



Date of Adoption: March 15, 2019

Date of Expiry: March 15, 2022

KSA Sustainability Policy

1.0 Preamble

Throughout Canada and around the world, organizations of all types, including student unions and universities, are striving to become more sustainable. To do this, they are taking on policies, activities and advocacy efforts to shift the behaviour of their organizations and members. Many student associations have dedicated sustainability staff, standing committees on sustainability, and a range of programs to this end.

Student activism, rising costs, and the impacts of global climate change continue to drive change both inside and outside the Kwantlen Student Association (KSA) and Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU). Environmental sustainability measures involve reducing our impacts on the planet, reducing the quantity of resources necessary for our daily activities, and protecting the environment for future generations.

Sustainability involves more than just environmental considerations. True sustainability involves creating a balance between upholding social justice principles, protecting the environment, and making responsible economic choices.

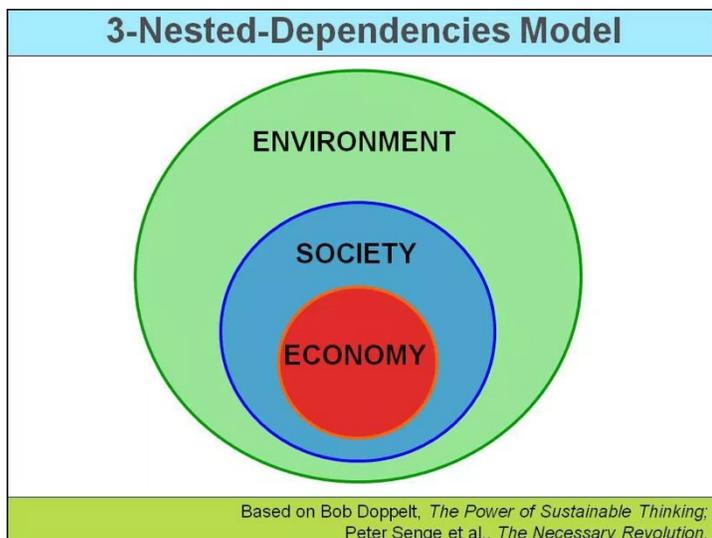
The first KSA Sustainability Policy was passed in June of 2014. Since then, the KSA has created permanent sustainability staff positions and developed a wide variety of sustainability-related policies, procedures, events and services. This update allows the KSA to further define sustainability and re-confirm its commitment to reducing the negative impacts of the organization.

As the consequences of environmental degradation and climate change become increasingly dire, and organizations such as the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) call for immediate societal change, a robust sustainability focus is essential to the continued relevance of the KSA's operations and services.

The KSA initially approached sustainability using a **triple bottom line** paradigm where the environmental, social, and economic impacts of each decision were considered and weighed before a balanced conclusion was developed.

Although these three aspects are interdependent, human society and economy are wholly encompassed by the environment. Without food, clean water, fresh air, fertile soil, and other natural resources, human society and economy cannot exist. A more accurate model of sustainability represents the three aspects as **nested dependencies**. This is designed to prevent decisions with potentially harmful environmental or social consequences from being made on the basis of strong economic merit alone.

A complete discussion of sustainability must also include a discussion of **social equity and social justice**. The climate crisis and other related environmental degradation have been exacerbated by systems of oppression formed throughout history, many of which still operate today. In addition, socioeconomic inequity is correlated with ecological degradationⁱ. Therefore, “a truly sustainable society is one where wider questions of social needs and welfare, and economic opportunity are integrally related to environmental limits imposed by supporting ecosystems.”ⁱⁱ



In Canada and elsewhere in the world, **colonization** contributed greatly to the oppression of Indigenous, Inuit, First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal peoples while also resulting in significant negative environmental impacts. Even today, the rights of Indigenous peoples to their territories are often challenged by the same projects and initiatives which create the worst environmental impacts. **Reconciliation** with Canada’s Indigenous peoples is an important process in the creation of a sustainable Canada and must be pursued by the KSA throughout its sustainability efforts.

