



Green Gown
Awards 2016



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Finalist's case study

Glasgow Caledonian University Sustainability Professional Becoming a Cycle Friendly Campus

About the project

Summary

- The number of students and staff cycling to and from GCU has increased significantly thanks to a targeted campaign to break down common barriers to cycling.
- Following research among students and staff, a series of initiatives were introduced to address common barriers to cycling and promote its benefits. Coupled with investment in cycling facilities, the number of students and staff cycling to GCU between 2012 and 2015 has increased significantly to 3% and 9% (respectively for students and staff).
- As a result of this programme, Cycling Scotland awarded GCU Scotland's first Cycle Friendly Campus Award (with distinction) in February 2016. The award acknowledges the outstanding level of commitment GCU has shown to encouraging and promoting active travel to and from the University and within Glasgow.

Project partners

- Cycling Scotland
- The Bike Station - Glasgow
- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
- Sustrans
- Police Scotland
- Glasgow City Council

The results

The problem

GCU's environmental Sustainability Strategy committed to reducing carbon emissions by, amongst other means, doubling the proportion of students and staff cycling to the University.



University for the Common Good

- International university delivering excellence to 20,000 students.
- Glasgow campus and outreach campuses in London and New York, and partnerships in Bangladesh, Africa and Oman.
- Top modern university in Scotland by research power (REF 2014).

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The approach

The starting point was the establishment of a bicycle user group at GCU (the Cycling Forum) in October 2013 to provide a formal mechanism for engaging with GCU's cycling community.

This dialogue provided initial insights into common barriers to cycling at GCU and a plan was formulated to overcome them. Initial initiatives included the introduction of a cycling to work scheme, free bike maintenance (once a month), removal of abandoned bikes and new parking facilities.

As the initial set of barriers was addressed, GCU's Sustainability Officer, carried out a more in-depth assessment of barriers to cycling by surveying 134 students about what would encourage them to cycle with findings used to develop a new programme of activities that included both hard (facilities) and soft (behavioural) interventions.

Delivered with funding from Cycling Scotland (as part of the Cycle Friendly Campus Award pilot), the programme was rolled out in August 2014 and included activities to:

- **Highlight the costs of cycling vs. other modes of travel** – leaflet inserted into freshers' packs (4,000 leaflets) at the start of each academic year; Student Travel Advisors offering personal travel plans at the start of each academic term (approx. 150-200 per year); discounted hire of city's mass-hire bike scheme; 12 posters promoting cycling.
- **Facilitate bike ownership** – recycled bike pop-up shop during freshers' week; webpage with information on Glasgow's second-hand bike shops; incentive (£20 cash or £40 lock) for those purchasing new bikes.
- **Improve cycle maintenance** – free bike maintenance (1-2 times per month); bike first aid kit (puncture repair kit available from Campus Security); public repair stand and free maintenance classes.
- **Increase Bike parking facilities** – 80 additional parking spaces and bike shelter (increasing total to 120).
- **Enhance Bike security** – free lock (lock swap); security bike marking with Police Scotland (2-3 times per year); enhanced CCTV coverage of bike parking facilities; advice on how to lock bikes properly.
- **Enhance Cycling Proficiency** – Established a team of [26] cycle ride leaders; bike tours of Glasgow (using the University's fleet of 10 bikes); free bike lights (during winter); free maps of cycling routes in Glasgow; Cycle proficiency training.
- **Reduce the impact of weather** – increased number of free lockers available to students (by 50%); access to showers for cyclists (in the sports centre); covered bike parking; practical tips (in the leaflet) on reducing impact of weather.

As a result of this programme of activities, there were significant increases in the proportion of students and staff cycling to the University between 2012 and 2015 from 2% to 3% for students and from 4% to 9% for staff (GCU 2015 Travel Survey) and in Feb 2016 Cycling Scotland nominated GCU Scotland's first Cycle Friendly Campus.

Our goals

- Reduce carbon emissions (scope 3 – student commuting)
- Double the proportion of students and staff cycling to the University.



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Obstacles and solutions

Difficulty in reaching out to people that cycled	Create BUG with associated mailing list and FB group. Offer incentives to those that register (e.g. free breakfasts and bike maintenance for those that cycled).
Potential cyclists difficult to identify	Collect contact details of everyone applying for a free locker (or any other freebie). Offer to send information about cycling or "cheaper travel option". Create regular newsletter for these groups.
Cycling not visible	Place new cycle parking and shelter in high profile location. Cycle activities (e.g. free maintenance sessions) also in high profile locations. Create poster campaign to highlight cycling as an acceptable option to commute to the University. Feature events to promote cycling in both student and staff newsletters. Reward those that cycle with freebies throughout the year (lights, locks, neck warmers).
Perception that bikes are not safe (from theft) on campus	Provide advice on how to lock bikes correctly. Make locks available to borrow from Campus Security. Free lock upgrades. Police Scotland on campus offering security bike marking (funded by the University).
Unfamiliarity with best/safe cycling routes in the city	Establish cycling buddies (tap into BUG members) and include route planning links on BUG webpage. Giveaway cycling map of city. Offer cycling training and highlight Cycling Scotland's skill app.

Performance and results

The number of students and staff travelling to and from GCU by bike has [almost] doubled:

- **Students 2012: 1.83% 2015: 2.89%**
- **Staff 2012: 4.46% 2015: 8.95%**

We have a loyal and engaged community of cyclists and the number of students and staff travelling to GCU by bike has increased by almost 20% since 2014 and doubled since 2012 (based on monthly bike counts).

Carbon emissions (absolute and relative) of "average" student and staff commute has fallen (although no. of individuals has increased):

	2012-2013	2015-2016
Absolute – students (tonnes)	8843	7868
Absolute – staff (tonnes)	1273	1160
Relative - kg CO ₂ e Students/year	626	525
Relative - kg CO ₂ e Staff/year	845	714



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The future

Lessons learned

- Main/key barriers need to be addressed before behavior change is attempted.
- Behaviour change is a long-term process.
- The “call to action” needs to be kept fresh and tailored to different groups of individuals.
- People will say what they think you want to hear.

Sharing your project

We have used a variety of channels to communicate, helping us to promote our Sustainability messages and achievements to a wide audience, from students and staff to external stakeholders. They include dedicated Sustainability social media pages, the newsroom and home page of the GCU website; weekly staff e-newsletter; fortnightly student e-newsletter; communication with the Students' Association; GCU stakeholder magazine, The Caledonian; video content.

Events/engagement:

- Annual Go Green Week since 2013: week-long programme of activities
- Dr. Bike: 1-2 twice a month with approximately 15-17 bikes serviced per visit
- Cycling forum (GCU's BUG): 217 subscribers receive 1-2 email updates every month regarding cycling activities on campus. Approx.. 170 users in BUG Facebook group.
- Cheaper travel tips: 365 students subscribers (in 2016-2017) receive 6-9 emails a year with hints and tips about cheaper (greener) travel opportunities
- To promote active travel (walking and cycling), students and staff starred in a poster campaign to highlight their preferred modes of travel to GCU.

Cycling Scotland features GCU's initiatives in a case study promoting their Cycle Friendly Campus Award Scheme.

The Bike Station's Uni-Cycle networking even (for HEI staff with a remit to promote cycling).

EAUC forum visits to GCU.

Knowledge sharing with HIE on a one-to-one basis

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

As the University for the Common Good, GCU believes in constantly improving its environmental performance and promoting the principles of sustainable development in every aspect of our operations. This award is well-deserved recognition of Paulo's commitment and enthusiasm in helping to create a more sustainable future for the University.

Further information

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