

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Summer 2022 Sustainability Scholars Program Internship Opportunity

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 sustainability across the region.

- Visit the [Sustainability Scholars Program website](#) to learn [how the program works](#) and to [apply](#).
- Be sure to review the [application guide](#) to confirm your eligibility before applying.

Applications close at midnight on Sunday January 30, 2022.

>> This is a Collective Impact (CI) Project >>

Collective Impact (CI) projects involve multiple Scholars working in collaboration on one larger project. Some CI projects require Scholars with similar skills while some require Scholars with different skillsets. If you are a strong communicator and like the idea of achieving high impact through collaboration, this project might be for you. Read on for more details.

Project Title: Planning for Future Food Systems in BC (Policy, Practice and the Rural/Urban Divide)

Total Number of Scholars Required: 3

Other positions collaborating on this project:

2022-001A Planning for Future Food Systems in BC (Equity Framework Implementation)

2022-001B Planning for Future Food Systems in BC (Policy, Practices and the Rural /Urban Divide)

2022-001C Planning for Future Food Systems in BC (Evaluation Framework Case Studies)

Project Background:

There is a broad spectrum of local government intervention in community agriculture which includes but is not limited to community gardens, boulevard gardens, farm stands, and inner-city farming. This broad spectrum results in complex and divergent sets of land-use legislation, policies and practices being employed by municipalities to address (or exacerbate) key issues facing their constituents (e.g., land dispossession, food insecurity, social isolation, community connectedness, social justice etc.). Urban agriculture is also associated with a multitude of co-benefits related to common community objectives, such as providing green infrastructure for temperature and stormwater regulation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from food transportation, supporting plant-pollinator relationships, etc. Some municipalities have created stronger, more supportive food system policies and practices than others, and reasons for these successes include financial, human, and physical resources, municipal land base, political leadership, champions among local government staff, community-driven collective action, and non-profit sector vibrancy.

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One of the most problematic policy areas for community-based agriculture (CBA) surrounds inner-city farming activities across municipalities. The policies and practices used by municipalities to support inner-city farming differ greatly and have various levels of adoption and support among municipalities. They cover a broad range of policies across different city departments; from planning, parks and recreation, engineering, and economic development. While some municipalities have a vision or suite of policies to support inner-city farming and allow for policy adoption across departments, many municipalities do not. This has resulted in inequities across municipalities in BC; those with stronger supportive policies and those without.

In light of the COVID-19 global pandemic and recent extreme weather events that have resulted in the loss of life and impacted crop production, there is a need for integrated approaches to urban agriculture that recognize the complex and positive role inner-city agriculture can play in mitigating these vulnerabilities. This requires a series of intentional research projects that align and build off of each other to ensure equity is foundational to any further policy and practice development, inner-city agriculture is viewed by rural agriculture and the provincial government as an important intervention, and evaluation frameworks, policy implementation and long-term visions are integrated into urban foodland planning efforts.

Project description

The purpose of the project is to build capacity of local governments, and food system stakeholders, to embed and measure progress on social justice efforts into food systems planning. Social justice is increasingly identified as a cross-cutting theme in planning for sustainable food systems. A focus on the human relations and impacts is necessary to advancing broader ecological sustainability, building resilience, and ensuring a just food future. The activities identified in this Sustainability Scholars project are foundational to broader participatory action work across municipalities.

This Sustainability Scholars project sets out to 1) develop an evaluation framework, 2) create a set of performance indicators, 3) embed an equity tool into the evaluation framework, and; 4) understand the divide between rural and urban growing. The framework will be developed with three municipalities in BC. An equity tool will be employed to inform the development of the evaluation framework to ensure the framework guides communities toward fair and equal access to community agriculture opportunities for every resident. To ensure usefulness, a trial with one municipality will be used to test the adaptability of the framework.

