

# YORK UNIVERSITY

## ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

2013



2014





Message from  
the President



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# Message from the President



Fifty-five years ago, York University was founded on principles of social responsibility, and since that time, we have built a strong commitment to sustainability. From the classroom to the laboratory and to operations across our campuses, we strive to be a leader on sustainability in higher education.

In 2008 I formed the President's Sustainability Council to give members of our community an opportunity to become involved in sustainability efforts here at York. The Council is a means by which students, faculty and staff can come together to discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with sustainability and to propose

innovative ideas and solutions that will help us to move forward. I am proud to say that six years after the Council was formed, it has now put forth 98 recommendations to the University administration, all of which have been accepted. Of these recommendations, approximately three-quarters have been either completed or have seen significant, ongoing progress towards completion.

The work of the Council, and of faculty, staff and students contributing to sustainability across the University, is showing up in impressive ways. In the classroom, we have over 500 courses that focus on environmental or sustainability related themes. Our Faculty of Environmental Studies continues to be a leader in post-secondary education on sustainability, and the MBA program at our Schulich School of Business has been ranked the top program on sustainability and corporate social responsibility for 10 straight years.

Our successes are not limited to the classroom. With an ongoing commitment to excellence, many staff members working on sustainability have helped us to achieve truly transformational results in energy reduction, waste diversion, water conservation, local food and sustainable transportation. In fact, a number of these staff members were recognized when we awarded the first President's Sustainability Leadership Awards in April of this year.



We also continue to receive external recognition for our efforts. In April 2014 York was named one of Canada's Greenest Employers for the second year in a row, and we continue to rank highly on external surveys on university sustainability.

I am very proud of our accomplishments, but I know there is more work to be done. We have built a strong foundation and we will continue to strive to be innovators and to work as a community to reduce our ecological impact. I offer my sincere congratulations and ongoing encouragement to the many students, faculty and staff who have helped us to get this far—and who will take us even further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Shoukri".

Mamdouh Shoukri  
President & Vice-Chancellor





Message from  
the PSC Chair

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# Message from the PSC Chair



The President's Sustainability Council (PSC) is an advisory body to the President, with a mandate to help advance sustainability initiatives on campus. The Council is made up of students, staff, administrators, and faculty. We are committed to a holistic and equitable approach to taking action that recognizes the full consequences and benefits of what we do. Our long term perspective acknowledges our responsibility to be innovators and to continually work as a community to reduce our ecological impact. Our vision of sustainability and details about our mandate are provided on our website ([www.yorku.ca/sustainability](http://www.yorku.ca/sustainability)). Membership of the PSC during 2013-14 can be found in Appendix B, while detailed progress on previous recommendations can be found in Appendix A.

Since its inception, the Council has followed a consensus-based process for decision-making. The Council met four times between May 1, 2013 and April 30, 2014; the agendas and minutes of these meetings are posted on the Council website (<http://www.yorku.ca/susweb/psc/>). The Student Subcommittee has also held regular meetings in order to ensure that the specific concerns and priorities of York's student body are integrated into our campus sustainability initiatives.

The PSC has four working groups, each of which has met regularly throughout the year. The working groups are organized around four themes, capturing the broad scope of sustainability issues at York:

- Administrative and Organizational Structure
- Campus Operations and Development
- Curriculum
- Social Justice and Human Rights

Working groups are coordinated by Council members, and participation is open to the broad York community. During 2013-14, the working group coordinators were: Ross McMillan and Andrew Plunkett (administrative); Alice Pitt (curriculum); Noel Badiou and Annette Dubreuil (social justice and human rights); and Steve Dranitsaris, Chris Wong and Helen Psathas (campus operations and development).



While the next sections of this report provide a comprehensive review of PSC's 2013-14 accomplishments, the following are five highlights:

1. **President's Sustainability Awards:** Based on the PSC recommendation from last year, York's inaugural President's Sustainability Awards were established this year. Several excellent nominations were received and adjudicated by our Awards Committee, and five award winners were selected. President Shoukri distributed the awards at York's Earth Day celebrations on April 22, 2014.
2. **Farmer's Market:** As a result of the PSC's recommendation from last year, and responding to interest from the York community, a Farmer's Market was piloted on Keele campus as a collaboration between CSBO Food Services and the student-led Regenesi@York. The market was a notable success, running in the Fall and Winter terms and providing York community members greater access to wellness products and a variety of healthy, locally grown and farm-

fresh foods. The plan is to continue to organize the Farmer's Market next year by integrating it into the University's broader Food Services program.

