

SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Information Session

January 15 & 22, 2026



Karen Taylor

Manager, Sustainability Scholars Program

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Agenda

- Welcome
- About the Sustainability Scholars Program
 - Overview
 - Timeline
- Participating in the program
 - Funding partners' & former Scholars' perspectives
- Questions



Territory Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that the UBC Vancouver-Point Grey academic campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the x^wməθk^wəy̓əm (Musqueam), and that UBC operations more generally take place in Vancouver on the territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and sə'liłwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) nations.

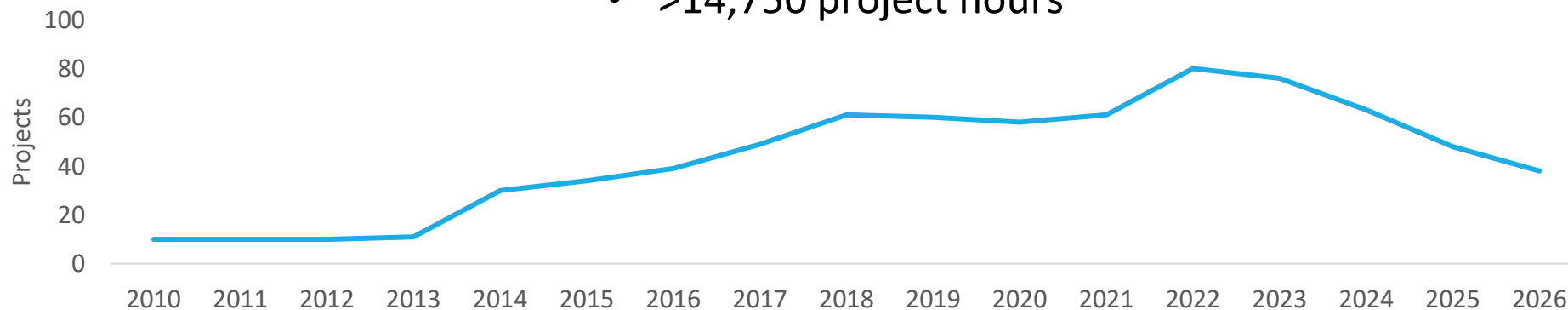
History



- Greenest City Scholars Program starts
- 10 projects
- 2,500 project hours

- Sustainability Scholars program pilot, 12 projects
- Greenest City Scholars Program, 59 projects to date
- >14,750 project hours

- 17th summer cohort
- 38 projects for summer 2026
- 782 projects since 2010
- >196,000 project hours



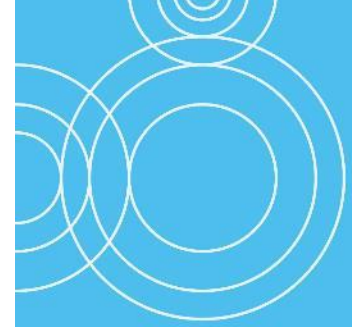


Program Goals

- Provide practical sustainability-related work experience to graduate students
- Support our partner organizations achieve their sustainability and climate action goals
- Actively integrate academic and operational sustainability work

Summer 2026 Program: 37 Projects

- Aboriginal Housing Management Association
- BC Housing
- City of Burnaby
- City of Coquitlam
- City of Courtenay
- City of Maple Ridge
- City of New Westminster (2)
- City of Richmond
- City of Surrey (9)
- District of North Vancouver
- Earthworm Foundation
- Ecotrust Canada
- Metro Vancouver (8)
- Songhees Nation
- Township of Langley
- TransLink (2)
- UBC
- Vancouver Airport Authority
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Zero Emissions Innovation Centre





Project Themes

- Climate Adaptation & Resilience
- Buildings, Construction & Built Environment
- Energy, Electrification & District Energy
- Transportation & Mobility
- Waste, Circular Economy & Materials
- Air Quality, Emissions & Low-Carbon Fuels
- Water, Watersheds & Natural Assets
- Land Use, Growth & Urban Form
- Equity, Indigenous Rights & Community Well-Being
- Policy, Governance & Data-Driven Decision Support



How it works



What you will be doing

- Managing and completing a sustainability-related applied research project
- You are not doing academic/theoretical/primary research
- Projects have been developed to be actionable by the mentor after completion
- See project description for details

Employment

- May 1 to August 14 (15 weeks)
- 250 hours, average 17 hours/week
- \$7,812.50 (\$31.25/hour)
- Employed by UBC
- Work under guidance of mentor
- Occasional check-ins with the Scholars Program Manager



