



Climate Action Cohort

PREPARED BY FER VILLASENOR [JUNE, 2023]

PARTNER MENTOR: ANGELA HAN

PARTNER UNIT: CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING

SUSTAINABILITY HUB MENTOR: KSHAMTA HUNTER

Introduction

The Sustainability Ambassadors program will advance a number of goals outlined in UBC's strategic plan at large. This cohort in particular falls under UBC's core area 3 and 4: Transformative Learning and Local and Global Engagement. The Climate Action cohort (or the Sustainability Ambassadors program) will help "strengthen undergraduate and graduate student communities and provide an opportunity for practical learning for students" and will prioritize coordinated engagement between UBC and local communities.

UBC Context

The cohort's goals are also aligned with the goals of different departments at UBC:

- [Sustainability Hub](#): As part of UBC's larger Transformative Learning goals, the Sustainability Hub aims to "increase the number of students and learners... who participate in UBC-wide co-curricular and curricular sustainability experiences every year". As with every aspect of the Hub's work, this cohort will have a justice-centred approach, putting those who have been most affected by the climate crisis front and centre of the solutions and conversation.
- [Climate Emergency team](#): The Climate Action cohort aligns with the UBC Climate Emergency strategic priorities of expanding climate education opportunities, supporting community wellbeing and fostering a culture of engagement and advocacy on Climate Action.
- [Centre for Community Engaged Learning](#): CCEL emphasizes creating experiential education opportunities and helping students move from developing awareness about an issue to taking real action towards improving it. CCEL supports a variety of programs providing opportunities for students to be involved in Climate Action, such as the Climate Action Mobilizers. Their curriculum is separate from this cohort's

Climate Action encompasses a broad range of efforts and actions that help mitigate the effects of climate change and/or increase communities' resilience and ability to adapt to the inevitable effects the world is already feeling. Effective climate action requires efforts from every institution at every level, as well as a shift in societal values towards a way of living that prioritizes sustainability and deconstructs current systems of oppression that have prevented us from achieving it.



Learning Objectives

In order to give the cohort direction and align with the goals of each partner, the Climate Action cohort will have 3 guiding principles throughout its projects: climate justice, collective leadership and ethical community engagement. Practicing ethical community engagement and collective leadership will help ambassadors develop self-awareness and interpersonal and collaborative abilities, and will be a guiding framework for the practical projects SA's will be involved in. Ethical community engagement is a particularly important pillar of this cohort, as its work will centre around working with external community partners, not just UBC. Working with a climate justice lens will allow them to strengthen their strategic application and develop systems awareness, and will be the groundwork guiding the curriculum learning. In other words, climate justice answers the question of “how do we learn?”, while ethical community engagement and collective leadership answer the question “how do we work?”.

Sustainability Ambassadors will learn explore climate action at different levels, and learn how each of these levels is embedded in and affected by different systems of oppression. Examples of how different workshops will look like at each level would be the following: Carbon footprint exercise at the individual level to explore the usefulness and limits of individual actions, policy labs at the provincial/national level to learn about specific climate justice issues facing Canada, or exploratory workshops to understand systems of oppression in better detail at the systemic level. All hands-on projects will be happening at the community level.



These learning goals are adapted from both the Sustainability Ambassadors program framework as well as from the SDG 13 learning goals for Climate Action. Through participating in the projects outlined below this cohort also aligns with SDG 10, reduced inequalities, and SDG 11, sustainable cities and communities.



Ambassador Projects

Homegrown Climate Justice: UBC Sustainability Hub + CCEL

"This project activates Indigenous knowledge to facilitate climate justice and Indigenous human rights advancement by committing to re-greening areas of the DTES in alignment with Indigenous ways of knowing. A model of sustainability at UBC, this project will engage with traditional Coast Salish ecological knowledge to work alongside the City of Vancouver to plant culturally-rooted plants and trees." Ambassadors will have the opportunity to participate in this project in a variety of ways. Though the specifics will be determined soon, there is potential for Ambassadors to run a consultation workshop in the Carnegie Centre to hear from community members and learn what they envision the green space to look like. They will collaborate with CCEL to receive training and prepare to engage with the community directly.

Dialogue from the margins

Dialogue from the margins looks to create safe spaces where IBPOC students can come together to learn about issues related to climate justice from each other, community members and experts in the field. The program will have four main objectives: fostering social connection, providing access to culturally safe support, creating lateral allyship and advancing the goals of climate justice. This year, the conversations will focus on action-based, climate solutions and community building.