

**A Report Proposing a Definition and Goals for Social Sustainability
to the Associate Director of Social Sustainability at the
University of British Columbia**

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Introduction – A Definition of Social Sustainability in a University Context

In this report, research has been conducted by examining the definitions and goals of ‘social sustainability’ as presented by various institutions, organizations, businesses, and levels of government. It is important to note that this report has been produced with a university context in mind and with The University of British Columbia in particular, at the forefront. Still, by looking towards developing areas of ideas of social sustainability at other universities and in non-university settings, a broad definition of social sustainability may be concluded that is not specific to such university contexts.

The initiatives, policies, processes, and mentality involved in developing and maintaining a vibrant, uniting community among diverse members with mutual goals and shared values by enhancing individual and collective capacity, advancing access and diversity, and perpetuating health and equality.

A Unique Vision – Social Sustainability at UBC

Imagining social sustainability at The University of British Columbia evokes the vision of a *harmonizing, synergistic university community that supports individuals to flourish to their full potential by realizing the ability for the whole to be greater than the sum of its parts.*

Methodology

As social sustainability – especially social sustainability in a university context – is a relatively new area of research, a majority of the research for this report has been conducted by looking at how others have grappled with defining and practicing social sustainability. The definition of social sustainability varies among different organizations and institutions, and depends on the characteristic of those entities and their role in society. Businesses and organizations develop their own definition to cater to their own needs and purposes. Whereas conservation is often identified as the most important aspect of environmental sustainability, maximizing individual and collective capacity is the most important element of social sustainability. For social sustainability, however, such a commonly accepted definition has yet to come into existence.

Summary of Findings and Key Concepts of Social Sustainability

The most commonly used definition of “sustainability” is often a broad interpretation derived from the “Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development” to the United Nations General Assembly in 1987. More commonly referred to as The Brundtland Commission, “sustainable development” is defined here as “the ability to meet present needs without compromising future generations’ ability to meet their needs” (UN website). ‘Social sustainability’ is widely recognized as being one of three main dimensions of sustainability: economic, environmental, and social. Various models have been used to describe the relationship among these three components including a three-legged stool model, a visual depiction of three overlapping circles where only true sustainability exists at the overlap, or a description of a triple bottom line a model often preferred model in business approaches to sustainability (AASHE FAQs website).

There are a few commonalities among the definitions of social sustainability of many of the sources researched. First, many do not differentiate at all or clearly social sustainability from environmental and/or economic sustainability. For example, in the website of the Alma Mater Society (AMS website) of UBC an entire ‘tab’ is dedicated to “Sustainability”. The main page of “Sustainability” presents the “AMS Lighter Footprint Strategy”, a plan that mainly aims to reduce the ecological impacts of the operations of the AMS (ibid). Under this tab there are also several sub-headings including “Eco Friendly Day” and “Environmental Sustainability Policy” (ibid). Interestingly, the information that is found under “Sustainability” heavily emphasizes environmental sustainability. As this is a source of sustainability efforts within the larger community of UBC, it is especially important to find such a disconnect between the three-pronged nature of sustainability theory and the access to practicing more fully rounded sustainability. Finally, among the Frequently Asked Questions in the website of the AASHE STARS program (see below), is the questions “why does STARS include “social” indicators? Isn’t sustainability mostly about the environment?” (AASHE FAQs website). These examples highlight confusion regarding social sustainability, its uncertain role as a part of sustainability as a whole, and the need to develop answers to these questions.

Indicators – GRI; AASHE STARS

In an effort to produce the most well-informed report on how social sustainability will be re-defined at UBC, sustainability indicators as defined by two important sources – the GRI and the AASHE STARS programs – have been researched and evaluated. GRI is different from STARS in the way that STARS is oriented towards educational institutions whereas GRI is utilized for various institutions. These two programs help institutions to measure their impact on society and develop how they can become more socially responsible.

GRI Program

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) program is an institution governed by multiple stakeholders to develop and provide a framework for reporting sustainability. GRI has created a set of continuously updated guidelines to which companies and institutions can measure themselves upon. Social performance indicators are grouped into four major categories: i) labor practices and decent work; ii) human rights; iii) society; iv) product responsibility. Each of these categories are composed of a set of indicators. The GRI guideline is applicable to any institution regardless of their size, sector, and location (GRI website).

