



2010



PRESIDENT'S
SUSTAINABILITY
COUNCIL

Annual Report

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is twofold: to reflect on the progression of sustainability policies, programs and practices at York University in 2010, and to identify forward-thinking strategies for advancing sustainability at York. Building on the conceptual foundation and recommendations of the 2008-09 President's Sustainability Council Report, the Council finds considerable progress in York's standing in relation to the three pillars of sustainability. York continues to lead the way in innovative yet contextually-specific approaches to building an ecologically resilient, economically robust and socially just institution. There has been progress in almost all of the recommendations proposed in 2009, and in some cases progress has exceeded expectations. At the same time, the Council finds that there is opportunity to continue enhancing a pan-University strategy with new recommendations that expand and deepen York's commitment to sustainability.

This report reflects not only the dedicated effort of Council members, but also ideas, suggestions and desires of the wider York community, articulated through a multi-faceted engagement strategy with students, staff and faculty members. Through a combination of participatory sessions, written and online submissions, focused discussions with specific groups, and the work of the Student Sub-Committee, the Council has learned a great deal about shared sustainability goals and preferred ways of fulfilling goals. The ideas and preferences shared with the Council are diverse, innovative and complex, and it remains clear that there is very strong interest in sustainability as a guiding principle at York. The Council has integrated many of the messages garnered through engagement activities into this report.

This report builds on a foundation for sustainability established in the Council's 2009 report (available at www.yorku.ca/sustainability). In particular, the vision and five guiding principles of sustainability presented in that report serve as a basis for moving forward. The vision for sustainability at York is:

Our vision of a sustainable university is one that enhances the ecological functioning of its campuses; provides equitable access to opportunities for active engagement in life-long learning; creates knowledgeable, active and responsible global citizens; and does so within an integrated, long-term framework of full-cost economic and environmental accounting.

The five guiding principles, which help define the qualities and aims of a York-specific approach to sustainability, are clearly described in the 2009 report. They are: a long-term perspective; an holistic outlook; acceptance of limits; focus on place; and active involvement in problem-solving. The Council's approach to sustainability embraces this vision and five principles, which inspire the following twenty recommendations proposed in the 2010 report:

1. Implement a pilot project for student engagement in sustainability in the summer of 2011.
2. Compile a list of University policies and procedures that are related to sustainability. The list will be reviewed to see if there are any opportunities for modification, and the list of relevant policies and procedures will be posted on the Sustainability Website.

PRESIDENT'S SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

3. Encourage University Divisions and departments to integrate sustainability into their Integrated Resource Plans.
4. Create a President's Sustainability Award that would recognize efforts of an individual or a team that initiate, adopt and foster a culture of sustainability.
5. Create a strategy that details how the Council and the Student Sub-Committee will engage the York community to establish greater awareness of sustainability, the work of the Council, as well as the opportunities for engagement.
6. Cultivate intellectual interest in sustainability among students and faculty through symposia and/or key events.
7. Bring forward discussion of sustainability to the Teaching & Learning Working Group on Technology-Enhanced learning in order to identify strategies to embed sustainable practices in course design and teaching practices across the University (for example, use of electronic assignment drop-box).
8. Explore the opportunity, perhaps in collaboration with relevant faculty members, by:
 - a. undertaking research to identify how other post-secondary institutions nationally and internationally support sustainability in the curriculum; and
 - b. conducting key informant discussions internally and externally to identify opportunities for new or enhanced academic offerings related to sustainability that meet emergent workforce needs.
9. Establish an assessment model for community investments, including time, financial, in-kind and other resource allocations.
10. Develop the York University-TD Community Engagement Centre (CEC) as the hub for York's various academic and non-academic outreach and engagement activities, by:
 - a. expanding employment and enrollment recruitment sessions at CEC and with CEC partners;
 - b. creating more opportunities to educate local community agency/support staff (such as youth workers, job developers, faith leaders) to function as guidance counsellors for residents who are not currently seeking support from in-school resources;
 - c. building/enhancing current mentoring activity between York students and local youth (including WAY, partnering with Teacher candidates, and through nursing student placements in local schools and at Black Creek Community Health Centre); and
 - d. developing capacity to host and support more York students who are high achieving local secondary school grads.

11. Explore policies and procedures at other institutions with a view to developing the best practices for improved community access to York, including access to events such as college speakers' series, the March Gala, public workshops, and fine arts performances.
12. Develop an electronic portal for external groups to understand York engagement opportunities and make requests for York resources and services.
13. Develop promotional materials for local neighbourhoods and other underrepresented communities that outline programs, admissions, scholarships, financial aid and engagement opportunities.
14. In collaboration with the Harry Sherman Crowe Co-op, create resident/youth social enterprises in the Harry Sherman Crowe Co-op and youth employment initiatives with on-campus employers.
15. Explore a program for workplace training opportunities, for example, through internships, skilled trade apprenticeships and other employment training in collaboration with local partners and community initiatives, including systems and support for faculty and staff to participate in supervision.
16. Advocate, with the City of Toronto, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority and other partners, for the construction of a physical link across the Black Creek, to enhance pedestrian and bicycle access to York University.
17. All University contracted, non-franchised food service outlets that serve coffee and tea provide their customers with at least one option of fair trade certified coffee and tea at all times; that information on fair trade be displayed; and that these options are priced so that cost alone will not be an overriding factor in consumer selection. This approach, as a principle, should also be extended to include other fair trade commodities (for example, sugar and cocoa) where this becomes feasible.
18. Request the York University Development Corporation and the York University Student Centre to take the same approach with their contracted tenants, and embed the requirement for a similar fair trade certified coffee and tea option in leases of food service operators within their respective premises.
19. The University should give preference to suppliers who can meet or exceed predetermined "green" specifications. Procurement Services could include in their Request for Proposal (and other "RFx" procurement documents) criteria/specifications from suppliers that could be quantified on responses received.

20. Develop a University-wide Green IT program that would, among other initiatives, include the following:

- a. develop and issue a series of green IT guidelines to be adopted by all IT units across the institution;
- b. further explore and, where practical, adopt virtualization technology and cloud computing as a means of achieving efficiencies and energy consumption reductions;
- c. establish institution-wide standards for the management of IT infrastructure, servers requiring spaces with specialized utilities, and other considerations;
- d. work with Procurement Services to establish and adopt minimum power efficiency standards for all new computer hardware;
- e. work with Procurement Services and the Waste Management department to develop a procurement process that requires consideration and adoption of life-cycle assessments for computer hardware purchases, and in-house mechanisms, to collect, recover and ensure that end-of-life computer equipment are recycled responsibly;
- f. develop and implement a centralized workstation power management initiative for all laboratory (and “computer common”) workstations, as a way to reduce power consumption from these workstations, beginning with the approximately 2,000 laboratory workstations managed by UIT; and
- g. phase out desktop printers in favour of an environment of duplex and network printers only.



PRESIDENT'S SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL

For additional information on
our sustainability initiatives
please visit yorku.ca/susweb