tips and tricks for navigating food waste. Another initiative to reduce waste on campus is the Free Store, a space where people can donate unwanted items such as clothing, small housewares, electronics, and textbooks. Members of the uOttawa community can 'shop' there for free. The office also manages an information hub website for the uOttawa campus community to gain information on the various sustainability initiatives undertaken by the university. Highlights of the University of Ottawa's achievements in sustainability include:

- ▶ In 2016, the University of Ottawa became the first Canadian University and only the second in the world to sign on to the Montreal Carbon Pledge;
- ▶ The first institution in Ontario to become a bottled water-free campus;
- ▶ Home to one of North America's largest biofilter walls, a six-story living wall which is made up of 2,000 plants of 12 different species;
- ▶ Ranked 6th most sustainable university in Canada according to the 2020 *UI GreenMetric World University Rankings*;

- In the 2020 *THE Impact Rankings*, uOttawa was ranked 36th in the world for SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and 62nd for SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being;
- Building all major buildings to a LEED Silver certification standard;
- The Growcer installed a hydroponic garden in an old shipping container - it can grow up to 5,000 kilograms of food annually with low water use;
- Over 50 community garden plots on campus;
- Zero-waste dining hall; and
- Canadian Recyclemania champions for eight years in a row from 2008 to 2016.

The University of Ottawa has also undertaken many other initiatives focusing on the SDGs. Among the educational activities, uOttawa organizes an annual International Education Week. The purpose is to raise awareness about the SDGs and promote the search for actions toward achieving the SDGs among the campus community. The university also organizes conferences to discuss the SDGs. Past conferences include: '*Towards 2030: Building Canada's Engagement with Global Sustainable Development*'; '*Sustainable Development Goals and Universities*'; and '*Meeting sustainable development goals: Blended finance and public alternatives.*' The uOttawa's Centre for International Policy Studies has participated in the gathering and measuring of data for the SDGs. Working groups have published reports that describe their contribution and analysis of the SDGs. The university collaborates with various community partners to develop and implement projects that respond to community needs. These consist of local and international volunteering opportunities, including Community Service Learning (CSL), an experiential learning program integrated into academic courses.

uOttawa has a publicly shared open, green map that allows students to report sustainability items/places/information onto an open-source web platform. The university is steadfast in its commitment to integrating sustainability, as evidenced in its research, teaching, public service, community engagement and campus operations. Information submitted to the *Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS)* is publicly available and measures sustainability performance. Finally, the university's 2015 Report on Sustainable Development also provides publicly available data on its progress and future goals.

The University of Ottawa's current strategic plan, Transformation 2030, is comprised of four strategic pillars. These pillars relate to a number of Sustainable Development Goals.

a. **More agile:** This pillar relates to SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure. It involves:

- Optimizing program offerings and training opportunities to make them more attractive and responsive to the needs of tomorrow's generation of students;

- ▶ Being flexible and creative with program structures to enable students to complete programs in a timely way while maintaining high academic standards;
- ▶ Strengthening and expanding experiential learning for every student;
- ▶ Continually renewing and revitalizing pedagogy to take full advantage of ongoing methodological, experiential and technological innovation; and
- ▶ Being able to seize new opportunities and demonstrate national and global leadership in major scientific and social challenges.

b. **More connected**: This pillar reflects SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals. It includes:

- ▶ Bringing the world to uOttawa, and adopting a differentiated approach to recruitment to foster diversity and excellence;
- ▶ Creating and promoting a distinctive national and international identity that emphasizes the institution's uniquely Francophone and bilingual status among research-intensive universities;
- ▶ Connecting with partners by fostering community engagement, as well as educational, research, and industrial partnerships with both the public and private sectors locally, nationally and globally; and
- ▶ Connecting with Indigenous communities: in light of the recommendations contained in the Indigenous Action Plan, uOttawa will make its commitment to Indigenous peoples fully visible, sustainable, and real.

c. **More impactful:** This pillar is connected to SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure. It focuses on:

- ▶ Providing the means to make a difference: achieving a level of philanthropic success consistent with the institution's ambition to distinguish itself as a top-tier research university in Canada;
- ▶ Leveraging assets to make a difference: developing potentially high-impact research initiatives at all levels of scale from local to global; and
- ▶ Improving the student experience academically, culturally, recreationally and socially to prepare students to go out into the world and make their mark.

d. **More sustainable**: This pillar is reflected in SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, SDG 6: Clean Water & Sanitation, SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, and in SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. It concentrates on:

▶ Nurturing a sustainable campus culture that promotes overall wellbeing, embraces diversity, and fuels employee engagement;
▶ Developing a long-term financial sustainability framework;
▶ Ensuring responsible and sustainable growth of infrastructure (both physical and IT); and
▶ Ensure responsible and sustainable security and safety planning.

