SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Summer 2023 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 on the Apply page to confirm your eligibility before applying.

Applications close at midnight on Sunday January 29, 2023.

Project title: Researching the role of provincial climate legislation on accelerating climate action at BC universities

Project Background & Overview:
The provincial law in BC requiring carbon neutral public sector organisations (PSOs) applies to BC universities (in addition to crown corporations, health authorities, advisory boards, tribunals, school districts, and local governments) and has been a major factor in accelerating climate action on BC's campuses, and beyond.

BC's Carbon Neutral Government program—legislated under the Climate Change Accountability Act (CCAA)—requires that all PSOs follow a five-step process to achieve carbon neutrality:
1. Measure greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from buildings, vehicles and paper use
2. Reduce emissions as much as possible by conserving electricity and fossil fuels
3. Offset remaining emissions by purchasing an equivalent amount of high-quality, made-in-B.C. carbon offsets
4. Report annually on progress through the PSO Climate Change Accountability Report (PSO CCAR), formerly the Carbon Neutral Action Report (CNAR)
5. Verify data and emissions

The government is justifiably proud of the regime, in which the public sector leads by example. Over the past twelve years, public sector emissions decreased by 109,307 tonnes or almost 13% compared to the baseline year of 2010, according to the government of BC website.

The federal government also uses the BC example as a highlight in its international reporting: "In 2010, British Columbia (B.C.) became the first government at the provincial, territorial, or state level in North America to take 100% responsibility for the greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution from all 128 of its public-sector organizations by measuring their emissions, reducing them where possible, and purchasing offsets to cover the remainder."

The climate law and policy regime in BC is evolving with recent changes announced in the CleanBC Roadmap to 2030.
The Climate Change Accountability Act requires the province to report publicly starting in 2020 on the following:
- the risks to B.C. that could reasonably be expected from a changing climate;

- progress towards reducing those risks;
- actions to achieve that progress; and
- plans to continue progress.

Actions taken by public sector organizations are part of this report.

Universities in BC have pointed to the legal regime as a major factor in creating the "business case" and influencing their emission reduction targets and strategies; energy, building and transportation policies; and more recently, extended emissions from commuting, air travel and food choices (Scope 3 emissions). Universities in BC have achieved significant greenhouse gas emission reductions since the law was introduced while their student numbers grew and campuses expanded. However, the preparation of a Climate Change Accountability Report each year is a major undertaking requiring considerable staff time to collect and analyze data.

Project description

The purpose of the project is to research how BC's climate law regime has affected climate action by BC universities to date since the regime was introduced in 2010, which provisions have had the most impact, what gaps remain, what legal changes and policies are new or on the immediate horizon, and what additional provincial legislative drivers could accelerate action further BC universities.

The project will explore:
- what consideration BC's climate law gives how climate change and climate change policies affect people at universities in different ways depending on their socio-economic status and other demographic characteristics, particularly students and lower income staff, and
- the burdens and benefits of carbon neutral reporting

Through desk research and interviews with the individuals responsible for emissions reporting and the development of climate action plans at the four universities, the Scholar will compile information on the law's impact on day-to-day operational decisions as well as overall strategic directions.

Project scope

The scope of the projects includes :
- A literature review summarizing the BC climate law regime, and an analysis of the impact of BC's climate law on universities as one form of PSOs.
    - Structured interviews with key knowledge holders (e.g., BC government Climate Action Secretariat) and staff from each of BC's four large universities (UBC, SFU, UVic and UNBC) to obtain their views and experience on the impact of the law. Interviews will target university staff responsible for carbon neutral reporting, campus land use planning and/or finance leadership. (Approximately 5 to 12 interviews. To manage time effectively, the Scholar and mentor will work together to prioritise the order of universities to contact.)
- A final report with the results of the literature review, legal and policy analysis, interview results, and, if apparent from the research, a discussion on the next big legislative driver at the provincial level needed to support universities in achieving climate goals
- Time permitting: Compile an annotated bibliography of related policies and regulations that come up in interviews and summarize them (it they haven't already been captured in the literature review). As an example of other laws that will impact universities climate actions: what impact will the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Declaration Act) which came into force in BC in 2022 have on universities' climate actions?

Deliverables

- An interim presentation of the findings to PICS and the Climate Action Secretariat
- A final report containing a summary of the work completed
- A final report for the online public-facing Scholars Project Library.

Time Commitment

- This project will take 250 hours to complete
- This project must be completed between May 1 to August 15, 2023
- The Scholar is to complete their hours between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday, approximately 17 to 20 hours per week.

Required/preferred Skills and Background

☒ Excellent research and writing skills
☒ Demonstrated interest in sustainability
☒ Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
☒ Strong analytical skills
☒ Ability to work independently
☒ Deadline oriented
☒ Demonstrated experience in legal and policy analysis
☒ Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct structured interviews
☒ Background in or experience analysing provincial climate law or policy

Applications close **midnight Sunday January 29, 2023**
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 23, 2023. 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