

SDSN Canada Members Meeting 2022

June 23rd, 2022, 2:00-3:30pm ET

[Access the meeting recording](#)

The 2022 SDSN Canada Members Meeting was hosted online using Zoom. A total of 33 participants joined, representing 20 Canadian post-secondary institutions.

The meeting featured remarks by the SDSN Canada Chair, networking breakout sessions, and a presentation on the SDG Academy and its role in accelerating SDGs education and teaching around the world. The meeting concluded with a 'lightning round' of presentations by four SDSN Canada member institutions to showcase and inspire SDGs work happening across the network.

Meeting Highlights

- Announcement on the transition of the current network Chair, Dr. Jean Andrey (retiring) to the new Dean of Environment at the University of Waterloo, [Dr. Bruce Frayne](#).
- SDSN Canada is growing with several initiatives such as two new Communities of Practice (SDG Localization & Teaching the SDGs), and a forthcoming guide on SDGs Reporting for Post-Secondary Institutions in Canada.
 - *All faculty at your institution are encouraged to join the [SDG Teaching Community of Practice](#).*
 - *A call for nominations will take place in summer 2022 for member positions on the revamped SDSN Canada Governance Committee.*
- The [SDG Academy](#) is a flagship initiative of SDSN Global which creates and curates free, open educational resources on sustainable development and offers them as a global public good.
 - *All SDSN members can make use of the Academy's content which is licensed by Creative Commons and can be downloaded and accessed via the [SDG Academy's Library](#).*
- Lightning round of member initiatives featured: University of British Columbia's Sustainability Ambassadors Program, Concordia University's 17 Rooms Exercise, York University's SDGs Teaching Toolkit, and Sheridan College's institutional integration of the SDGs.

Network Update from the SDSN Canada Chair

Presented by outgoing Chair Dr. Jean Andrey and incoming Chair Dr. Bruce Frayne

- **The Role of the University Sector** – From *Our Common Future*, a report on environment and development in 1987 and the accelerating challenges our world faces with evolving technology, there is still so much to do. The university sector has an important role to play partly because these institutions are raising the next generation and mobilizing knowledge, which makes the work of SDSN more imperative.
- **Environmental Scan of the SDGs in Canada** – Great momentum on the SDGs across post-secondary sector in Canada such as the Times Higher Education impact rankings which many institutions are now reporting data. In relation to where Canada stands on the SDGs as a whole, there is good effort on good governance and education, however, there is much room for improvement on the environment front such as climate and sustainable communities, with a growing crises in affordable housing.
 - The Government of Canada’s efforts towards the SDGs are commendable, however, there is still room for a more coordinated approach which calls for increased leadership from the federal and provincial governments.
- **Growing impactful work of SDSN Canada**
 - **Grown to 61 members** in 2022. The value of SDSN Canada and SDSN Global remains praiseworthy which is aptly reflected with the acceptance of the [Tang Prize in Sustainable Development by Prof. Jeffrey Sachs](#).
 - [Together Ensemble Conference](#) was hosted by SDSN Canada virtually in March 2022 and supported by the Federal Government’s SDG Unit in Ottawa. The conference had over 700 attendees and discussed major themes such as intersectionality, transformation, and justice. The conference report is due to be published by the end of summer.
 - The Network is currently **hosting two Communities of Practice**:
 - A growing [SDG Localization Community of Practice](#) jointly with the Tamarack Institute with more than 200 members. The COP is a commendable initiative with a lot of buy-in from municipal governments.
 - A new [SDG Teaching Community of Practice](#) to convene faculty across the network to share their SDGs teaching innovations, approaches, and resources, as well as to create collaborative opportunities to work together to accelerate SDGs education across Canada.
 - **The SDSN Youth Hub** has grown with over 16 hubs across campuses in Canada.
 - Currently working on a **best practices guide on SDGs reporting** for post-secondary institutions, in collaboration with Universities Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada (publishing in summer 2022).
 - Collaborating with The University of British Columbia to establish a coordinated **national SDGs Week** towards building long-term momentum and awareness around the SDGs in post-secondary institutions in Canada. Tentatively scheduled for Winter term 2023.

- **SDSN Canada governance structure** – Exploring building a structure that is more inclusive of members in the governance of the network. Working on a Terms of Reference to share with the membership with a call for nominations to join the SDSN Canada Governance Board.