Furthermore, the Office of Government Relations serves as the University of Ottawa's liaison with all levels of the Canadian government. The office works with elected officials and public servants, government agencies, and key stakeholders to promote and enhance strategic relationships and provide input into SDG policy development at the university.

9

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Dr. Meghna Ramaswamy, Director, International Office

The University of Saskatchewan's (USask) new sustainability strategy focused on the SDGs, with indigenization being at the heart of the strategy. Several sustainability-focused educational programs exist at USask, including an Undergraduate Certificate of Proficiency in Sustainability. USask's internationalization plan provides targeted funding to address the SDGs in research and partnership activities. In addition, it provides support for USask to host an international annual "People Around the World" conference on the SDGs. USask also hosts a Sustainability Living Lab, the Common Future Undergraduate Symposium on the Environment and Sustainability, Campus Sustainability Week, Welcome Week, Indigenous Achievement Week, and a dedicated webinar series on the 17 SDGs with international partners and local leaders from the city of Saskatoon.

USask is a member of the *Sustainable Solutions Development Network (SDSN)* and works closely with its Canadian and global counterparts to advance research on SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 13: Climate Action, SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals, and other SDGs. SDSN has provided training for two USask international students to serve as SDG coordinators on campus. Moreover, USask has also contributed to the SDSN guide on [Accelerating Education for the SDGs in Universities](#) published in 2020. In the 2020 *THE Impact Rankings*, USask was ranked 96th in the world for addressing the SDGs overall, 4th for SDG 2: Zero Hunger and 12th for SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being. As a campus, USask ranks 8th out of 10 among the U15 Group of Canadian research universities with an active rating in the *Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating System (STARS)*. GHG emissions per square metre of building space at USask decreased by 13% from 2006-2019.

Sustainable development is crucial to the future of Canada and that of the planet. Universities provide cutting-edge research, high-quality education, groundbreaking innovation, and contribute and promote local and global partnerships towards sustainable development. But activities alone are not enough to advance sustainable development; it is the combination of activities, core missions and common effort that together achieve the SDGs.

The University of Saskatchewan's Sustainability Strategy incorporates the SDGs into its mission, vision and purpose to address societal responsibilities in management, teaching and learning, operations, research, and partnership development. The voice of Indigenous people and an understanding of how their knowledge systems and cultures can contribute to sustainable development is rooted in the sustainability strategy at USask. In 2011, as part of its Indigenous Voices Program, the university supported collaborations between the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning and the College of Education and formed the BEADWORK Committee. The focus of this collaboration was to develop a program that could support faculty and staff to be better prepared to decolonize and indigenize their classrooms through learning opportunities about Indigenous histories, cultures, worldviews, and ways of knowing and living. Sustainability is also facilitated by implementing other educational programs, including the Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP), Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) and the Aboriginal Awareness Initiative in the College of Education.

This, along with the university's internationalization plan, enables USask to truly be "the university the world needs" as it adopts a whole-institution approach, meaning all parts of the university community, including external stakeholders, are involved in these efforts. Researchers at USask co-create knowledge and provide innovative solutions and technologies by working with local and global partners, communities, NGOs, government, and the private sector. USask has taken the lead and initiative to set up a working table with the International Education & Jurisdiction Activities at the Ministry of Advanced Education, Government of Saskatchewan and all the HEIs in the province of Saskatchewan. This working table, known as the *SaskAlliance* group, addresses international research, international development, and the SDGs so that there is a collective voice to advance the *UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

A spirit of global collaboration underpins the implementation of the SDGs if they are to be achieved. The internationalization plan for USask, known as the International Blueprint for Action 2025, specifically provides funding to address the SDG in research and partnership development activities. USask also hosts several events throughout the year, such as Campus Sustainability Week, Welcome Week, Indigenous Achievement Week, and others. In addition, USask hosts an annual international "People Around the World" conference which coincides with Canada's International Development Week in February, themed on the SDGs.

