

Date: Monday 14 October 2019
Time: 10.30am – 3pm
Venue: University of Stirling
Resources: Available on the [Sustainability Exchange](#)

MINUTES:

Community Engagement Topic Support Network Meeting

Engaging Student Unions and Student Associations on Sustainability

Attendees:

Laura	Cristea	LC	SOS-UK
Safya	Devautour	SD	Abertay University
Claire	Furniss	CF	Edinburgh College
Lauren	La Rocca	LLR	EAUC-Scotland
Alex	Luetchford	AL	Edinburgh College
Sinead	McKenna	SMK	City of Glasgow College
Severine	Monvoisin	SM	Edinburgh College
Robert	Scullion	RS	City of Glasgow College
Sarah	Whelan	SW	Queen Margaret University
Matt	Woodthorpe	MW	University of Stirling

Apologies:

John	Thorne	Glasgow School of Art
Sandra	Grieve	Newbattle Abbey College

	SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS	ACTIONS
1	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Introductions <i>Lauren La Rocca, Chair, Sustainability Engagement Project Officer, EAUC-Scotland</i></p> <p>Everyone was welcomed to the event and invited to introduce themselves to the room.</p>	
2	<p>EAUC Updates and Resources <i>Lauren La Rocca, Sustainability Engagement Project Officer, EAUC-Scotland</i></p> <p>There are a couple of events and resources to highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EAUC-Scotland Conference is on Tuesday 26 November 2019 at the Lighthouse in Glasgow. This full day conference will look at some of the more controversial and challenging issues facing sustainability professionals within Further and Higher Education today. You can still book early bird tickets until the end of the month. • The Green Gown Awards follow the EAUC-Scotland Conference on the 26th November at the Glasgow Science Museum. Ceremony tickets are also available to book. • EAUC-Scotland collected case studies from across Scottish universities and colleges that align with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The case studies provide a snapshot of the some of the ways that Scotland's Further and Higher Education sector are contributing towards the Global Goals. Explore the Scotland SDG Case Studies individually by resource below or view them as a collective in the Case Studies document. • There is a new collection of Climate Change Adaptation guides, case studies, tools and resources to help to communicate the need for investment in adaptation, to climate projections, examples of risks, opportunities and potential adaptation actions to support action in your institution. • There will be a set of new sustainability curriculum guides for Economics and Computer Science that highlights key concepts, case studies, and curriculum ideas to help embed sustainability into each subject area — these are due to be released at the end of October. 	

<p>3</p>	<p>Go Green Edinburgh College Students’ Association – Workshop & Presentation</p> <p><i>Alex Luetchford and Claire Furniss, Low Carbon Travel Officers, Edinburgh College Students’ Association</i></p> <p>The Go Green Project is funded by the Scottish Government’s Climate Challenge Fund. Through this funding the Edinburgh College Students’ Association, which is an independent charity from the College, employed 2 Low Carbon Travel Officers who are tasked with running various engagement events and programmes of work to help embed low carbon travel at the institution. They engage students across Edinburgh College’s four campuses, and use their annual travel survey to help provide the evidence and background for their projects. By meeting with every student at registration to discuss their travel modes and needs, they are able to align and target their activities.</p> <p>Successes when engaging students include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running campaigns with incentives or challenges (for example a walking challenge, relating it to health and financial benefits rather than from a sustainability point of view so it reflects student priorities) • Building links with staff to get into classes to expand reach (example: speaking to the automotive classes about low carbon travel and sustainability) • Run stall over lunch time, as emails and social media have limited/varied success – as most students leave campus directly after classes and are only at the institution for 1 year, it is better to meet face-to-face during the day in order to engage with more of the student body <p>Challenges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal barriers including lack of resources and institution culture • Student-driven things aren’t successful • Scheduled talks at lunch didn’t work • Tried free bike breakfast – some campuses were successful • Funding restrictions limit incentives that are motivating to students – recommend looking at Paths for All Funding – Smarter Choices Open Fund • Unforeseen circumstances <p>Future Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use photos and quotes from students to highlight engagement and create stories • Increased advertising and highlighting of Low Carbon Travel Student of the Year Award • Formalise a Sustainability Club structure • Get into classes more <p>Workshop</p> <p>Conducted Sustainability in the Curriculum workshops in Learning and Development classes as these aren’t subject specific (allowing for better</p>	
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engagement, open conversations and less infringement on subject area curriculum demands.

- Using the College's just launched Sustainability Strategy to push for more sustainability in the curriculum

Also conducted a Sustainability in the Curriculum workshop for Edinburgh College Students' Association Officer/Rep Residential Training and as a result the President has made Education for Sustainable Development a priority and added it to her platform for the year.

