

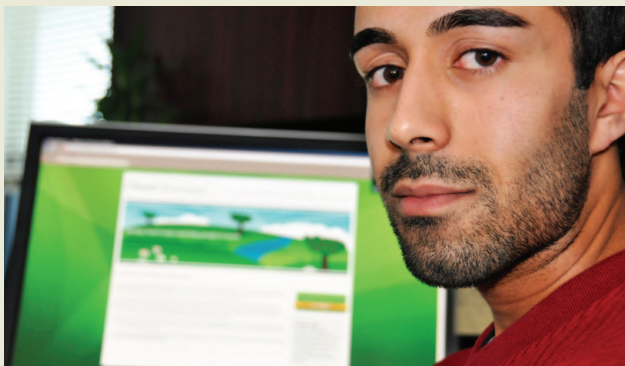
## A COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Mary Stockdale wears two hats these days: she's a volunteer community activist for sustainability and an Adjunct Professor in the Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences.

Stockdale's roles are far from separate—she's bringing the community into her classroom and her students into the community, all in an effort to engage students in the material they are learning and to serve the community both on and off campus.

"It's like rain on parched land," she says. "There are so many things community groups are grateful to get help with. Through community-based research students can help support community initiatives. In turn, the community groups provide relevant case studies and inspiration for students. It is really a great partnership."

Stockdale's courses, Development of Environmental Thought and Community Food Security in the Okanagan, have students thinking creatively and taking action on sustainability. Students in these courses have a fair amount of leeway to explore the topic and are encouraged to experiment.



Fourth-year geography student Raja Wariach created a gleaning website to connect people in need of food with farmers and orchardists with excess produce.

"This free service allows food producers, such as a commercial orchardist or even a backyard gardener, to post online ads about their excess food and directly give it to people in need," says Wariach.

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Students are thrilled to have the opportunity to make a real impact. Although Wariach was only asked to research the idea, he is taking it considerably further, using funds from his own pocket to develop the website. Wariach plans to expand the initially Kelowna-focused site nationally.

Wariach's fellow students are leading other experiments in sustainability, from promoting a community garden on campus, a project of third year student Kathleen Taylor, to developing information resources, as in the case of fourth-year student Tanya Rumak, who put together a green guidebook for new students: "Living la Vida Verde," orienting students towards sustainable food options.

A key theme Stockdale addresses is the role universities play in the realm of sustainability.

"It's important to gain insight into students' perceptions of sustainability on campus," she says. "Many students have shown great interest in what our campus is doing. This subtheme represents students' desire to be directly engaged with sustainable initiatives in the UBC Okanagan community."

### SEEDS

(Social, Ecological, Economic Development Studies)

The creativity and enthusiasm of students, the experience and knowledge of faculty, and the expertise of staff are integrated into an academic program that seeks to advance sustainability on campus and in the community. Through this unique program undergraduate and graduate students have the opportunity to participate in research through hands-on projects that address sustainability issues and challenges.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL:

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Clockwise from top left: Tanya Rumak; Raja Wariach; Mary Stockdale; and Kathleen Taylor