USask is partnering with institutions worldwide to advance all 17 SDGs. It recently entered into a partnership with the Embassy of Canada and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines in 2020 to develop a series of online webinars to specifically address each of the 17 SDGs. USask is also an active member of *SDSN* and works closely with *SDSN Global* and *SDSN Canada*. In 2020, *SDSN Youth* selected two international students from USask to serve as SDG coordinators to establish an SDG hub at USask to

empower and mobilize youth on the SDGs. In this way, USask supports students to reinvigorate their scientific mindsets and spur creativity and curiosity to increase awareness and develop solutions to address sustainable development challenges.

USask offers a wide variety of community-based courses and co-curricular programs that touch squarely on the social, economic, and community aspects of sustainability. It also offers courses/lectures to senior residents of Saskatoon through the Saskatoon Seniors Continued Learning (SSCL) President's Lecture Series, which focused on the SDGs in 2020. USask also implements a Work Green program, which commits to improving the sustainability of day-to-day operations. Led by a USask "champion" in the workplace, colleagues collaborate to adopt new, greener practices that reduce resource use (i.e. energy, water), minimize waste, and consider the most sustainable options for purchases and commuting.

The Office of Sustainability maintains an inventory of sustainability-focused and sustainability-inclusive courses offered at USask. Since 2019, this inventory includes courses featuring indigenization and internationalization-related content. The Sustainability Living Lab uses the campus and community as a laboratory for students to explore sustainability and develop solutions to sustainability issues. Students are also connected with funding, staff supports, and other campus resources to help their undergraduate research transform campus. Past projects have studied campus farmers' markets, fruit orchards, solar installations, planning proposals for regional mega-projects, and more. *[The Common Future Undergraduate Symposium on the Environment and Sustainability](#)* has been held since 2017 and highlights the accomplishments of the year's Sustainability Living Lab student projects. Furthermore, the School of Environment and Sustainability offers an undergraduate Certificate in Sustainability. There is also an immersive multi-day experience program called EcoHack, where innovators, tinkerers, and makers from various degree programs collaborate using a rapid-iteration design model to generate viable solutions to problems posed by local community/industry partners.

The university established a Sustainability Revolving Fund (SRF) in 2014 to help finance sustainability initiatives at USask. Over $1.5 million was committed to campus sustainability projects through this Fund by 2019. USask has an energy management program, an Energy Action Plan, a green buildings initiative, and waste audit and management initiatives. The university actively supports alternatives for transportation, food services and sustainable initiatives and has a policy for procurement and responsible investment in support of sustainable development. These measures collectively have led to a drastic reduction (13%) of GHG emissions per square metre of building space from 2006 to 2019. The university's greenhouse gases (GHG) measurements are tracked annually to help better understand the university's carbon footprint. USask is a firm supporter of sustainable management measures, which include energy-saving measures, resource efficiency and waste

reduction, as well as the sharing of services, infrastructure and facilities with other universities and partners. The university is home to several community gardens, as well as a prairie habitat garden. Together, these actions and activities allow USask to implement sustainable development across its functions and missions, institutional practices, teaching, research, and community engagement.

10

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Gwen Burrows, Executive Director, International

The University of Toronto President's Advisory Committee on the Environment, Climate Change, and Sustainability (CECCS) leads, catalogues and coordinates many of the university's efforts to address global sustainability challenges. The CECCS operates on the principle that sustainability is more than a field or discipline, but a cross-cutting framework, ethos and component of the University of Toronto's identity. In support of this initiative, three main areas of activity have been identified: the campus as a living laboratory, the university as an agent of change in the community, and curriculum innovation.

In 2018, the University of Toronto joined the *University Climate Change Coalition (UC3),* a group of leading research universities in North America committed to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on their campuses and communities. In keeping with this commitment, the University of Toronto has set a goal of reducing GHG emissions to 37% below 1990 levels by 2030. Over the past decade, university operations have contributed to a reduction of more than 55,000 metric tonnes of GHG emissions. A five-year Low Carbon Action Plan (2019-2024) was developed to continue to implement carbon reduction strategies across all three U of T campuses, accelerating efforts as the university works to meet its 2030 goal.