AASHE STARS Program

The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) program of the Association of the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) is an answer to the call for a unified measuring system among higher education institutions for meeting sustainability guidelines and requirements (AASHE website). The goals of the STARS program – although created for different purposes than this project’s goals – provide an interesting perspective on how to develop a sustainability framework and metrics system that are specifically tailored to universities and colleges (ibid).

The two aims of STARS that most directly inform the developing framework of social sustainability at UBC are the commitment to “facilitate information sharing about higher education sustainability practices and performance” which speaks to the importance of building meaningful, communicative, and cooperative relationships among different stakeholders and the commitment to “build a stronger, more diverse campus sustainability community” which realizes the richness of diverse individuals and communities that can enhance each other when their growth is nourished (AASHE). STARS and the AASHE perspective are both invaluable resources for this report. The leading role of the STARS Program in this emerging field and the practical specifications of these guidelines will be again analyzed during the secondary process of creating metrics and strategies for implementing a social sustainability at UBC.

Social Sustainability Goals for UBC

- 1. Sustain Equality in Diversity**
- 2. Expand Social Inclusiveness**
- 3. Develop Safe, Healthful, and Peaceful Environments**
- 4. Nurture Meaningful and Cooperative Partnerships and Relationships**
- 5. Improve Adaptability, Flexibility, and Resilience**

While these goals aim to guide and motivate social sustainability practice and mentality at UBC, they are not considered to be strategies for achieving such. Instead, these five goals act as overarching principles under which a more comprehensive social sustainability action plan will be contemplated and produced.

1. Equality in Diversity

The goal of ‘Equality in Diversity’ arises from the assertion that every community member should have equal access to both resources and respect regardless of the unique qualities of their identity such as race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexuality, or physical ability. Truly valuing difference and seeking to best understand that a diverse population requires diverse social considerations are essential to perpetuating equality among all.

An important aspect of equality is to distribute benefits and burdens in an equitable manner so as not to disadvantage one specific group at the advantage to another group. (Hallsmith 63). Furthermore, if inequality is not controlled and allowed to run free, people will be too consumed by the accumulation of wealth and end up competing against each other for resources, and forget about the common bond that unites us all (Baehler).

2. Social Inclusiveness

The aspirations, interests, and values of all the groups in a given community must be taken into consideration. In addition, each group should have the opportunity to participate fully in community activities and events. Social exclusion is detrimental to the development and vitality of humans and will reduce the potential synergy that can be derived. In particular, effort must be taken to reach out to those who participates the least in terms of community life. Through social inclusion, a sense of belonging will become

apparent as a self-emergent property of our complex community. People will have the opportunity to engage with other members of the community, which ties in with our goal to nurture relationships. Furthermore, people should have the right and opportunity to engage in the decision-making process and voice their opinion on the issue at hand. Through such a process, people will be able to exercise their power, feel valued and enjoy a greater sense of autonomy.

3. Safe, Healthful, and Peaceful Environments

The importance of the personal wellbeing of community members makes this goal integral to the vision of social sustainability at UBC. Mutual respect is integral to bringing about a sense of safety within communities, as each member will feel dignified and free of worry of being violated. Promoting individual rights and a sense of common goals will provide the necessary conditions to achieve the desired environment stated above. Health services and programs can be initiated to enhance the well-being of students on campus. Safety and health is crucial to the development and advancement of the individual and community. Without those elements, other goals will be hindered and impeded.

4. Cooperative Partnerships and Relationships

This goal is not one that is commonly found in many other social sustainability frameworks, although it is often subtly presented or implied, we however find it absolutely crucial to highlight the importance of this goal of social sustainability especially in a university context. As we find social sustainability to be an aim of maximizing the potential of both individual and community members, and that a powerful whole is greater than the sum of its parts, meaningful and cooperative partnerships between stakeholders is crucial. When actors are envisioned as nodes of unique knowledge, ability, and perspective, it is easy to see how important it is to strengthen the fluid communication between actors. In addition to partnerships, healthy and caring relationships that are mutually beneficial and supportive is vital to socially sustainable communities.

