

Sustainability Labour Market Research

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS SUMMARY REPORT FOR

UBCv WORKING GROUP ON ACADEMIC PROGRAMS OF THE PRESIDENT'S
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SUSTAINABILITY

and the

CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

2009

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RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS SUMMARY REPORT

This Highlights Report summarizes sustainability labour market research conducted for UBC towards their goal of strengthening teaching and learning on sustainability. It is produced to assist UBC's Working Group on Academic Programs (WGAP) of the President's Advisory Council on Sustainability in their efforts to develop an academic sustainability plan and identify potential course and degree options at UBCv on sustainability. In collaboration with the Sustainability Office, the WGAP commissioned a literature review of key trends in the Canadian and international sustainability labour market and employer, industry and thought leader interviews on emergent sustainability labour market trends. They also consulted with UBC undergraduate students via an electronic survey to determine their priority sustainability learning interests.

Key conclusions from the three research reports have been compiled into this Research Highlights Summary Report which will be used to inform the Working Group's discussion and priority-setting on new courses and programs on sustainability at the undergraduate and graduate level.

The following is a summary of the research highlights.

CROSS STUDY ANALYSIS

The following is a summary of the key conclusions from the three studies which comprise UBC's sustainability labour market research.

1. Integration of Sustainability into Degrees/Courses

- Significant majority of students believe that sustainability should be a component of their degree; with some exceptions, they prefer courses and minors to majors in sustainability
- Thought leaders/employers believe that sustainability will be embedded into every discipline in the future
- Thought leaders/employers believe that general education in sustainability concepts and issues is important for incoming employees
- Thought leaders/employers believe UBC can become an academic leader in sustainability if it embeds sustainability throughout all disciplines
- Modest majority of thought leaders/employers believe there will be demand for a generalist sustainability professional

2. Key Job Trends and Priority Subject Areas

Student Survey

Top overall priority subject areas from the student survey:

- Clean/Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (1st)
- Sustainable Transportation (2nd)
- Sustainable Community Development (3rd)
- Water and Air Quality
- Sustainable Infrastructure (water, waste, energy)
- Sustainable Cities
- Climate Change
- Green Building and Design

Note that rankings differ slightly depending on the home Faculty and student type (year of study) of the survey respondents.

Employers and Thought Leader Interviews

Most important jobs in transition to a sustainable future:

- Climate change and energy management related jobs (1st)
- Community development related jobs (2nd)

Top sustainability attributes required of incoming employees:

- Life cycle and systems thinking (1st)
- Community-based development knowledge (2nd)

Key trends that will impact the labour market:

- Climate change
- Business sustainability

Literature Review

- Shift to a low-carbon economy, specifically renewable energy and energy efficiency industries including energy management
- Environmental engineering
- Recycling and waste management