The University of Toronto takes on an even greater leadership role as an influential local, national and global citizen. Its university community is contributing to coalitions, partnerships, and collective actions to avoid or mitigate the catastrophic threats we face with respect to climate change and advancing global sustainability. One example is the University of Toronto's leadership in the *U7+ Alliance*, which is committed to taking concrete action at the institutional level for local, regional and global impact. The University of Toronto, in collaboration with its partners, is promoting international commitments to ensure that all students at these universities have access to climate, biodiversity and sustainability courses while improving energy efficiency and reducing GHG emissions below 2018 levels by 2030.

The *University of Toronto Asset Management Corporation (UTAM)* has taken a leadership role in the global financial community by integrating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into its investment decisions. *UTAM's Responsible Investing 2019-2020 report* outlines various activities over the past year, including significant progress toward reducing the carbon footprint of UTAM's pension and endowment portfolios.

In December 2020, U of T hosted SDGs@UoT: Ideation Generation and Cross-Cutting Theme Events, based on the "17 Rooms" model created by the Brookings Institution and the Rockefeller Foundation. The goal of these events was to stimulate new forms of collective action towards the realization of its commitments related to the SDGs. The events brought together university faculty from different disciplines to participate in both a plenary session and sessions in 17 rooms. A second session brought participants together around the six transformations, a cross-cutting framework for the SDGs that brings the SDGs together in a meaningful and practical way for operationalization. Participants were invited to collectively create a proposal for one of the following initiatives: a joint research project, a course, and/or a joint community engagement project. The outcomes of these sessions will be directly linked to the University of Toronto's international strategy as it explores how it can work with its global partners on the SDGs and jointly support collaborative projects.

11

YORK UNIVERSITY

Helen Chua Balderama, Associate Director, International Partnerships and Programs, York International and NAFSA International Outreach Coordinator

York University was founded in 1959 and, in the last 60 years, has grown to become Canada's third-largest research and teaching institution, a progressive and community-engaged university committed to providing a broad demographic of students access to a high quality, research-intensive environment. Today, York has 25 interdisciplinary and collaborative research centres with strengths in vision and space sciences, history and refugee studies, health, the environment, climate change, sustainability, digital media, and corporate social responsibility.

York University currently has close to 500 course offerings and 300 researchers that focus on sustainability. From the pioneering Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change to programs and courses in every York Faculty, there are many options to study sustainability at York. These are laid out in York's Sustainability Strategy.

In 2020, York University earned recognition from *Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings* for the second year in a row, placing an impressive 33rd out of 767 universities. York ranked in the top ten in four key categories and top 100 in 15 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) measured by *THE*. York was ranked first in Canada (fifth in the world) for SDG6: Clean Water and Sanitation, first in Canada (ninth in the world) for SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, third in Canada (ninth in the world) for SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, and first in Canada (10th in the world) for SDG 5: Gender Equality.

York University launched its academic plan, titled Building a Better Future: York University Academic Plan 2020-2025, which serves as a blueprint for action, positioning York University as an agent of positive change in a world facing a convergence of unprecedented trials from climate change, a global pandemic, racism and xenophobia, poverty and inequality.

York University plans to launch an Internationalization and Global Engagement Strategy, which will set the stage for a new phase of development. That aim will be to bring greater resources and coordination efforts in this area and reinforce the institution's commitment to ethical internationalization. It will have four priority areas: (1) global outlook and fluency informing curricula and global learning while leveraging diversity; (2) global nature of research attracting international scholars and supporting international collaborative research; (3) robust recruitment of international

students from a multitude of countries for whom it will create a nurturing and inclusive environment that supports career transitions or further study; and (4) cultivating new partnerships, and fostering alumni connectivity to expand global reach and profile.

York's Strategic Research Plan Towards New Heights (2018-2023) highlights York's leadership in multidisciplinary research and knowledge creation and mobilization contributing to the SDGs. The university's research strengths include six intersecting themes: (1) advancing fundamental inquiry and critical knowledge; (2) analyzing cultures and mobilizing creativity; (3) building healthy lives, communities and environments; (4) exploring and interrogating the frontiers of science and technology; (5) forging a just and equitable world; and (6) integrating entrepreneurial innovation and the public good.

