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Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
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Date: Wednesday, January 10, 2018

To: Deans, Directors & Chairs

From: Andrew Sharman, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations)
Wendy Rodgers, Deputy Provost

Re: Sustainability at UAlberta

Today the Office of the Provost and the Vice-President of Facilities and Operations took initial steps to restructure the university's approach to sustainability, shifting resources to facilitate a stronger academic focus. The Office of Sustainability has served as an administrative hub since 2009 and has largely achieved its original vision. Now that the education and outreach team is well established and operationalized, it makes sense for the accountability to be shifted to the most appropriate operational units in Facilities and Operations. The staff from the Office of Sustainability will continue under transitional leadership while the appropriate academic structure is developing.

Under academic leadership, this new initiative will launch on July 1, 2018 and, by taking an interdisciplinary approach across all faculties, will be mandated to more ardently integrate sustainability into the entirety of UAlberta's scholarship and research. Drawing upon a deep pool of academic expertise and interest, UAlberta is well-positioned to grow the number of students who graduate with an appreciation that they must strive to become global leaders in sustainable thinking and action, develop and support sustainability-relevant research, and support the actions of others as they also pursue sustainability. As noted in the Academic Companion Document to the University's 2016-2020 Sustainability Plan "We envision students having opportunities to learn, research, and apply sustainability using interdisciplinary approaches. Through outreach and partnerships, the university brings research and new knowledge to the community, enabling individuals, communities, organizations, and industries to achieve sustainability. The university is recognized as a leader for taking significant action on climate change and for capitalizing on the knowledge and strengths of our academic and research communities." (page 7)

For the Public Good, UAlberta's institutional strategic plan, includes "sustain" as one of its five goals, which has been recently emphasized by a recommendation from a President's Visiting Committee (part of our quality assurance suite of activities), in which we are encouraged to "provide leadership in interdisciplinary research initiatives at the U of A". Sustainability in thought and action is not limited to any particular discipline as, whether it is in terms of economic development, social development, or environmental protection, we must always consider tomorrow when making decisions today.

Since 1975, UAlberta has made significant achievements towards building a sustainable future. Under the guidance of the Office of Sustainability, we have considerably reduced greenhouse gas emissions, launched the Envision energy management program, certified new and existing buildings for sustainability features and performance, increased the amount of waste diverted from landfills, and initiated the Green Spaces certification program for residences, labs, food vendors, offices, and events. Advancing initiatives such as these will continue across all of our campuses in our relentless pursuit of lessening our impact on the planet.

However, recognizing the importance of bringing academic leadership to bear in achieving excellence in sustainability, the Academic Team for Sustainability, consisting of Dr. Lars K. Hallström, Dr. Frank Robinson, Dr. Robert Summers, and Dr. Sheena Wilson along with Dr. John Parkins will work to discern how best to fully integrate sustainability into the academic mission of the university. In this time of transition, key sustainability initiatives already underway will continue; such as:

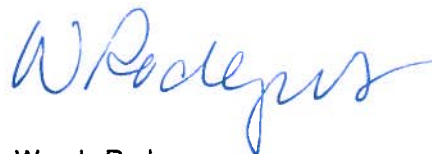
- Sustainability scholars – an applied internship program where, this year, 30 graduate students are undertaking an applied research project focused on sustainability with an outside employer.
- Certificate in Sustainability – a certificate providing undergraduate students formal recognition for the sustainability acuity acquired throughout their academic career. The certificate indicates to employers that a graduate has gained a baseline understanding of sustainability complimenting their primary area(s) of expertise.
- Envision Energy Reduction – an investment of \$35 million over seven years to implement energy techniques across our campuses resulting in 30,000 fewer tonnes of CO2 emissions and an avoidance of \$4.5 million in annual energy costs.
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – in exchange for volunteer commitments, up to 50 graduate students will be sponsored to attend the 2018 Cities and Climate Change Science IPCC conference.
- Outreach and engagement – a resource for students, staff, and faculty interested in fostering a culture of sustainability at UAlberta.

We commit to keeping the UAlberta community informed of all progress toward ensuring we positively continue to contribute to a sustainable future.

Sincerely,



Andrew Sharman
Vice-President (Facilities and Operations)



Wendy Rodgers
Deputy Provost