In keeping these ideas at the forefront of sustainability discourse, the KSA will not implement or support sustainability policies or initiatives which perpetuate further harm towards marginalized groups. To do this, it will be necessary to engage in consultation with **marginalized** groups to fully understand the impacts of any policies created by the KSA. To create a sustainable society, systems of oppression must be dismantled, and marginalized groups must be supported.

Sustainability is complex, both in theory and in practice. In order for this policy to be truly effective, its goals



must be integrated across all portfolios of the KSA. While each year's elected representatives and staff will have their particular skill sets and interests, it is expected that all staff and decision-makers within the KSA will act in good faith towards achieving the goals of this policy.

2.0 Definitions

Sustainability is commonly defined as "improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems"ⁱⁱⁱ or "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."^{iv} Including social justice and social equity creates the following definition: "the need to ensure a better quality of life for all, now and into the future, in a just and equitable manner, whilst living within the limits of supporting ecosystems."^v Since the concept of sustainability applies to long-term objectives achieved by short- and medium-term actions, the term has application within virtually all spheres of human activity.

Social equity is defined as "the promotion of equality in a society with deep social and economic disparities. It embodies the goal that the members of all social groups will have the same prospects for success and the same opportunity to be protected from the adversities of life."^{vi}

Social justice is defined as "a fundamental valuing of fairness and equity in resources, rights and treatment for marginalized individuals and groups of people who do not share equal power in society"^{vii} because of their immigration, racial, ethnic, age, gender, sex, socioeconomic, religious heritage, physical ability, mental ability, intellectual ability, sensory ability or sexual orientation status groups. Social justice examines systems and history and how they impact the lives of individuals. It looks at access to resources, power and privilege, and works to dismantle systems of oppression which deny access to marginalized groups.

Reconciliation in this context is defined as "coming to terms with events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship among people, going forward... Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in [Canada]. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour."^{viii}

Colonization is defined as "The action or process of settling among and establishing control over the Indigenous people of an area."^{ix} "The policy of colonization suppressed Aboriginal culture and languages, disrupted Aboriginal government, destroyed Aboriginal economies, and confined Aboriginal people to marginal and often unproductive land. When that policy resulted in hunger, disease, and poverty, the federal government failed to meet its obligations to Aboriginal people. That policy was dedicated to eliminating Aboriginal peoples as distinct political and cultural entities and must be described for what it was: a policy of cultural genocide."^x



Marginalized describes groups and individuals whose human rights and/or access to resources, power and privilege have been limited or denied through systematic historical oppression by dominant groups.

3.0 Policy

WHEREAS the KSA recognizes environmental and social responsibility are ongoing processes requiring continual organizational commitment;

AND WHEREAS the KSA recognizes its members are committed to environmental and social responsibility, and value sustainability;

AND WHEREAS the KSA recognizes that organizational and environmental health are complementary;

AND WHEREAS the KSA recognizes the importance of integrating sustainability into all aspects of organizational operations, and developing sustainability initiatives internally and within our campus community;

AND WHEREAS the KSA recognizes that improved recruitment, retention, and health and wellness of all of its members, Council and employees will result from sustainable practices;

AND WHEREAS the KSA has a Special Committee on Environmental Sustainability (SCES) that reviews and reports to Council on matters of sustainability;

4.0 Resolution

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the KSA adopt the following Principles for Environmental and Social Responsibility and encourages KPU to do the same:

- The KSA will balance quality, cost and environmental sustainability in its purchasing and investment decisions. Where relevant, long-term and life-cycle costs will be considered in achieving this balance.
- The KSA will work to minimize its consumption of non-renewable energy.
- The KSA will work to minimize water consumption and contamination.
- The KSA will employ sustainable and accessible building design and construction principles wherever possible.
- The KSA will prioritize purchasing of sustainable food products such as student-grown, local, organic, fair trade, plant-based and/or other environmentally-certified products. This list is not intended to be used hierarchically, but rather, environmental and social considerations should be used during the food purchasing process to come to a balanced decision.



