



## The SDG Accord

*The University and College Sector's Collective Response to the Global Goals*

### **Integration of SDGs in**

- Institutional governance/strategic level
- SDGs in research
- SDGs in campus operations
- SDGs in curriculum development
- SDGs in student engagement activities
- SDGs into community activities
- SDGs at a whole-institution level

### **Focus on**

- Goal 1 - No poverty
- Goal 2 - Zero hunger
- Goal 3 - Good health and wellbeing
- Goal 4 - Quality education
- Goal 5 - Gender equality
- Goal 6 - Clean water and sanitation
- Goal 7 - Affordable and clean energy
- Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth
- Goal 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- Goal 10 - Reduced inequalities
- Goal 11 - Sustainable cities and communities
- Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production
- Goal 13 - Climate action
- Goal 14 - Life below water
- Goal 15 - Life on land
- Goal 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions
- Goal 17 - Partnerships for the goals

## *SDG Accord Reporting 2021 CASE STUDY*

### **GCU SmartTravel**

Student commuting is a material source of emissions (19% - 2015) in GCU's greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory and University's triennial travel surveys highlight a significant potential to reduce these because: a high proportion of students (54% - 2015) live within walking or cycling distance; and there is a tendency to over-estimate how far individuals live from the university and how long it would take to walk or cycle.

To capitalise on this potential, the University's Sustainability Working Group, which oversees operational-centred sustainability campaigns, suggested the development of an intervention that would help more students walk or cycle.

In 2015 the University launched a holistic programme called GCU SmartTravel that would engage the student community, primarily at the start of each new academic year before students committed to particular modes of travel, to help them consider more active, lower carbon modes of travel for their commuted.

The core element of GCU SmartTravel is a team of student travel advisors that offer micro-consultations (2-5 minutes) to help peers consider lower carbon alternatives for their commute. Travel Advisors undergo a short training programme to develop their understanding of travel habits to the University (e.g. typical journey origins, typical modes of travel and factors influencing their selection) and the application of behaviour change science. Travel advisors use an enticing range of freebies (e.g. sweets, re-useable water bottles and travel mugs) to encourage peers to participate in a consultation and provide information to help participants choose more sustainable modes of travel.

In 2018-19 of GCU\_SmartTravel Advisors delivered over 3,000 micro-consultations (the equivalent of speaking of 75% of that years' new intake). Between 2015-16 and 2018-19 the proportion of students walking or cycling increased to the University increased from 22% to 35% and emissions from commuting fell by over 2,800 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year (from 7,826 to 4,968 tCO<sub>2</sub>e).

### **BENEFITS**

1. Better student experience (resulting from reducing commuting costs)
2. Improved health & wellbeing due to increased levels of physical activity (from more people walking and cycling).
3. Reduce GHG emissions (personal and scope 3 for the University)

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GCU SmartTravel Advisors at Freshers' Fayre 2017.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Universities are uniquely placed to develop and execute holistic strategies to reduce GHG emissions and support the attainment of a range of the SDG. Through this initiative Glasgow Caledonian University demonstrates that action to reduce emissions from commuting (which contribute to the attainment of SDG 13.3) can also make a positive contribution to developing more sustainable cities (by reducing reliance on motorised transport – SDG 11.2) and fostering improvements in health and wellbeing (SDG 3.4 and 3.6).