

UBC Sustainability Scholars Program 2019

The UBC Sustainability Initiative (USI) is pleased to offer current UBC graduate students the opportunity to work on funded sustainability internship projects. Successful candidates work under the mentorship of a partner organization, and are immersed in real world learning where they can apply their research skills and contribute to advancing organizational sustainability goals.

For more information about the Sustainability Scholars Program and to apply to work on this project, please visit the [Student Opportunities](#) page.

Please review the application guide (PDF) before applying.

Applications close **midnight Monday February 25, 2019.**

Research project title: Measuring the Value of Vancouver's Circular Economy of Food

Research supports the following City of Vancouver policies -

- Greenest City Action Plan. Specific goal area (s):
 - Zero Waste Target:** Reduce total solid waste going to the landfill or incinerator by 50% from 2008 levels;
 - Local Food Target:** Increase city-wide and neighbourhood food assets by a minimum of 50% over 2010 levels
 - Green Economy Targets:** Double the number of green jobs by 2020; Double the number of businesses greening their operations by 2020
- Healthy City Strategy. Specific goal area (s): _____
- Renewable City Action Plan.
- Green Operations
- Other: **Zero Waste 2040**
 - Identify and pursue options to improve food rescue and redistribution systems
 - Become a Leading City in Food Waste Prevention

Outline scope of project and why it is of value to the City of Vancouver and describe how and when the scholar's work will be actionable

The City's ambitions to achieve increasingly high levels of waste diversion and zero waste cannot be achieved by the public sector alone and requires deep commitment by businesses. Circular economy practices are taking hold in the private sector all over the world and right here in Vancouver, with many businesses demonstrating that operational efficiencies and cost savings are possible when they take a circular approach. Closing the loop to create a fully circular product requires designing for disassembly and designing out waste, implementing

some sort of take-back program, tooling up for repair and remanufacture, and clearly communicating waste reduction practices to consumers.

While closed loop manufacturing is the circular economy's gold standard, there is also a lot of activity underway focused on retaining valuable materials and creating new products from existing "waste" materials. Eco-minded entrepreneurs and diverse cultural practices by, for example, immigrant communities and resource-scarce communities, contribute to this activity. The economic value of this activity is largely unknown, and measuring it is challenging. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF) has developed tools for measuring the economic potential of localized circular economy practices that can be adapted for different regions and different materials. The Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC) has completed some preliminary work on the EMF tools and would like to test them further by applying them to Vancouver's food sector.

At this stage, the EMF tools are vastly out of scale for Vancouver's food economy, however re-scaling them to suit local activity and available data will create useful tools that can be used to track sector growth, identify barriers to circularity, and highlight innovations or success stories. The project will also produce actual data on the circular activity happening in our local food economy. A few businesses in this sector are becoming better known, such as Food Mesh and Goodly Foods, however this Sustainability Scholars project will undoubtedly uncover more entrepreneurs working on food recovery, food waste reduction, and processing for redistribution. One of the project deliverables is a database of the groups (organizations, businesses, government agencies, etc.) currently participating in Vancouver's circular food economy. If it is also possible to capture the number of jobs that contribute to food circularity, that field should be included in the database. It is anticipated that the database created for this project will be a reasonable size for the scope of the project since the local CE food sector is growing, but not very large at this time.

This project will create circular economy valuation tools that will be applied in multiple industries in Vancouver and the region. The results of this study will enable Vancouver to contribute real data to the Circular Cities Network, C40, the USDN, and more networks like these in which municipalities share challenges and solutions. This work will contribute to development of municipal and regional circular economy strategies that are anticipated to begin in 2020.

Deliverables

- Draft CE valuation tools localized to Vancouver's food economy (based on EMF tools, revised for local and sector focus)
- Food CE participant database including job numbers
- Final CE evaluation tools for Vancouver's food economy
- A public facing final report (or executive summary) for the UBC Sustainability Initiative website

GREENEST CITY / HEALTHY CITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM 2019
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Time Commitment

- This project will take **250*** hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between ***April 29th and August 12th***
- The scholar is to complete hours between *9am to 5pm, Monday through Friday*, approximately **15-20** hours per week.

Skill set/background required/preferred

- Excellent research and writing skills.
- Demonstrated interest in circular economy and/or food systems.
- Strong technical writing skills
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Demonstrated time management skills
- Deadline oriented
- Project management and organizational skills
- Demonstrated experience in financial and/or economic analysis
- Familiarity with benchmarking methods and tools
- Familiarity with quantitative research methodologies and implementation
- Other: highly skilled in MS Excel, Access, or other data management software

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Apply here:

<https://sustain.ubc.ca/student-opportunities>

To learn more about the program here:

<https://sustain.ubc.ca/ubc-sustainability-scholars-program>

Read the application guidelines to confirm your eligibility to participate in the program here:

<https://sustain.ubc.ca/student-opportunities>

Contact Karen Taylor at sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca if you have questions.