5. Adaptability, Flexibility, and Resilience

Finally, the goal “Adaptability, Flexibility, and Resilience” speaks to one of the most foundational aspects of social sustainability – longevity. The Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘sustainable’ as “capable of being borne or endured; supportable, bearable” (Oxford Dictionary website). While this definition is obviously derived from a different context, it is clear that sustainability implies a maintenance of vitality. In an ever-changing and increasingly fast-paced world, it is unreasonable to suppose that any sort of imagination of social sustainability could rigidly continue to be beneficial for a changing community in a changing society. This imagination needs to be constantly improved upon to provide communities with the dexterity to respond to changing conditions and needs. Resiliency can be measured by “population density, cultural and lifestyle diversity, and the number and combination of different skills that are found within a community” (Wilson 6). This goal is closely linked to the goal of “Equality in Diversity” as any framework of social sustainability must be flexible to the diverse and changing needs of

community members. Furthermore, this goal is a nod to the two other elements of 'sustainability' – the environmental and economic. Simply considering social sustainability without a considering the unpredictability of the influences of environmental and economic sustainability makes for a short-sighted social sustainability mentality.

Conclusion

Social sustainability is an emerging area of social thought and practice that is increasingly utilized as a tool and adopted as a mentality for institutions and community members. As part of the tri-dynamic of the more all-encompassing term 'sustainability', social sustainability at The University of British Columbia – like many other societal actors – has yet to be a robust field that is well integrated into the institution. This report is a response to this call for UBC. Considered in the university context, and for UBC specifically, social sustainability aims to operate through distributing benefits and burdens equitably, developing cooperative and caring relationships, fostering a sense of safety through mutual respect, enhancing civic participation, and adapting to internal and external changes in an efficient and beneficent manner. The progression of community development must be accompanied by the mentality of prosperous longevity, keeping future imaginations of UBC and the world at the forefront. All sectors of community must be taken into consideration when addressing goals so that advancement in one area would not lead to a regression in another area. In addition, we need to have members care about the needs of others in addition to their own to facilitate the blossoming of diversity and ideas. Community capacity can be increased as greater knowledge is transferred between members through social interaction. As more socially sustainable interactions occur, the community system will become more and more dynamic, effective, and strong. Sustainable communities is essentially a complex system where the contributions of each individual results in a product that is greater than the total of their contributions.

Annotated Bibliography

AMS Sustainability Page. “Lighter Footprint Strategy.” The University of British Columbia. Jan. 27, 2009
<http://www.amsubc.ca/index.php/student_government/subpage/category/ams_lighter_footprint_strategy/>

This part of the website of the Alma Matter Society, a student society of UBC, presents the efforts of the AMS to “be a leader in reducing the University campus’s ecological footprint to sustainable levels by fostering environmental justice in our own operations and lobbying for sustainable practices through our relationships with the University community and broader society”. Much of the page is dedicated to the AMS Lighter Footprint Strategy and other environmentally-oriented sustainability effort.

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) Website. “Frequently Asked Questions” page. Jan. 28, 2009
<<http://www.aashe.org/stars/faqs.php>>.

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) Website. Jan. 28, 2009.
<<http://www.aashe.org/stars/index.php>>.

AASHE, an association developed over the last four years, focuses on integrating the communities and practices of higher education institutions with sustainability. One of their key programs is the STARS Program, which is dedicated to creating measurability guidelines and methods of sustainability. The goals of the AASHE STARS program are: “provide a guide for advancing sustainability in all sectors of higher education; enable meaningful comparisons over time and across institutions by establishing a common standard of measurement for sustainability in higher education; create incentives for continual improvement toward sustainability; facilitate information sharing about higher education sustainability practices and performance; build a stronger, more diverse campus sustainability community.”

City of Boulder. 2007. “Social Sustainability Strategic Plan.” Jan. 31, 2009.
<http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/final_sss_plan_060608.pdf>.

The City of Boulder in Colorado has set up a framework of six goals to achieve social sustainability: i) promote city and community engagement; ii) expand and value diversity; iii) improve neighborhood and community livability; iv) address the needs of children; v) address the needs of youth; vi) partner with schools; vii) address the needs of seniors; viii) develop a shared vision of community sustainability. This plan is expected to incorporate social planning into the city. In the context of UBC, addressing the needs of children, youth, and seniors is less relevant than addressing the needs of students, faculty and staff members. However, some students are parents that have children, so we must take that into