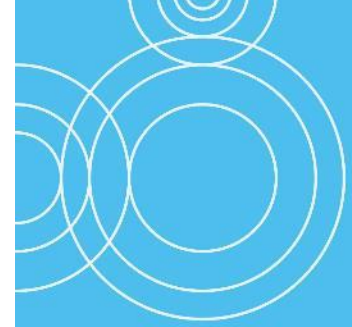


Your Obligations to UBC

- Attend **mandatory** meetings:
 - Orientation/kick off meeting (May 1, time tbc)
 - Mid-project check-in meeting (week of June 22)
- Complete a project plan
- Produce top quality work, meet deadlines, serve as a representative of UBC and the Scholars Program, engage with the cohort, enjoy yourself
- Submit a final report/deliverable for the online project library
<http://sustain.ubc.ca/scholarslibrary>
- You are also asked to present your research at the wrap-up conference in September

Your Obligations to the Project & Your Mentor

- Participate in regular check-in meetings
- Bring your energy and passion to the project
- Engage with your mentor and their organization
- Complete the project on time and produce top quality results
- Deliverables/expectations vary by project.
 - Main deliverable is typically a report <http://sustain.ubc.ca/scholarslibrary>
 - Other deliverables may include: presentations, tool kits, maps, policy drafts, interim reports, databases, etc.). See the project description for details.



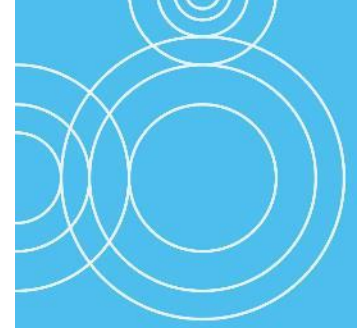


Professional Development

- Various workshops and guest speakers
 - Project Management/Time Management
 - Planning your Project
 - Career trajectories of former Scholars
- Public speaking opportunities
- Wrap-up conference “Research to Action: Advancing Urban Sustainability”

Eligibility Requirements

- Masters, JD, doctoral
- Current full-time UBC graduate student in good academic standing
- UBC-V and UBC-O grad students are welcome
- Valid work/study permit (expires after August 14, 2026)
- Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- Canadian bank account
- You must be physically located in BC while working. Work can be remote/hybrid except if the project needs dictate otherwise (e.g., fieldwork)
- No other UBC employment that would put you over 40 hours/week





Applying to the Program

- Confirm you meet the eligibility requirements
- Carefully read the posting
- Modify your cover letter/resume for each position
- Provide contact info for two references (letters of reference not required)
- Follow the instructions in the online application
- You may apply for up to 3 positions



Resume Workshop January 19

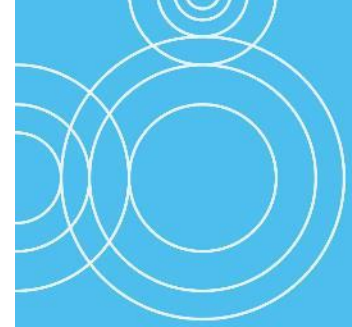
Designed for prospective Sustainability Scholars to help you craft a strong application to the program.

January 19
5:00 – 6:30 pm (online)

<https://sustain.ubc.ca/scholars-events>

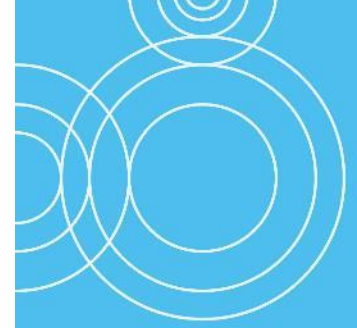
Your Application: Cover Letter

- A good cover letter . . .
 - Clearly communicates your skills and experience as they pertain to what's listed in the posting
 - Expresses your passion for sustainability/climate action
 - Describes how your past experiences have prepared you to meet the job requirements
 - Is customized for each position you're applying for
 - Has been checked for spelling and grammar
- Address to Karen Taylor, Sustainability Scholars Program Manager
- Try to keep your cover letter to one page