York's Sustainability Strategy, established in 2017, guides the university in advancing sustainability into the near and long-term future. The purpose of the strategy is to communicate and implement a shared vision, inspire positive change, build capacity, empower people, harness innovation and creativity, and foster a culture of sustainability within and beyond the university. The President's Sustainability Council is an advisory body that provides input and recommendations on advancing York University's sustainability initiatives, projects, and practices and providing oversight.

More examples of York's SDG initiatives include the following:

- ▶ With funding from York's Academic Innovation Fund, York hosted an international virtual conference on *Reimagining Approaches in Higher Education in an Era of Global Uncertainties*, which brought together international mobility professionals and practitioners, scholars, policymakers, sustainability experts and other stakeholders to discuss the evolving status of international mobility in higher education in Canada and globally. The conference also critically reflected on the current global situation and how to collectively build a future vision of international mobility that is inclusive, innovative and responsive to the global sustainability challenges of our times.
- ▶ York's Las Nubes Project aims to contribute to community wellbeing in ways that are compatible and conducive to environmental conservation through faculty and student research, environmental education, and community engagement initiatives.
- ▶ Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) Project. The BHER training program has been developed with the unique challenges of refugee camps in mind. It provides gender-equitable teacher training programs to working, untrained teachers who can then contribute to the community, increasing and improving education in the camps overall.
- ▶ The *Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH),* housed at York University, is a non-partisan research and policy partnership between academics, policy and decision-makers, service providers and people with lived experience of homelessness. The Homeless Hub is an

innovative web-based research library internationally recognized as a leading example of innovation in knowledge mobilization.

▶ The *Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research (DIGHR)*. By engaging in health policy, practice and science on the world stage, the Dahdaleh Institute works to strengthen the global commons and enhance global health equity. Researchers at York's DIGHR, in partnership with Médecins sans Frontières (MSF/Doctors Without Borders), launched the Safe Water Optimization Tool (SWOT). This new web-based tool will help aid workers ensure water is safe to drink in refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps.

▶ The York University *UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education Towards Sustainability* is the lead for *the IAU-HESD Global Cluster* on SDG 4. The *Global Cluster on Higher Education and Research* for SDG advocates for higher education institutions' role in achieving Agenda 2030.

▶ Established in 2020, CIFAL York, in collaboration with the UN Institute for Training and Research, provides a range of learning opportunities and facilitates knowledge sharing between public servants and leaders of the western hemisphere. The aim is to strengthen capacities, improve the decision-making process, and encourage sustainable development.

▶ Advancing Scholarship and Capacity for Emerging Nursing Doctorates (ASCEND is a graduate program partnership between the York University School of Nursing in Toronto and the School of Nursing and Midwifery at the University for Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS), Ghana aimed at expanding the capacity, quality and scope of nursing education and research in West Africa and Canada - a response to the WHO's call to address the global crisis of health care access especially the world's most vulnerable people.

▶ York is the only Canadian university member of the *Hemispheric University Consortium (HUC)*. *HUC* facilitates problem-based collaborations in education and research to generate the knowledge and solutions necessary to confront key hemisphere and global challenges in public health and wellbeing, climate change, sustainability and resilience, entrepreneurship and inclusive innovation, crime, conflict and corruption, and technology and innovation for education.

▶ York University has observer status at the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) since 2009 (COP15, Copenhagen).

▶ York University advances the SDGs through innovative student programming and initiatives that expand awareness of global challenges. Examples of these are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Student Hub, UN SDG Goals Training, Globally Networked Learning (GNL) and Cross-Campus Capstone Classroom (C4). C4 won the 7th Airbus GEDC Diversity Award from Airbus and the Global Engineering Deans Council for its efforts to support diversity and inclusion in engineering education.

12 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS NETWORK (SDSN)

Jon Beale, Manager of SDSN Canada
Allen Lu, Communications Coordinator of SDSN Canada

SDSN Canada is part of a global SDSN movement to build a network of universities, colleges, research centres, and knowledge institutions to promote practical solutions for sustainable development.

With over 1,300 participating institutions worldwide, SDSN members work together to support action-oriented research to address some of the world's most pressing problems, including implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement.