consideration. For each of their goals, the City of Boulder has developed strategies to achieve it. In addition, each strategy is comprised of multiple actions, which help to actualize the strategy. A lot of the strategies and actions for the first goal are very bureaucratic, such as expanding the legislative agenda to include social services. I personally believe more tangible things, such as involving the community in the decision making process, would be more helpful in promoting engagement. To expand and value diversity, Boulder aims to increase immigrant and Latino participation. In the case of UBC, we can create more opportunities to involve minority groups and Aboriginals. Developing plans to enhance social inclusion and recreation activities are the two strategies employed to improve livability. Restricting the access of cars and creating sport events can enhance student interaction. Similar to the strategy of Boulder, UBC can provide affordable daycare to students that are parents to help share some of their responsibilities. One of the main actions to attain a shared vision of community sustainability is to coordinate the different sustainability initiatives on campus. In addition, a shared vision of community sustainability would aid the process of uniting and harmonizing the student body.

City of Vancouver. May 10, 2005. "Policy Report: Social Development." Jan. 28, 2009 <<http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20050524/documents/p1.pdf>>.

In the context of this report, social sustainability is defined by the ability of a community to meet the needs of its inhabitants and to address and mitigate problems that may arise in the future. Two types of resources are available to foster socially sustainable communities: individual capacity and collective capacity. Individual capacity represents the skills, knowledge, and personal values each person is able to offer to enhance their own health and beauty as well as the health and beauty of the community. Community capacity refers to the usage of connections and networks to bring about collective action that can enhance the well-being of the society as a whole. Social sustainability embodies three main elements: i) provision of necessities; ii) human capacity for development and education; iii) community capacity to expand and improve community organizations. Four factors reinforces the above three elements: equity, social inclusion and interaction, security, and adaptability. These four elements, in our opinion, can be thought of as goals in an university setting. They suggested that this policy report be used as a framework for the city's sustainability initiatives.

Larem Baehler. "Social Sustainability: New Zealand Solutions for Tocqueville's Problem Social Policy Journal of New Zealand." Government of New Zealand. Ministry of Social Development. Jan. 26, 2009 <<http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/journals-and-magazines/social-policy-journal/spj31/31-social-sustainability-new-zealand-solution-for-tocquevilles-pages22-40.html>>.

This paper examines the range of factors that made it possible for New Zealand to avoid going down an un-sustaining path. An interesting logic is made in this paper where equality and social cohesion is less of a birthright than a fire. This is because equality and social cohesion, similar to a fire, needs to be continually maintained to prevent any kind of degradation. Social consensus can only bring about social

cohesion if the government is truly listening to the people instead of manipulating it to impose ideal standards. Equality in such a sense is just as important in an university setting, where we need to continuously monitor to ensure that there has been no degradation of equality. A closely-knit community with dense connections and “village style politics” will naturally lead to a high level of civic participation. In pursuing equality, jealousy and suspicion can arise and question whether if certain people have “greater” equality” than others. If members of a community engage in teamwork, where there is mutual respect and trust, suspicions such as those mentioned above would not exist. Another way to dissolve suspicions is to not only share benefits equally but to share misfortunes equally as well. In order for a socially sustainable community to exist, people must possess cultural values that combat the drive for material fulfillment. I agree with the statement that Michael Cullen, the Finance Minister, made recently: ““the pursuit of happiness” does not “equate to the pursuit of wealth and success in owning a red Ferrari”. Happiness comes from the acquisition of meaningful relationships instead of purchasable objects, where the warm and cozy of feeling of being cared for and loved is priceless and immeasurable. Socialization processes can foster more meaningful and compassionate concerns within people, such as anti-materialism and prudence. A sense of security will self emerge as the above factors are attained. Security can also be enhanced through the implementation of social safety nets to support people in times of hardship. In my opinion, all of the above factors that contribute to the social sustainability of New Zealand can be modeled and implemented as goals in a university context.

Hallsmith, Gwendolyn. The Key to Sustainable Cities. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 2003.