-
- The KSA will reduce waste by promoting the use of reusable items, reducing the availability of single-use items except when doing so would further negatively impact marginalized groups, and educating members, staff and Council on the proper sorting of waste using the campus waste bin system.
 - The KSA will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution by promoting alternative and multi-modal transportation options for staff, Council and members, including public transit, cycling, walking, carpooling, car-sharing, campus shuttle and electric vehicles.
 - The KSA will encourage adherence to leave-no-trace principles on all staff and member outings.
 - The KSA will use natural alternatives to synthetic chemical products when feasible.
 - The KSA will include awareness and educational outreach programs as a vital component of achieving its sustainability goals. These programs will incorporate Indigenous perspectives, varied cultural perspectives, the perspectives of people with disabilities, and the perspectives of other marginalized groups which have historically been excluded from the sustainability movement.
 - The KSA will encourage its Council and staff to take ownership and commit to modeling sustainability initiatives set by the organization.
 - The KSA will support students to raise public, government, industry, and university awareness to address the urgent need to move towards environmental sustainability, social equity, social justice, and reconciliation.
 - The KSA will support education, research, policy formation, and information exchange which applies a social justice lens to the environment and innovation in order to move toward global sustainability.
 - The KSA will work with local, national and international community and non-governmental organizations, including Indigenous, Inuit, First Nations, Métis, and Aboriginal organizations, to assist in finding solutions to environmental and social problems.
 - The KSA will encourage the active engagement of all members of the campus community on issues of sustainability and will support sustainability awareness and action in the greater community.
 - The KSA will utilize a social justice lens to ensure that its work helps to dismantle historic systems of oppression and involve marginalized members of the campus community in sustainability initiatives.
 - The KSA will seek feedback from its community as part of its accountability mechanisms.



12666 72nd Avenue
Surrey, BC V3W 2M8

Reception: 604.599.2126
Fax: 604.599.2429
Website: www.kusa.ca

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the KSA will not implement policies that further negatively impact marginalized groups. The KSA will take initiative to consult with members of marginalized groups on all new policies in order to ensure that no unforeseen negative consequences occur.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the KSA mandates the Executive, Executive Director and Sustainability Coordinator to develop a sustainability action plan every three years in accordance with the sustainability principles outlined in this policy. This plan will be prepared in collaboration with staff and elected officials and should contain baseline measurements of sustainability metrics along with specific and measurable sustainability goals to be reviewed annually.



12666 72nd Avenue
Surrey, BC V3W 2M8

Reception: 604.599.2126
Fax: 604.599.2429
Website: www.kusa.ca

ⁱ Gregory M. Mikkelsen, Andrew Gonzalez, Garry D. Peterson, "Economic Inequality Predicts Biodiversity Loss," PLoS ONE 2(5): e444 (2007).
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0000444>

ⁱⁱ Julian Ageyman, Robert D. Bullard, and Bob Evans, "Exploring the nexus: Bringing together sustainability, environmental justice and equity," *Space and polity* 6, no. 1, 2002, p. 78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562570220137907>

ⁱⁱⁱ IUCN - The World Conservation Union, UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme & WWF - World Wide Fund for Nature, *Caring for the Earth - A Strategy for Sustainable Living*, 1991, p. 10. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/efiles/documents/cfe-003.pdf>

^{iv} World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission), *Our Common Future*, 1987, p. 16.
http://mom.gov.af/Content/files/Bruntland_Report.pdf

^v Julian Ageyman, Robert D. Bullard, and Bob Evans. *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World*. 1st MIT Press ed. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2003, p. 5. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kwantlen-ebooks/detail.action?docID=429936>

^{vi} Norman J. Johnson and James H. Svara, *Justice for All: Promoting Social Equity in Public Administration*, Routledge, 2011, p.3.. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kwantlen-ebooks/detail.action?docID=793234>

^{vii} Madonna G. Constantine, Sally M. Hage, Mai M. Kindaichi, and Rhonda M. Bryant, "Social justice and multicultural issues: Implications for the practice and training of counselors and counseling psychologists," *Journal of Counseling and Development: JCD*, 85(1), 24-29, 2007, p. 24. doi: <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.kpu.ca:2080/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2007.tb00440.x>

^{viii} Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 2015, pp. 6-7. http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Exec_Summary_2015_06_25_web_o.pdf

^{ix} Oxford Living Dictionaries - English. (2018). Colonization. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/colonization>

^x Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 2015, p. 137.
http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Exec_Summary_2015_06_25_web_o.pdf