SDSN Canada is hosted at the University of Waterloo and is working to mobilize Canadian post-secondary institutions to take action for the SDGs. Resources shared by SDSN and its partners include:

- ▶ The *Together|Ensemble Conference Report* describes the 2020 "Together|Ensemble" conference's impact on the SDGs. Particular interest should be given to pages 26-28 that describe how to bake the SDGs into K-U education. English | French
- ▶ SDSN, in general, has a resource that details how universities can be involved in the SDGs.
- ▶ *Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICAN)* has another resource specific to how Canadian Colleges and Institutes can be involved in the SDGs.
- ▶ The SDSN Sustainable Development Report. Explains how Canada is meeting all relevant goals for Quality Education.
- ▶ The SDSN Canada website has a resource and publication section.

Additionally, the *SDG Impact Alliance* is working to create resources for students to establish SDG Impact Alliances at other universities.

13

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PLC
The IR Professional Learning Community of CBIE

The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 Agenda is a global framework between 193 UN Member States. Composed of 17 goals, 169 targets, and 223 indicators, the SDGs aim to tackle the world's most pressing challenges, including poverty, hunger, and inequality, while ensuring social inclusion, environmental sustainability, economic prosperity, peace and good governance. Universities are hubs for knowledge, discovery, and innovation that can provide the expertise, resources, and know-how to contribute and move the UN 2030 Agenda forward. In this context, international offices within universities are particularly well-positioned to serve as active agents and contributors to both local and global communities.

In an effort to recognize and capture universities' impact on society, the *Times Higher Education (THE)* launched the *Impact Rankings*, which measure progress made by universities on delivering on the SDGs. While acknowledging the debates around rankings and methodologies, it does offer a tool by which universities are assessed on their efforts and ability to reflect and act on their own commitments to address global challenges.

Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed huge inequalities - which have always existed - both between and within countries, and at the same time, has opened a deeper discussion on the role universities play in contributing to the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda. This pandemic has shown that addressing global challenges requires universities to dedicate their efforts collectively, using creative and innovative approaches. No single country, institution or individual can address them alone. The SDGs can serve as a set of guiding principles that steer universities in translating their core values, missions, and aspirations into measurable, comparable, and sustainable impacts, leading to more equitable outcomes. This approach would allow universities to embed practices within a humanitarian context, ensuring that "no one is left behind."

To provide a forum for universities and their collaborators to exchange ideas, experiences and strategies around the challenges and opportunities involved in international collaboration to advance the SDGs, the International Relations Learning Community (IR-PLC) organized a panel discussion in September 2020.

This forum provided an opportunity for the sector to compare visions for mobilizing international education in higher education institutions (HEIs) toward advancing the SDGs.

During the event, higher education experts inspired the audience with new and thought-provoking ways of looking at international education and the role of the university in society. Universities were challenged to view education from a problem-focused perspective – in which students are taught to use interdisciplinary skills and ask poignant questions to solve problems in their community – rather than from a siloed, subject-matter perspective.

HEIs were encouraged to foster a culture of collaboration among researchers rather than a culture of competition to promote knowledge-sharing and problem-solving across an academic community of global citizens. The panel further discussed internationalization in the era of COVID-19. Many may find achieving the SDGs daunting in the face of the setbacks ushered in by the pandemic. However, the inequalities addressed by the SDGs have only been underscored by the pandemic, making progress toward their achievement more important than ever. While COVID-19 has brought its share of challenges and obstacles, it also forces new opportunities for higher education institutions to innovate and collaborate.

The participants also heard examples of institutions making strides toward the SDGs in other countries, including the UK, Kenya, Mexico, and Canada. These examples, along with the contributions shared in the open community discussion, provided many ideas for how institutions can network, (re)frame their identity, measure progress, and get students involved in an institutional culture of promoting the SDGs.

HEIs are uniquely positioned in society to present themselves as agents of change, proponents of social responsibility, and members in service of community. If institutions can clarify their purpose as such, progress toward the SDGs will be sure to follow.

As an outcome of this panel discussion, a podcast series was produced and shared among the community.

- ▶ SDGs Part 1 (Opening Remarks by Dr. Alex Awiti, Vice Provost, Aga Khan University, Kenya)
- ▶ SDGs Part 2 (Panel I: Strategies in Internationalizing the SDGs in Higher Education Institutions)
- ▶ SDGs Part 3 (Panel II: Case Studies: Universities as the Engine of Transformation to achieve the SDGs)