This book derives its goals and guidelines of social sustainability from the Earth Charter, which is a declaration of the fundamental principles for a harmonizing and sustaining community. Fostering and enhancing social capacity is a crucial part of a socially sustainable community. Social capacity is also called the “caring capacity” in this book as social capacity is developed through establishing relationships and caring for each other to produce synergy, where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Under this broad umbrella of social capacity, five objectives are listed that could achieve the goal of increasing it. Firstly, communities have to create or support systems that care for people, such as daycare services. Secondly, strengthen civic participation in decisions that affect the community, such as holding public consultations and involving the public in the decision making process. Resources and burdens should be distributed equally within the community so as not to disadvantage a particular cultural or social group. The fourth and fifth objectives are to increase the value and vitality of humans and to preserve and renew human resources respectively. Furthermore, the book goes into greater detail regarding how the needs of a community can be addressed through six goals: i) to create safety and peace; ii) to foster a sense of community; iii) to provide healthcare; iv) to promote education; v) to encourage creativity and recreation; vi) to nourish spiritual development. To create a sense of safety and peace, members of a community have to respect and care for each other.

Developing healthy relationships and social support systems can help bring about a sense of belonging to a community. Education is the key to having community members recognize the importance of caring for each other and learning the practices of sustainable living. Art and cultural activities can help nurture an individual's creative expression. Lastly, communities need to recognize and preserve the different religions and faith groups, which are ways of nurturing human beliefs and liveliness. All of these goals and objectives are suitable for, and relevant and transferrable to a university context to achieve the socially sustainable community mentioned in this book.

McKenzie, Stephen. "Social Sustainability: Towards Some Definitions." Hawke Research Institute Working Paper Series No. 27 (2004). Jan. 28, 2009
<<http://www.dest.gov.au/priorities/plans/n539281103.rtf>>.

This working paper aims to define social sustainability irrespective of the ecological and economic dimensions of sustainability. One definition of social sustainability they suggested that we particularly like is: "life-enhancing condition within communities, and a process within communities that can achieve that condition" (Stephen). Existing definitions, indicators, and measures of social sustainability are examined. Sustainability can be measured by the level of increase or decrease in different types of stocks. It argues that most of the work on social sustainability is focused on presenting indicators that can be measured while there is a lack of literature on the processes that can achieve such social sustainability. Various definitions of social sustainability are provided from research projects that are catered to a particular purpose. One noticeable statement is the consideration of sustainability as a process/condition through transforming indicators into actions, which can be actualized to maintain or increase sustainability. The key principles of sustainability include: diversity, equity, interconnectedness, quality of life, and democracy and governance.

Oxford English Dictionary Online. "Sustainability." Word searched 3 February 2009.
<<http://dictionary.oed.com/>>

Social Sustainability. Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

<<http://www.wpi.edu/About/Sustainability/sustainability.html>>.

In describing social sustainability on Worcester Polytechnic Institute's website, they did not provide a clear sense of what social sustainability is and intermixes the social dimension of sustainability with the economic and environmental dimensions. This intermixing of the three components of sustainability is understandable as all three components are connected to each other. Two goals are listed on their "Social Sustainability" page: i) community engagement; ii) social, economic, and environmental justice. The method to achieve community engagement chosen by the institute is to have faculty and students participate in research projects that sets out a framework for civic participation on campus. Although at first one might think that economic and environmental justice should not be categorized under social sustainability, justice regarding any matter is a

social issue. Justice is carried out by the Institute's commitment to respect for people without discrimination of any kind.

Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. 2008. "Vancouver 2010 Sustainability Report 2007-08." Jan. 26, 2009 <<http://www.vancouver2010.com/en/sustainability-and-br-aboriginal-pa/sustainability-report/-/31734/31656/5jelel/sustainability-report.html>>.

In the VANOC Sustainability Report, the social dimension of it highlights two main goals, social inclusion and Aboriginal participation. Under each of the two main goals is a subset of objectives. Social inclusion, as defined by VANOC, means taking the needs and views of diverse groups, from athletes to stakeholders to the disadvantaged, into consideration during their decision making process. There are six objectives for social inclusion: i) inner-city inclusive commitments; ii) employment and training opportunities; iii) business development; iv) accessibility; v) safe places to live; vi) a good place to work. I believe only the latter three objectives are suitable for a university context. VANOC aims to achieve the highest level of Aboriginal participation in the "planning, hosting, and legacies of the games" in relation to previous Olympic Games. To increase Aboriginal participation, the five objectives are: i) partnership and collaboration; ii) sport and youth; iii) economic development; iv) cultural involvement; v) awareness and education. Steady progress towards their goals are being made by VANOC to achieve those goals, such as establishing a non-commercial licensing with the Aboriginals to promote Aboriginal arts and crafts as well as their culture.