3. Sustainability Courses: In co-operation with York's Registrar, the PSC has carried out an analysis of York courses and determined that, over the 2013/2014 year, there were 503 courses related to environment and sustainability at York. This very impressive number is testament that York is a Canadian and global hub for sustainability-related teaching and research. The plan is for the Registrar's Office to design an online filter that will allow students and faculty to retrieve a continually updated list of sustainability-related course offerings.
4. Electric Vehicle Recharging Stations: In order to encourage York community members to adopt more sustainable transportation to and from campus, the PSC is recommending that the University install electric recharging stations. If approved, this pilot project will be used to identify best practices for electric vehicle transportation, as well as to help raise greater awareness about sustainability at York.
5. York Named One of Canada's Greenest Employers: In April 2014, York was named, for the second year in a row, one of Canada's Greenest Employers. This is excellent news, reflective of the hard work and impressive progress that York has been making on sustainability for several years.



Ilan Kapoor  
*Chair, President's Sustainability Council*





Introduction  
and New  
Recommendations



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# Introduction & New Recommendations

At York University, we have a longstanding commitment to excellence in sustainability. Whether it is teaching, research, or action on campus, our community of students, faculty and staff continue to play a leading role in making York one of the greenest post-secondary institutions in Canada. This report outlines the work of the President's Sustainability Council (PSC) for the 2013-2014 academic year, while also providing updates on the progress of recommendations made by the Council in previous years. Up to and including last year's report, the PSC has made 85 recommendations, including:

- 14 that have been completed
- 20 where significant progress has been made
- 19 where work has begun
- 28 where work is ongoing, and
- 2 not yet started

## **There are 13 new recommendations for 2014-2015:**

1. That the PSC adopt a revised Terms of Reference (which was reviewed during the 2013-2014 academic year and is attached as Appendix C.)

## **Administrative Working Group**

2. That, in addition to the Annual Sustainability Report, the PSC develops a shorter, reader-friendly sustainability report that captures annual highlights for wider circulation and communications purposes.

## Social Justice and Human Rights

3. That York University apply in 2014 to be designated as a “Fair Trade Campus.”



## Campus Operations and Development

4. That York publishes, on an annual basis, its Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan.
5. That York consider the installation of electric recharging stations and prepare for their use by assembling best practices regarding the operation of the new facilities, for communication to the public as part of this initiative.
6. That the Faculty of Environmental Studies researchers be provided with a high-profile location for the accommodation of a pilot project examining the use of solar power in the use of electric vehicle recharging stations.
7. That tobacco waste control efforts focus on collaboration with interested building occupants to target key areas of non-compliance, including loading docks and under building awnings, with a view to improving health and safety in those areas.
8. That a protocol be developed which allows community members to advertise in a manner that does not cause the destruction of property or otherwise adversely impact the university

environment, and that the Office of the Vice President of Administration and Finance, through Campus Services and Business Operations (CSBO), bring together a working group for posterity with the objective of creating the new protocol.

9. That CSBO collaborate with pertinent stakeholders, including the Vice President of Student Services, and Corporate Communications, to develop a program aimed at deterring further graffiti on campus.
10. That CSBO, Food Services, develop an operating framework and mandate for an ongoing Farmers' market during summer 2014 to ensure that it is integrated and operated within a broader Food Services program as a University-sanctioned event and is compliant with relevant policies and practices.
11. That the expansion of the pedestrian and cycling network along Ian Macdonald Blvd. from Chimneystack Rd. to Shoreham Blvd. be considered.
12. That York consider a requirement that all new buildings demonstrate the structural and electrical capability to accommodate renewable energy, so that at minimum, new buildings are "solar ready" and can be considered in a future initiative when it becomes more viable to pursue solar power.
13. That the tree inventories recently completed be uploaded into York's asset management tool so that it may be used in the tracking of all tree activity and changes; it is also recommended that a website be created to make the tree inventory information available to the public.