The project will work with different levels of government to ensure the widespread dissemination of the research and tools developed. The intended outcomes for the project are as follows: i) that municipalities have increased capacity to evaluate their CBA policies and interventions; ii) that municipalities have improved alignment/integration across policies/practices oriented towards similar outcomes; iii) that CBA activities centre equity, and; iv) that there is a wide uptake of the evaluation framework. Finally, the three students will work together to create a paper on climate justice and food systems in relationship with their respective areas of research. This paper will help establish a stronger link between food system planning, climate action and social justice

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Scope of work: Understanding Policy, Practice and the Rural and Urban Divide: Environmental Scan and Informant Interviews (position 2022-001B)

There is an ongoing tension with resource allocation, particularly in wealthier local governments, to support urban agricultural initiatives (e.g., community gardens, rooftop gardens, farmers' markets, institutional procurement, school food programs) which may deleteriously impact agricultural development in more rural spaces. Many urban agriculture proponents describe the importance of connecting urban citizens with food production, but often neglect the production systems outside of the urban area. This research project is an area of interest identified by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. The scholar will work with the team to answer the following questions: How are urban agricultural initiatives (e.g., programs, policies, plans) linking the urban food system and citizens to rural agriculture, if at all? How might urban agricultural initiatives lead to closing the urban/rural divide?

Working with the project mentors, the Scholar will work with lead researchers to conduct an environmental scan of the approximately 10 to 20 current inner-city agriculture activities taking place in British Columbia. Once the activities have been compiled and organized, the scholar will conduct a document and gap analysis, employing NVIVO or equivalent data analysis platform, to determine what activities are aimed at linking urban citizens to rural agriculture, if at all. The graduate student will then co-develop with the project team a semi-structured questionnaire and conduct key informant interviews with at least ten inner-city agriculture actors/stakeholders to understand what types of activities they are doing to connect the urban food system and citizens to rural agriculture. These interviews will also aim to explore the possibilities for establishing reciprocal relationships between urban and rural actors. The scholar will synthesize key findings in a report and provide recommendations on how to support and develop urban agricultural initiatives that integrate with broader rural agriculture issues and initiatives. Finally, based on the scholar's experience with inner-city agriculture activities and interviews, they will extrapolate key climate justice areas, they will work with the other two scholars to produce an integrative report linking these three thematic areas.

Position Deliverables

- Environmental scan of current municipal urban agriculture policies. For example, <https://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/residents/parks/growing-in-the-city.html>
- Key informant interviews with 10 to 20 inner-city farmers to understand what types of activities they are doing to connect urban producers and consumers to rural agriculture, and how and if they are bringing attention to rural agricultural issues.
- White paper or Policy brief for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- Final report or executive summary for the online Sustainability Scholars Project Library

Time Commitment

- This position is for 270 hours of work.
- This project must be completed between May 2 and August 12, 2022
- Work takes place between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday, approximately 17 to 20 hours per week.

Required/preferred Skills and Background

X Excellent research and writing skills

X Demonstrated interest in sustainability

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- X Experience conducting stakeholder engagement events, including facilitation skills, is an asset
- X Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- X Familiarity with qualitative data analysis tools such as NVivo or ATLAS.ti
- X Excellent public speaking and presentation skills
- X Community engagement experience
- X Familiarity conducting focus group research
- X Strong analytical skills
- X Ability to work independently
- X Deadline oriented
- X Project management and organizational skills
- X Familiarity with WordPress, Drupal, or other website content tools (asset)
- X Demonstrated experience in farming, food systems, social justice. Urban agriculture and policy is an asset

Applications close **midnight Sunday January 30, 2022**

Apply here: [Click here to apply](#)

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

Useful Resources

We are holding a special **resume preparation workshop for prospective Scholars** on January 19. [Click here for details and to register.](#)

Below are some links to useful resources to help you with your resume and cover letter (there are many more online). Some of these resources also provide information on preparing for your interview.

<https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/resumes-cover-letters-curricula-vitae>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/graduate-pathways-success>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/cover-letter-cv-resume-templates-ubc-career-services>