



UBC Sustainability Scholars Program

The UBC Sustainability Initiative (USI) is pleased to offer current UBC graduate students the opportunity to work on paid sustainability internship projects. Successful candidates work under the guidance of a mentor from one of our partner organizations, 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.

Don't forget to review the application guide (PDF) before applying.

Applications close **midnight Sunday September 22, 2019.**

Research project title

Understanding the impact of diversity, equity and inclusion on social connection and wellbeing

Sustainability Goal or Operations Plan objective

We know that strong and lasting social and friendship connections are critical to our health and have a positive influence on our physical well-being, mental well-being, and longevity. Conversely, having few or poor-quality social connections has been shown to cause detrimental health outcomes.

The UBC Wellbeing Strategic Framework through its consultation with community and informed research has identified Social Connection as a priority area that promotes the wellbeing of students, staff and faculty.

The long-term targets for Social Connection are that:

1. Community members feel part of a community at UBC
 - a. % students who report they have a group, community or social circle at UBC where they feel they belong
2. Inclusive environment: Community members report their beliefs, identity and experiences are valued at UBC.
 - a. % students

Through the Student Diversity Initiative Student Consultation Report 2016 and the Undergraduate Experience Survey data from 2016-2018 we have been able to identify priority groups that feel less of a sense of belonging to UBC and their experience in the academic environment. These student groups include, but are not limited to equity seeking groups, such as students of colour, LGBTQ, and students with disabilities.

The Health Promotion and Education Unit is committed to developing and providing programs and services that are inclusive. Furthermore, we believe it is important to consider the unique needs, and social and structural

determinants of health of the diverse groups, when developing inclusive initiatives, programs and services. We see the relationship between social connection and the holistic well-being of all students.

We acknowledge that specific groups of students, often equity seeking groups, experience more barriers to feeling a sense of belonging while at UBC and report feeling that their beliefs, identities and experiences are less valued. We would like to better understand the experiences of equity seeking student groups in order to develop and offer diverse and inclusive programs and services.

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

- Okanagan Charter: 1.2 Create Supportive Campus Environments
- 20 Year Sustainability Strategy: UBC Community
 - Integration of social sustainability demonstrates improvements in health, productivity and quality of life of the UBC community.
 - Intercultural fluency, diversity and equality are fully integrated into UBC's social sustainability efforts.
- UBC Wellbeing Priority Area: Social Connection
- UBC People and Place Strategy: Strategy 4: Inclusive Excellence

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

1. Assist in determining the UBC Wellbeing Social Connection priority area's next steps with a student-focused lens.
2. Define social sustainability and how it relates to the Wellbeing Strategic Framework and its Social Connection targets and indicators.
3. Inform the design and facilitation of an engagement process with student equity seeking groups (through stakeholder consultations).
4. Understand the experiences of equity seeking groups and the barriers that impact their sense of belonging and social connection at UBC.
5. Articulate the connection between social determinants of health, and the structural determinants of wellbeing that can impact social connection.
6. Collate best practices to inform the development of inclusive programs and services in the Wellness Centre.
7. Understand the relationship between other wellbeing priority areas and social connection. E.g., How does social connection impact mental health? How can physical activity enhance social connection?

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 (March 15, 2020). The deliverable will be archived in the online public-facing [Scholars Project Library](#).

1. Literature review on to social connection, wellbeing, and university student experiences, with a focus on equity seeking groups.
2. Complete a landscape scan and a summary of practices on other Canadian campuses that promote social connection and a sense of belonging, specifically for equity seeking groups.

3. Review and analyze Student Diversity Initiative Student Consultation Report 2016, specifically focusing on the theme of “extra-curricular” spaces.
4. Create a summary of sample actions in progress at UBC that enhance the social connection and sense of belonging of equity seeking groups.
5. Conduct stakeholder interviews with campus partners involved with equity seeking groups.
6. Identify Health Equity Frameworks that have been applied in practice on post-secondary Campuses to support the wellbeing of students.
7. A final report containing a summary of completed work with recommendations to support the development and implementation of programs and services offered by the Health Promotion and Education Unit, complemented by a final presentation to key stakeholders.
8. A final report for the UBC Sustainability Scholars online project library.

Time Commitment

This project will take **250** hours to complete.

This project must be completed between October 21, 2019 and March 15, 2020

The Scholar must be available to work approximately 12 hours per week.

Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Experience conducting stakeholder engagement events, including facilitation skills, is an asset
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Statistical analysis
- Excellent public speaking and presentation skills
- Community engagement experience
- Familiarity conducting focus group research
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Demonstrated experience in working with diverse groups
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys

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Apply here:

<http://sustain.ubc.ca/scholarsopportunities>

To learn more about the program here:

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

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

<http://sustain.ubc.ca/scholarsopportunities>

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