United Nations General Assembly. "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development." 11 December 1987. Jan. 28, 2009 <<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/42/ares42-187.htm>>

The electronic version of the original Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, commonly referred to as the Brundtland Commission provides one of the most commonly used definitions of 'sustainable development'. This document also reveals the emphasis in the Commission's findings of inherently social aspects of sustainability. For example, the Commission endorses "critical objectives" including "preserving peace, reviving growth and changing its quality, remedying the problems of poverty and satisfying human needs, addressing the problems of population growth and of conserving and enhancing the resource base, reorienting technology and managing risk, and merging environment and economics in decision-making".

Washington State University. Jul. 17, 2009. Department of Community and Rural Sociology. "Vision Statement." Jan. 30, 2009 <<http://www.crs.wsu.edu/crs-vision-stmt7-17-07.pdf>>.

"Social Sustainability encompasses community cohesion, compassion, and the equitable distribution of resources such as food, healthcare, affordable housing, education, employment opportunities, and other vital resources. It suggests that education in social sustainability can be added as a fourth E to "the Three Es" of sustainability because it is through education that we come to understand how the

different aspects of sustainability interact with each other. Besides providing a definition, the Washington State University does not provide any more useful information as to their goals and strategies to bring about social sustainability.

Wilson, Diane. Sept. 24, 2002. "Assessing Social and Economic Considerations in Ecosystem-Based Management for the North Coast LRMP." School of Resource and Community Management, Simon Fraser University. Jan. 31, 2009 <http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/PubDocs/bcdocs/358996/ecosystem_2rpt.pdf>. The definition of social sustainability mentioned once again highlights meeting basic needs, such as food and shelter. In addition, the definition highlights the need to meet "higher-level social and cultural necessities", such as equality and freedom (Wilson). This research paper puts forward the idea that social well-being encompasses four elements: i) social resiliency; ii) community capacity; iii) quality of life; iv) empowerment with responsibility. All of these elements can be set as goals for a university to achieve social sustainability. Social resilience refers to the communities ability to recognize and adapt to changes. Community capacity is made up of the abilities of individuals, institutions, and other components that comprise a community. The description of quality of life is very vague in this paper as it only provides a list of indicators. Empowerment and responsibility comes from allowing citizens to participate in the decision-making process, a process in which a citizen's freedom and values are enriched.

YVR Vancouver Airport Authority. 2007. "2007 Sustainability Report." Jan. 28, 2009 <http://www.yvr.ca/pdf/authority/2007_Sustainability_Report.pdf>. In YVR's 2007 Online Sustainability Report, the social aspect is separated into eight different categories: i) Supporting our Community; ii) Our People; iii) Investing in our People; iv) Seeking Feedback from our Team; v) Recognizing and Rewarding People; vi) Supporting Health and Safety; vii) Supporting Respect and Equality; viii) Connecting with our Communities. In terms of supporting the community, YVR gives back to the community through investment in various organizations and charities. The Airport Authority has set a goal of donating one percent of their net income into three main areas: "families and communities, First Nations, and employee driven" (YVR). They "support skills development, employee recognition, and fitness and balance" (YVR). This fits nicely within a university context, as universities should help students develop their skills, recognize their academic success, and encourage a balanced lifestyle. The Airport Authority invests a considerable amount of time and money to provide training for their employees; they also provide financial aid, such as bursaries, to allow their employees to gain certification in another trade through education. Universities should seek feedback from their students to develop better curriculums just as YVR seeks feedback from their employees to improve their training program. The Airport Authority rewards those employees who provide exceptional service by monetary rewards; universities take part in a similar recognition process through giving out scholarships to students who demonstrate outstanding academic success. A range of health programs and initiatives are provided to the employees to ensure their well-being because employees are their most important asset. In comparison,

universities need those programs and initiatives as well to care for the students because without students universities would not exist. Employees with different cultures and backgrounds are treated with equal respect at YVR. Its website mentions the “Employment Equity Act [that] was passed in 1986 and specifically covers four groups: women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities” (YVR). Universities would find it beneficial to the overall harmony of the community if respect and equality for every student were protected. Lastly, measures are in place that engages and informs the public and stakeholders about major projects and decisions that are to be made. Similar measures to engage students to participate in decision-making processes and projects at universities would nurture a greater sense of social cohesion.

