

## 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.**

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### Research project title

Identification of tools to support stress and wellbeing interventions for students (UBC Okanagan)

### Goal or Operations Plan objective

To refine a stress-reduction intervention designed to help students understand their own stress response and subsequently develop a stress management plan by connecting them to current support services on campus.

### Please specify the strategic area(s) this project supports:

Okanagan Charter:

- Call to Action 1: Embed health into all aspects of campus culture, across the administration, operations and academic mandates – specifically 1.4 Support personal development & 1.5 Create and re-orient campus services.
- Call to Action 2: Lead health promotion action and collaboration locally and globally – specifically 2.1 Integrate health, well-being and sustainability in multiple disciplines to develop change agents.

20 Year Sustainability Strategy: UBC Community Strategic Goals 2&3

- Goal 2 - Integration of social sustainability demonstrates improvements in health, productivity and quality of life of the UBC community.
- Goal 3 - Innovative engagement programs strengthen linkages across the campus to generate a sense of place and support the creation of a vibrant, animated, and sustainable live-work-learn community.

UBC Wellbeing Priority Area: Mental Health and Resilience

- It also helps support Goal 3 of UBC's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy which is "to support student wellbeing, personal development, and positive affiliation with UBC through outstanding campus life programs and service excellence".

UBC People and Place Strategy: Strategy 3: Thriving Communities

### Outline scope of project and why it is of value to your organization. Describe how and when the scholar's work will be actionable.

This project is a joint effort with the University Experience Office to help train peer mentors to be able to work with incoming undergraduate students to better understand the physiological stress response, the skills to

decrease the stress response as well as to connect students to existing resources on campus to develop their own stress management toolbox. In our initial work together it has become evident that there are a number of wellbeing supports on the Okanagan campus that are offered to students to help manage their stress but that students still lack the understanding of where and how to access such resources. In addition, it has been identified that there is a need to increase students' awareness level and ability to access.

The larger intervention planned for the Fall of 2019 will include two main components - biofeedback training and linking students to other support mechanisms and tools for reducing stress (the biofeedback is designed to help students better understand the stress response and teach them breathing techniques to regulate the stress response). It is not sufficient in itself to help students to develop a sufficient number of coping skills - the tools and linking to current support mechanisms will help students develop and diversify their coping skills.

The biofeedback data the Scholar will analyze and the identification of tools are essential for creating a more effective intervention for helping students reduce stress levels and enhance wellbeing.

The Sustainability scholar will:

- Work with relevant stakeholders (e.g., director of wellness, campus health, BARK program leader, director of peer mentors, students) throughout the summer. Initial meetings are intended to gain a better understanding of what is currently offered on campus for students to reduce stress and promote wellness. Follow up meetings will take place once the tools have been identified and the larger intervention plan comes together. These meetings will be used to obtain feedback/input to continue to strengthen the intervention and connections between various supports and services.
- Meet with stakeholders leading/facilitating wellness initiatives across campus and investigate opportunities to build connections.
- Analyze the pilot data that will be collected in March and April (2019) of the biofeedback intervention to determine the impact on perceived stress levels and academic resilience. This will involve data cleaning and data analysis with SPSS as well as qualitative data analysis of interviews. The ethics for this project has already been submitted and approval is expected by end of February 2019.
- To collect data via semi-structured interviews with approximately 15 undergraduate students to examine the barriers for reaching out and accessing current services designed to help students improve their health and well-being.
- To complete a review of literature examining the intervention work in the area of stress and wellbeing to identify tools used within the interventions. The purpose of this review will be to identify evidence-based tools (e.g., self-guided practices and strategies) related to reducing stress. The tools will be used for phase 2 of the project (Fall 2020) which is to implement the full intervention that will involve three components: a refined biofeedback intervention, an evidence-based toolbox of self-guided strategies for reducing stress and mentorship that will help students become more aware of and have the ability to connect with services on campus to enhance their health and well-being.
- To refine the evaluation tools and protocol for measuring the impact of the larger intervention to occur from September to December 2019.

### **Deliverables**

*Note that a final deliverable either a full report or, if the report contains confidential information, an executive summary is required by the end of the program (August 12, 2019). The deliverable will be archived in the online Scholars Project Library and made publicly available.*

- Refine the biofeedback intervention and evaluation protocol and ethics modifications (if necessary) based on initial data analysis.
- Summary report of interviews with stakeholders and students
- Review of literature of evidence-based tools for reducing stress
- Final report [or Executive Summary] for the UBC Sustainability Scholars online project library

### Time Commitment

*Please indicate the total numbers of hours your scholar will need to complete the project, the time frame (between April 29 to August 12), any critical dates for the project, and the optimal schedule for your scholar's work.*

- This project will take **250\*** hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between May 1<sup>st</sup> to August 9<sup>th</sup> 2019
- The scholar is to complete hours between 9-5 Monday to Friday, approximately 15-18 hours per week up to a total of 250 hours.

### Skill set/background required/preferred

- Excellent research and writing skills.
- Demonstrated interest in health and wellbeing.
- Experience conducting stakeholder engagement events, including facilitation skills, is an asset.
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Statistical analysis
- Community engagement experience
- Familiarity conducting focus group research
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Project management and organizational skills
- Design and layout skills
- Ability to work in a team environment
- Background in Human Kinetics or Psychology
- The successful candidate must be available to work in Kelowna for the duration of the project.

Applications close **midnight Monday February 25.**

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](mailto:sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca) if you have questions.