

## 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.**

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### **Project Title: Innovative approaches to intercultural climate engagement**

#### **Project Background & Overview:**

Our planet is in the midst of a climate crisis where the latest science calls for reducing global emissions by half within the next decade to avoid catastrophic climate change. In the wake of the past summer's deadly heatwave and unprecedented fires, coupled with more recent flooding events across British Columbia, public awareness of the climate crisis is growing rapidly. Environmental organizations, such as Sierra Club BC (SCBC), have a critical role to play in supporting individuals and communities to take action to address this crisis.

Western environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS) have relied heavily on technical scientific descriptions of the crisis; and this framing has both shaped the nature of the actions undertaken, as well as determined who feels drawn to participate. As ENGOS seek to expand the numbers and diversity of those with whom they work, they must increase their organizational capacity to learn from and work with diverse knowledge systems, as well as tell different kinds of stories about the climate crisis and associated impacts.

Climate change is a 'wicked problem': its degrees of complexity demand solutions that not only transcend the dominant worldviews that created it but call upon a diverse collective with intersectional understandings in order to move forward actions.

Although Indigenous people contribute much less to the underlying causes of climate change, they are disproportionately affected. Similarly, people of colour, women of all races and ethnicities, and those living in poverty, also experience disproportionate impacts of climate change. As awareness of climate change impacts have increased, momentum has grown for stronger, more actively engaged, and self-aware, environmental and social movements. A critical insight and perspective emerging from diverse Indigenous organizations and actors within their communities is seeing climate change not as a new phenomenon, but rather as a symptom and culmination of the damaging effects of settler colonialism. Such an example does not downplay the severity of the problem but rather sheds light on the systemic origins of the issue.

Mainstream ENGOs have a long history of ignoring the presence of Indigenous and diverse peoples in the areas that they are attempting to protect. These practices have resulted in a lack of diversity and inclusion in many organizations. For mainstream sustainability practices and climate actions to be inclusive and diverse, ENGOs must centre Indigenous and diverse lenses. For several years, Sierra Club BC has been working to decolonize the organization's efforts: this project is among those that are the direct result of this initiative. It is imperative that ENGOs work with Indigenous and other historically "*marginalized communities*", in order to forward their environmental goals on a foundation of social and environmental justice. This project attempts to do just that.

## Project description

As civil society organizations (ENGOs more specifically) are beginning to reckon with past mistakes and strive for equity and inclusivity, they need tools to create meaningful and lasting organizational change. This project, *Implementing A Pathway Together (IAPT)*, is an expansion of two connected initiatives. The first, '*Seeing Through Watchers' Eyes*' project (STWE), was started by and T'Sou-ke Nation cultural knowledge holder, and SCBC Cultural Voice, kQwa'ste'not~Charlene George. STWE is a digital tool that guides participants through Coast Salish knowledges, bridging Western and Indigenous ways of knowing, and enhancing and interacting with the existing K-12 curriculum.<sup>1</sup> The initiative was deeply collaborative, and many of the teaching materials have been integrated into district schools on Vancouver Island.

Inspired by STWE, the second project, *A Pathway Together*, was a joint endeavour between SCBC and the University of British Columbia (UBC) through the 2020-2021 Sustainability Scholars Program. It led to the production of a toolkit, including a digital 'Prezi' guide and print resources, to help bridge divides between the mainstream environmental movement from many Indigenous and diverse populations, and to decolonize action, and organizing on climate change and related issues.<sup>2,3,4</sup>

The purpose of this project is to identify and create innovative approaches to intercultural climate engagement by centering Indigenous and diverse lenses. This includes generating reflection, analysis, tools and practices, enabling organizations to engage with and learn from diverse communities on the climate crisis. Through respectful Indigenous and intercultural approaches, it will support the sector to develop shared analysis in developing appropriate climate actions. It will build on existing resources to create a process guide with supporting materials to 'kick-start' ENGOs and others engaging with APT. Examples include tools to help cultivate critical thinking and guiding engagement towards deeper connections, personal responsibility, and awareness: all of which were identified as needed next steps for ENGOs/NGOs, universities and other post-secondary institutions, and practitioners more broadly through APT's initial phase.

Work will proceed grounded in both Participatory Action Research and Transformative Learning modalities, where specific output features and outcome trajectories remain emergent through the process of 'doing'. Fundamentally, the project will proceed in ways that follow Coast Salish protocols, while striving to be respectful to all Indigenous and diverse communities, as well as the non-Indigenous allies who will be reading and utilizing this work in their practices.

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<sup>1</sup> Seeing through Watchers' Eyes: <https://sierraclub.bc.ca/watcherseyes/>

<sup>2</sup> Since its launch on SCBC's website in April 2020, the APT resource page has been accessed by more than 3,000 unique viewers. <https://sierraclub.bc.ca/a-pathway-together/>

<sup>3</sup> A Pathway Together -- Executive Summary: <https://sierraclub.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Final-A-Pathway-Together-Report-2021.docx.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> A Pathway Together – Literature Review: <https://sierraclub.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/A-Pathway-Together-Project-Literature-Review.pdf>

## Project scope

Key research questions include:

- How do we create opportunities for a genuine pathway together?
- How do we, in an authentic manner that is respectful of protocol, encourage collaboration?
- How do we create a bridge, or pathway across a bridge, connecting our intercultural languages?
- How do we centre the SCBC work to the lands and waters?

Primary activities to be undertaken by the scholar include:

- Conduct a short literature review on intercultural approaches to environmental advocacy and education.
- Work with kQwa'ste'not~ Charlene George to review the online tool *A Pathway Together*; and create a short companion resource for ENGOS, demonstrating how the tool can support climate action.
- Conduct surveys and other outreach to identify innovative approaches to intercultural climate engagement used by other ENGOS.<sup>5</sup>
- Generate a draft resource for use by Sierra Club BC and other ENGOS that highlights the analysis of best practices for intercultural climate engagement and communication and highlights any existing models that are working well.
- Solicit feedback on the draft resource from diverse individual and community groups with whom SCBC has existing relationships and identify others willing to give feedback; incorporate this feedback into a final draft.
- Meet with SCBC campaigns and communications teams to jointly review curated resources.
- Support SCBC to develop an implementation plan for incorporating best practices and recommendations where useful and appropriate.
- Work with SCBC's communications team to make the resources available to other ENGOS and other interested parties.

Once selected, we would also like to invite the successful scholar into a conversation to co-develop a work plan that best connects their research interests and skills with SCBC's values, strategies and tactics.

## Deliverables

- A final report containing a summary of the work completed
- A companion 'guide', tools, and resources for *A Pathway Together* designed to support environmental organizations, academics, and other practitioners to draw on it as a tool for climate action based in Coast Salish knowledge and two-way seeing

## Time Commitment

- This project will take 250 hours to complete
- This project must be completed between May 2 and August 12
- The Scholar is to complete approximately 12 hours per week, and can work on their own schedule in agreement with mentor
- The scholar will need to develop a schedule for regular meetings with their Mentor, and be available for occasional meetings with the Executive Director and other staff as relevant

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<sup>5</sup> All activities will be conducted in line with COVID public health guidelines and respectful of participant and community needs.

# SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

## 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
- Community engagement experience
- Familiarity conducting focus group research
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Project management and organizational skills
- Demonstrated experience:
  - a) Translating/bridging environmental and Indigenous thinking
  - b) Transferable collaboration skills
- We welcome all candidates to apply for this position. We especially encourage applicants who have lived experience and/or strong knowledge of Indigenous ways of knowing and/or Indigenous culture.

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

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

Contact Karen Taylor at [sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca](mailto: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>