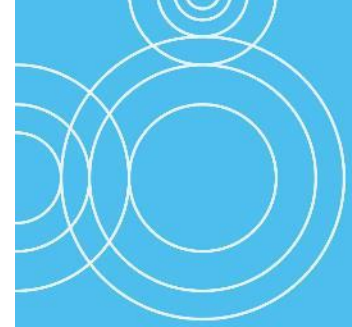
Your Application: Resume

- Does not need to be customized for each position, but should contain relevant information
- A good resume . . .
 - Has been checked for spelling and grammar
 - Does not include your photo
 - Does not include your social insurance number (SIN)
 - Uses a plain typeface (e.g., Arial/Times) and a legible font size (minimum 10 point font)
- Try to keep your resume to 2 pages and under 3 pages for a CV



Your Application: References

- Provide two references: A professional reference, and an academic reference.
- You may provide the same references for each position you're applying for
- Only provide contact information. Reference letters are not required
- If you do not have a professional reference, do your best to provide a reference who can speak to the quality of your work. **TIP:** Don't forget that volunteer work and campus work all count.
- Your references will only be contacted if the project mentor is interested in hiring you.





Online Application Form

<https://sustain.ubc.ca/teaching-applied-learning/sustainability-scholars-program/apply>

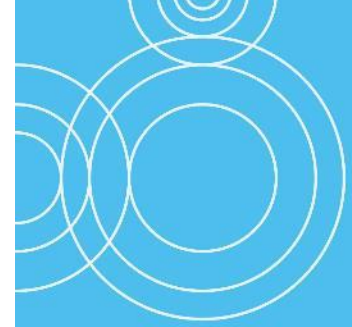
Rank order your preferred projects (max 6)

Your Application

Please indicate the projects you are applying for in order of preference with "1" being your first choice. The first three projects you indicate will be the ones for which you need to submit a cover letter and resume. You will upload the application documents for your three preferred projects in the next step.

If you are not shortlisted for your first three choices, we may consider you for other projects. You can rank an additional 3 projects (up to a maximum of 6 projects) that you feel qualified for. You do not need to provide a resume or application materials for the additional ranked projects at this time.

- 2026-001 Research to identify gaps and develop a culturally informed emergency planning "medicine box"
- 2026-002 Incorporating Sustainability Metrics in the BC Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS)
- 2026-003 Opportunity Analysis for Environmental Education and Stewardship in Burnaby
- 2026-004 Develop a Watershed Improvement Prioritization Framework for the City of Coquitlam
- 2026-005 Feasibility of introducing a flood resiliency assessment and risk reduction program for homeowners
- 2026-006 Research to inform operations and maintenance practices for climate resilient municipal buildings
- 2026-007 Develop a draft heritage master plan to advance sustainability of the built environment at YVR





Your Application File

- One PDF for each position you're applying for.
- Includes: cover letter, resume, and contact information for two references
- Do not include writing samples in your application. If a writing sample is required, take it with you to the interview.
- **Important:** Save each application as **one PDF file** in the format: **Project number_First name_Last name.pdf** (e.g., 2026-005_Jenny_Smith.pdf).

File name protocol/Save as PDF

Application file upload

You must submit a cover letter, resume, and contact information for two references for **each** project you are applying for. You may use the same references for each project. Do not include writing samples in your application. If a writing sample is required, please take it with you to the interview.

Save each application as **one PDF file** in the format: **Project number_First name_Last name.pdf** (e.g., 2026-005_Jenny_Smith.pdf).



Be sure to read the application guide and FAQ on the [APPLY page](#) to make sure your application contains everything we've asked for.

Please upload the PDF file for your **FIRST CHOICE** here:



Confirmation page

- Once you complete the last step in the application form you will see a confirmation page
- You will also receive an email confirmation.
- If you don't receive an email confirmation within a few minutes (check your junk folder, too) you may have typed your email address incorrectly. If so, submit you application again.

Your application has been submitted.

Thank you for your interest in the UBC Sustainability Scholars Program! We wish you every success in your application to the program.

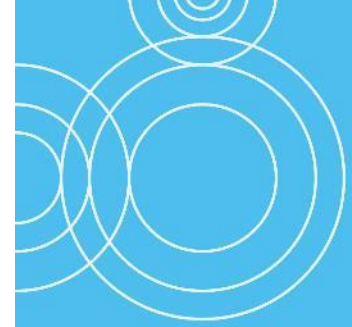
Your application will now be evaluated based on the project criteria. From there a shortlist will be established that will be forwarded to the Project Mentor to review. The Project Mentor will contact you directly if they wish to interview you. Successful candidates will then receive an email from the UBC Sustainability Scholars Program Manager informing them of the final decision.

Due to the large number of applications, we will only contact you if your application has been shortlisted. All applicants will be notified once all the positions have been filled.

Please direct inquiries to sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca

What happens to my application after I submit it?