SDG Academy

Presented by Dr. Amber Webb, Deputy Director SDG Academy

The [SDG Academy](#) is the flagship educational initiative of SDSN Global, launched in 2014. Given the critical role of universities in achieving the SDGs, the Academy was established to harness the cutting-edge expertise of universities to produce educational resources on sustainable development. The aim is to garner the best knowledge from across the world and to make it freely available to educate individuals in achieving the SDGs.

The intent of the Academy is to build a multi-generational effort towards achieving the SDGs. Although the Academy has been largely focused on higher education, it is currently in the process of expanding efforts to build a consortium across sectors to encourage different types of learning.

The work of the SDG Academy is based on a three pillar approach:

1. **Content** – Known for its work on content creation of Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), with over [40 MOOCs currently hosted on the Edx platform](#) (courses have reached over 700,000 learners to date). The uniqueness of these MOOCs is that the knowledge is derived from a variety of regions and perspectives from academics and practitioners. In addition to Edx, the MOOCs are also hosted on some regional platforms such as Edraak and XuetangX for regional audiences.

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2. **Pedagogy and Training** – Addressing a continuum of educational approaches to harness degree and training programs. In 2020, the Academy established an online masters in sustainable development in partnership with two universities; [Sunway University Masters in Sustainable Development Management](#) in Malaysia and [University College Dublin MSc. in Sustainable Development](#) in Europe. With the aim to expand to Africa later in the year and the Americas, the Academy provides the foundational concepts and then these institutions expand on this to conceptualize these ideas. In addition, the Academy has the [Global Schools](#), which represents its K12 work towards training educators around the world and mobilizing resources.

3. **Community** – Creating a shared space for collaboration through the founding of the SDG Academy [Community of Practice](#) with over 60 members across higher education institutions, NGOs and businesses. Due to the pandemic, the activities of the COP were slowed down, however, a new cohort will be launched in September.

For more information, contact Dr. Amber Webb, Deputy Director SDG Academy - amber.webb@unsdsn.org

Member Initiatives Lightning Round

1. ***University of British Columbia Sustainability Ambassadors Program***, presented by Kshamta Hunter, Manager of Sustainability Student Engagement

UBC is continuing to add to their [Sustainability Ambassadors Program](#), adjusting the model to include more students from different faculties. This new model is intended to expand capacity and foster a diversity of opportunities. The campus-wide program is a leadership development opportunity for students, working within thematic teams related to different SDGs and disciplines to progress the engagement, amplification, and leadership of sustainability in various fields on campus and in the broader community.

2. ***Concordia University 17 Rooms Exercise***, presented by Jason Ens, Executive Director, Academic Policy, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives

Concordia has implemented the [17 Rooms exercise](#), running over the course of the 2022 winter and spring terms. 17 Rooms is a convening approach designed to foster dialogue on the social, environmental, and economic priorities within the SDGs. At Concordia, participants may join two-hour sessions every week to assess what is already happening, engage in the targets articulated, and openly brainstorm solutions. This initiative takes a grassroots approach to creating impactful change through open conversations and exploration.

3. ***York University SDGs-in-the-Classroom Toolkit***, presented by Nicole Arsenault, Program Director for Sustainability

York has launched a [SDGs-in-the-Classroom Toolkit](#), which will foster the integration of the SDGs across classes. In this toolkit, the SDGs act as a framework to broaden opportunities for student learning, application, and impact. This resource is open source and live for any educators from other institutions who are interested in learning more. Additionally, the institution has created an SDG hub and a community of practice that can support the infusion of sustainability within the University.



York's Capstone initiative also includes a variety of open-ended, real-world projects that are organized to support the progress of individual SDGs. The school held a successful capstone day, as well as its first Sustainable Development Goals virtual teach-in day in May. The teach-in day was open to any instructors looking to incorporate SDGs in their classroom, and offered an "SDG-tasting" to explore how different goals might infuse into their program.

4. *Sheridan College SDGs Institutional Planning, presented by John Helliker, Dean, Innovation and Engagement*

In late 2019, Sheridan College launched a strategic plan that touched on sustainability through topics such as community wellbeing and social impact. Since then, a small network of people interested in the SDGs, with the help of Colleges and Institutes Canada and SDSN Canada, have been able to [infuse the SDGs more explicitly within institutional planning](#) moving forward. Their combination of a top-down and bottom-up approach has engaged individuals across divisions in a multi-year initiative. This initiative incorporates a diversity of worldviews, such as decolonizing methodologies, in efforts toward systemic change.