Summer 2025 Sustainability Scholars Program Internship Opportunity

The UBC Sustainability Hub is pleased to offer current UBC graduate students the opportunity to work on sustainability internship projects. Successful candidates work under the guidance of a mentor from the partner organization, and are immersed in real world learning where they can apply their research skills and contribute to advancing sustainability across the region. The pay rate for the summer 2025 program is $31.25/hour or $7,812.50 for a 250-hour project.

- 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 11:59 pm on Sunday January 26, 2025.

Project title: Strata Retrofit Communication and Engagement Toolkit for UBC Neighbourhoods

Project Background & Overview:
This project sets out to develop a retrofit communications and engagement toolkit for the University Neighbourhoods Association (UNA) and UBC Campus and Community Planning (C+CP) to support condo owners and strata councils to undertake unit- and building-level retrofits. Project goals include developing a toolkit for communications and engagement with condo owners and strata councils to undertake unit-level heat pump retrofits for efficient, low-carbon heating and cooling, and supports for strata councils to undertake building-level electrification retrofits to add low carbon building hot water and heating systems.

Building on the momentum generated by the Neighbourhood Climate Action Plan (NCAP), which set a pathway to a net-zero and climate resilient community for the residential neighbourhoods, this project will directly support implementation of goals such as producing educational materials (e.g., toolkits, guides, etc.) that identify incentives for building owners to install energy efficient equipment, and developing a plan to facilitate accelerated cooling upgrades in existing buildings.

Despite local progress achieved through compact design and high standards for green building performance at UBC and in the UBC neighbourhoods, global GHG emissions continue to grow, and the effects of climate change are being felt by those living in UBC's campus neighbourhoods. Facing increasing temperatures and a rise in extreme heat events, cooling in neighbourhood homes has become an imperative. NCAP is targeting that by 2030, at least 50% of homes have active, low carbon cooling increasing to 100% of homes before 2050. This project seeks to equip and inform strata councils and condo owners with the tools and knowledge to facilitate local climate action through retrofits.

The retrofit communication and engagement toolkit will be targeting the UBC residential neighbourhoods but is expected to be broadly applicable to other local governments that wish

to support heat pump and electrification retrofits in their communities. The intended audience for this toolkit will be condo owners and strata councils.

Project description

This project will be done in partnership with the University Neighbourhoods Association (UNA). The UNA provides municipal services for the UBC residential neighbourhoods with a population of roughly 16,000 people. Staff from UNA and Campus + Community Planning (C+CP) at UBC will work in close partnership with the Scholar to guide the development of easily accessible and informative supports for building and unit retrofits that support decarbonization, energy efficiency and improve climate resiliency through electrification and heat pump adoption. Building on top of the 2022 Sustainability Scholar project by Tsubasa Bolt (Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Retrofit Options for UBC Strata Residential Buildings) and furthering the UNA's work on advancing local sustainability goals, this project seeks to systematically spread knowledge and information to condo owners and strata councils to help facilitate retrofits.

The basis of the retrofit communication and engagement toolkit will be built on background research conducted by the scholar to compile information about relevant retrofits, incentives, and supports available to UNA condo owners and strata councils. The project will also involve a jurisdictional scan of existing engagement materials (infographics, FAQs, etc.) and best practices from municipalities and other similar organizations to help guide the development of the toolkit. The purpose of this scan of materials and best practices will be to identify ways in which tangible/practical information about retrofits can be best shared with the target audience through an easily communicable toolkit.

The toolkit should provide information about the tangible benefits of retrofits along with communication and engagement focused on education around equity considerations in terms of which populations are most vulnerable to extreme heat—strengthening the case for why these retrofits are necessary.

By compiling and sharing easily accessible information such as checklists for strata councils and condo owners (which currently exist), the permitting process (such as the 1-step heat pump), and information about available incentives and support programs from BC Hydro and ZEIC, this project will undertake valuable work that will be instantly actionable by the UNA and C+CP.

Project scope

1. Background research. Research and compile information about retrofits, incentives, and supports relevant to strata councils and condo owners based on dwelling types on campus (BC Hydro, ZEIC, CoV, MetroVan, provincial, federal).

2. Materials search + FAQs + Infographics. Undertake a materials search (including FAQs, infographics, etc.) to identify ways in which practical/tangible information about retrofits is shared by other municipalities/organizations).

3. Best practices in engagement and communication from other organizations/municipalities. Jurisdictional scan of communication and engagement approaches from other municipalities.

4. Create a Toolkit. Compile the informational resources and incentives in an easily communicable toolkit that can also be adapted for the UNA website.

5. Time Permitting: Recommendations on future work and approaches. Recommendations for future additions to the toolkit and suggestions for additional events such as demos, etc. (as seen from other municipalities) .

6. Time Permitting: Interviews to find pinch-points and address common concerns. Survey or outreach to strata presidents to find common concerns or challenges. Include case studies/success stories of folks who have gone through the process of installing heat pumps. Administer a follow-up survey to folks who have installed heat pumps for outcomes.

Deliverables

- A final report containing a summary of the work completed
- A final report for the online public-facing Scholars Project Library.
- A final communications and engagement plan
- A final presentation summarizing the work

Time Commitment

- This project will take 250 hours to complete
- This project must be completed between May 1 to August 15.
- 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
☒ Experience conducting stakeholder engagement events, including facilitation skills, is an asset
☒ Community engagement experience
☒ Ability to work independently
☒ Project management and organizational skills
☒ Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
☒ Interest or familiarity with retrofitting, an asset
☒ Demonstrated experience writing compelling communication pieces and/or communicating important information to a lay audience

Applications close **at 11:59 pm Sunday January 26, 2025**
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 21, 2025. 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