- All applications are reviewed and assessed relative to the project requirements
- Candidates that have been shortlisted are notified
- Shortlist sent to mentor
- Mentor sets up interviews
- Mentor confirms preferred candidate
 - If you are offered more than one position or have an offer, but are still doing interviews, let me know *ASAP* so I can keep all parties informed
- UBC sends offer letter, candidate accepts in writing
- All applicants notified once all opportunities filled





Key Dates

- **February 1:** postings close at 11:59 pm
- **Feb 12 - 27:** most of the interviews and job offers take place, some continue into March
- **May 1:** program starts & orientation (possible orientation April 30)
- **May 1 to August 14:** project work takes place (~250 hours)
- **June 22 to 25:** mid-project check-ins (group sessions)
- **August 14:** final approved report due, program ends
- **September 22, 23, or 24:** Wrap-up conference



Guest Speakers



Metro Vancouver

Tim Singh



Metro Vancouver's 2026 Sustainability Scholar Projects

Tim Singh

Business Analyst, Liquid Waste Services

January 14, 2026

81871547

metrovancouver



metrovancover

23 Member Jurisdictions

3.3 million by 2030¹

>50% of BC by 2030²

1. <https://metrovancover.org/services/regional-planning/Documents/metro-vancouver-growth-projections-2024-update.pdf>
2. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/statistics/people-population-community/population/population-projections>



2026 Scholar Projects

Transportation

- EV Charging Infrastructure: Mapping & Strategy Optimization, Water Utility Fleet
- EV Charging Infrastructure: Cost-benefit, funding, and policy analysis for water utility fleet electrification
- Validating Remote Sensing of Truck Emissions to Improve Regional Air Quality and Protect Human Health

Alternative fuels

- Assessment of Emissions Reporting Methodologies for Hydrogen-Derived Renewable Diesel (HDRD)
- Quantifying alternative feedstocks for hydrothermal liquefaction in Metro Vancouver

Waste management

- Research opportunities to expand end markets for reclaimed wood from construction and demolition in Metro Vancouver

Other areas of interest

- Impacts of large data centres on energy demand, greenhouse gas emissions, and local air quality
- Identifying upstream flood attenuation and benefiting areas in the Lower Fraser



City of Surrey

Craig Busch

Surrey Sustainability Scholars

Information Session – January 14



Craig Busch, Climate Action Planner

Snapshot

Surrey Sustainability Scholars pairs City of Surrey staff with UBC graduate students to complete 250-hour applied research projects that advance the City's sustainability initiatives and climate targets outlined in the Climate Change Action Strategy (CCAS).



2026 Projects

| CCAS Component | Projects |
|---|---|
| Bold City Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best practices research to advance climate considerations in procurement practices• Informing an equity-driven social vulnerability analysis for emergency response and recovery planning |
| Resilient 15-Minute Neighbourhoods | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comparing the long-term costs of greenfield development and urban infill in Surrey• Research to inform a geospatial forecasting tool to support climate-resilient redevelopment planning |
| Climate-Positive Resilient Ecosystems | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scoping an integrated floodplain strategy for Bridgeview–South Westminster• Developing a framework for cross-jurisdictional coastal flood response coordination• Assessing irrigation options for climate-resilient agriculture in Surrey |
| Resilient Energy and Zero-Waste Systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhancing demolition waste diversion and deconstruction practices in Surrey• Technical, institutional, and strategic feasibility of integrating a hospital with a district energy system |

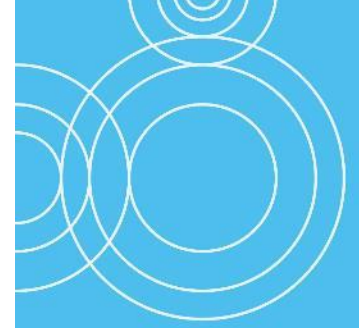
Guest Speakers: Former Scholars

- Alida Oegema Thomas, Master of Public Policy and Global Affairs
- Hilal Kina, Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology
- Ihomehe Agbebaaku, Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing
- Charlotte Milne, Doctor of Philosophy in Resources, Environment and Sustainability
- Elmira Berjisian, Doctor of Philosophy in Civil Engineering



Why apply?

- Paid internship
- Part-time, supports studies
- Unique work-integrated learning experience
- Apply research skills to a real world sustainability challenge
- Contribute to sustainability across the region
- Work with a mentor
- Develop skills and knowledge
- Gain sustainability-related work experience
- Build a professional network





Questions?

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Thank you!

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