



CLIMATE WELLBEING COHORT

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Introduction

Climate change has generated a **convergence of social, emotional, and ecological crises**, which disproportionately impact young people and marginalized communities (Tafon & Saunders, 2025). Alongside physical and environmental risks, youth are experiencing **heightened climate anxiety, grief, and fatigue**, which are often intensified by a lack of justice-oriented approaches and supportive spaces to process these emotions (Tafon & Saunders, 2025). These psychological and social responses are deeply connected to individual identities and relationships, both of which are disrupted by the displacement, disconnection, and cultural loss that accompany climate change (Adger, 2016).

When people, particularly youth, feel **personally connected to place**, they are more likely to engage meaningfully with climate issues and sustain long-term action (Scannell & Gifford, 2011). Yet, as these connections are increasingly threatened by climate disruptions, effective adaptation must also prioritize fairness and wellbeing to support resilient relationships between people and the environments they inhabit (Adger, 2016). The Climate Wellbeing Cohort responds to these challenges by engaging with **emotionally intelligent, justice-oriented, and place-based practices** (Desmarais, Johnston, & Hunter, 2023). Additionally, the cohort will draw upon the guiding principles of **Two-Eyed Seeing**, which enables an integration of Indigenous and Western knowledge system, emphasizing **reciprocal and respectful ways of knowing** (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012).

While mainstream education frequently emphasizes the scientific dimensions of climate change, it often fails to account for the emotional and relational impacts that shape how climate change is experienced by communities (Desmarais, Johnston, & Hunter, 2023). By incorporating **Climate Kind Pedagogy**, a framework centered on **empathy, co-regulation, and compassion**, the cohort equips students with tools to address the emotional complexity of climate work (Desmarais, Johnston, & Hunter, 2023). Ambassadors will explore **Indigenous-led and interdisciplinary approaches** to climate action, recognizing that emotionally grounded education supports not only wellbeing but also transformative learning (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012; Macfarlane et al., 2022). Through **collaborative leadership, experiential education, and values-based research**, the Climate Wellbeing cohort will navigate climate uncertainty while contributing to just and sustainable futures (Tafon & Saunders, 2025).





UBC Context

The Climate Wellbeing Cohort aligns closely with several key UBC initiatives and global commitments. This cohort directly supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly [SDG 3 \(Good Health and Well-being\)](#), [SDG 4 \(Quality Education\)](#), [SDG 11 \(Sustainable Cities and Communities\)](#), [SDG 13 \(Climate Action\)](#), and [SDG 17 \(Partnerships for the Goals\)](#). These SDGs provide an overarching global context for the cohort's focus on emotional resilience and community-engaged climate action. At the institutional level, the cohort directly supports the UBC Sustainability Hub's Strategic Plan for 2022–2027, especially the priority to “Advance and Innovate Sustainability Education.” The cohort embodies the Hub's learning goals by fostering transdisciplinary and justice-centered learning approaches and preparing students to lead systemic change.

Additionally, the cohort's projects respond to the UBC Climate Emergency Task Force (CETF) recommendations by centering wellbeing and mental health in climate response, integrating diverse knowledge systems, and enhancing climate justice education on campus. The cohort is also deeply aligned with the UBC Wellbeing Strategic Framework and the Okanagan Charter, which recognizes climate change as a determinant of health and encourages institution-wide efforts to build a culture of wellbeing. As such, the cohort offers a meaningful opportunity for Ambassadors to work at the forefront of climate wellbeing innovation within a supportive, interdisciplinary learning community.

Learning Objectives

Through guided mentorship, community-based projects, and interdisciplinary collaboration, Ambassadors will gain both practical and reflective skills that are transferable across academic, professional, and personal contexts. Key skills and knowledge development will include:

1. Understand foundational concepts within climate wellbeing: systems and settings thinking, health promotion, and intersections of climate, wellbeing, and justice.
2. Implementing a Two-Eyed Seeing approach and amplifying Indigenous worldviews.
3. Workshop facilitation using Climate Kind Pedagogy and experiential learning.
4. Community engagement strategies rooted in equity and reciprocity.
5. Research skills including action research and knowledge co-production.
6. Emotional intelligence and strategies for processing and responding to climate anxiety, grief, and fatigue.
7. Leadership in collaborative, creative, and interdisciplinary environments.



Ambassador Projects

1. Climate Justice and Leadership Camp

The Climate Justice & Leadership Camp is a five-day program running in Spring 2026, with the goal of advancing climate education for youth ages 13-18. This camp employs Climate Kind Pedagogy in order to provide understanding and resources for youth in navigating the uncertainties of our changing world. Through this project, Ambassadors will mobilize their skills in emotional resilience and community engagement to facilitate curriculum. Additionally, Ambassadors will utilize their knowledge in the arts and sciences to develop and lead hands-on, experiential sessions for youth. Overall, this project will employ an educational approach that is based on reciprocity, while cultivating climate wellbeing competencies for both camp participants and Ambassadors

2. Climate Wellbeing in the Classroom Toolkit

The goal of this project is to encourage and inform UBC faculty members across disciplines on how they can integrate climate change knowledge in the classroom, with a focus on student experiences and wellbeing. The role of Ambassadors will be to amplify student voices on the intersections of climate change and wellbeing, in order to create recommendations for integrating these perspectives across UBC learning environments. With the guidance of colleagues at the Sustainability Hub and the Office of Wellbeing Strategy, Ambassadors will: (1) lead the process of interview design; (2) perform interviews with UBC students; (3) film, audio-record, and edit interviews; and (4) capture key findings from student perspectives that will be used in the final toolkit.

3. Community Placemaking

This project aims to explore the intersection of the built environment, sustainable transportation, and personal wellbeing through a series of community engagement activities. In collaboration with the Sustainable Transportation and Environmental Justice cohorts, Ambassadors will set up interactive booths at False Creek. We will focus on gaining insights from 18-21-year-olds to share their stories about how their daily interactions with public spaces and transit impact their sense of wellbeing. The findings from this engagement will play a key role in informing the creation of resources for the primary projects, ensuring that the materials developed resonate with the target demographic and address their specific needs during this transition period in their lives.

DISCLAIMER: The projects undertaken by this cohort may change in response to shifting partner interests and evolving goals.





References

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