

# FROM STRATEGY TO ACTION: TAKING SUSTAINABILITY TO THE NEXT LEVEL ON UBC'S OKANAGAN CAMPUS



It all starts with a plan: a scheme or method of proceeding developed in advance; defining the steps necessary to complete a definite purpose.

After five years of building UBC's Okanagan campus identity, it was an ideal time to review progress and move forward with a plan. In 2010, UBC's Okanagan campus distributed the Strategic Action Plan.

Developed as part of the strategic planning exercise for Place and Promise: The UBC Plan, the Strategic Action Plan highlights the distinctive features, opportunities and potential of the Okanagan campus. Sustainability is one of four Priority Themes identified in the plan. From the outset, the Okanagan campus has been dedicated to building a sustainable community, in terms of both the environmental sustainability of physical infrastructure and the social sustainability of the learning and working environment.

It's a plan that is great in concept, yet it begs the question - can the University put this plan to action?

According to Alaa S. Abd-El-Aziz, Provost and Vice Principal Academic and Research, and leader of the planning process, it's a challenge the campus is not only willing to take on, but determined to win.

And, progress on sustainability so far is a great example of meeting this goal.

"Acting on the sustainability commitments we put forth is crucial in building a campus culture that truly embraces

sustainability," says Abd-El-Aziz. "UBC's Okanagan campus isn't looking to only be a sustainable campus, it wants to be the sustainable campus - leading the way and becoming the most sustainable campus in the country."

Becoming a leader requires great leaders with vision. The Okanagan campus has recruited just such a visionary - an internationally recognized leader in sustainability - to direct the campus' Okanagan Sustainability Institute.

In 2011, Keith Culver joins the UBC community, leaving his current position at UniverSud Paris as International Chair in Generation Eco-Innovation.

"Keith brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in sustainability leadership and he is a great asset for our campus," notes Abd-El-Aziz.

The installation of a new Director is a major step towards fully integrating and supporting sustainability in academic programs, operations and the campus community to create an all-around healthy, vibrant and sustainable campus culture.

Culver will work closely with Leanne Bilodeau, Director of the Okanagan Sustainability Office. Together they will use diverse but parallel pathways to campus sustainability in an integrated and complementary approach.

"Bringing together academic and operation at a strategic level is a unique collaboration," says Abd-El-Aziz. "This approach is truly at the core of what sustainability is all about and will enable us to strengthen our position and move forward." ●