- Aim to work more with Class Reps to conduct a larger sustainability in the curriculum audit from their respective subject areas
- Hope to embed workshop as standard part of Class Rep training

TSN Attendees ran through a condensed version of the University of Bath [Sustainability in the Curriculum – identify, improve inspire! Workshop](#)

Discussion Topics

- The changing landscape of social media platforms and students –
 - AL: Younger students generally don't use facebook, preferring twitter whereas older students do – need to promote on both
 - SMK / RS: City of Glasgow College Marketing and Communications Team issued new guidelines: Facebook for events; Instagram for photos at events and visual campaigns; Twitter for promotion, networking and sharing; and LinkedIn for highlighting institution successes and staff achievements
- Encouraging lift sharing at colleges and universities
 - AL: Challenging at various institutions as many students / staff commute as a single-occupant in a vehicle, putting pressure on parking at campuses and increased carbon emissions
 - AL / CF: Edinburgh College had a soft launch of the Liftshare service in May and then had a focused campaign at the beginning of this academic year – already have ~150-200 students and staff signed up for the service
 - Used travel survey results to show student support for a lift share service and gain funding
 - Once lift share service available able to promote and highlight service to interested individuals from the surveys which helped sign-ups
- How to increase longevity of sustainability activity in students union and associations
 - SD: Change constitutions – either the processes of approving activity or by putting sustainability directly into the constitution
 - LC: Depending on how policies are enacted, use policy approval to fast track changes and push sustainability up the agenda
 - MW: Utilise societies to help further reach and collaborate on projects

<p>4</p>	<p>Case Study: Green and Blue Space – Sustainability at the University of Stirling Students’ Union</p> <p><i>Matt Woodthorpe, Environmental Development Coordinator, University of Stirling Students’ Union</i></p> <p>The University of Stirling Students’ Union is the first carbon neutral SU in the UK. The SU started its sustainability work by focusing on energy and waste reduction, then food and food waste, and has only continued to grow to what is now the Green and Blue Space – its sustainability dedicated SU arm.</p> <p>They have been able to jumpstart and push for many sustainability changes and initiatives at the institution, showing carbon and cost savings from its many projects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clothing swap – that now collects 6 tonnes of clothing and household goods each year bringing in £17K last year – improving financial security • 3 tonnes of paper saved each year through paperless coursework initiatives • Inter-hall energy competition that results in £5K saved each year – easy to implement as metering was already in place, only needed to promote and then allocated £1000 of the savings to the winning hall (used to put benches outside and now can use as a courtyard) • Coffee cup charge preventing 150,000 cups from entering the landfill last year • Increased bike parking – continue to push up the agenda at the University • Period Poverty – encouraging the use of reusable menstrual cups distributing over 300 cups) • University Divestment from fossil fuels <p>Conduct many events, part-time employment and volunteer opportunities to help students build skills (example bench making with Green Aspirations).</p> <p>By having a formal presence at the University’s Sustainability Working Group meetings and engaging with the Chancellor when needed, able to call for more sustainability changes and actions on behalf of the students. In addition, use the constitution and policies to contribute to the longevity and continuity of sustainability at the Students’ Union — highlight costs savings, carbon emissions cuts and student engagement to showcase impact of sustainability activity.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Tour of University of Stirling Students’ Association Community Gardens and the Green and Blue Space</p> <p><i>Matt Woodthorpe, Environmental Development Coordinator, University of Stirling Students’ Union</i></p> <p>TSN attendees visited the Community Gardens operated and managed by the Students’ Union Green and Blue Space. The space continues to grow and attracts students from across the institution. The Green and Blue Space swap shop, workshop space and food hive is an active space promoting sustainable behaviours and healthy, sustainable, cost effective options.</p>	

<p>6</p>	<p>Best practice with Student Association/Union Sustainability Initiatives <i>Laura Cristea, Project Manager, SOS-UK</i></p> <p>Working with your local Students Associations (SAs) — case study highlight: University of Central Lancashire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students Union invited the Estates Team into a project (2013-2015) – so engagement can be two-ways with SUs/SAs initiating collaboration • Integrated initiatives included Green Impact Auditors, New Student Staff Role within Union, Green Week bursary for society activities, and micro-allotments <p>Collaborations help everyone</p> <p>Helps the university:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAs are in better position to engage students (they have volunteers, space, resources, social media channels) • Societies tend to be the first contact students engage with at institutions, and these can be utilised to build leadership skills in students <p>Helps the SAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estates and senior leaders can make things happen • Better access to resources and potentially to funding <p>Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TSN attendees walked through a short activity as a skills mapping exercise (example of how to reduce single use plastic freebies at Fresher's Week) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MW: Write into Terms and Conditions of contract with exhibitors stating ban on items and what to use instead such as paper) ○ CF: Challenges including lack of enforcement and staff/student awareness ○ SM: Increase awareness by holding institution accountable – improved transparency around costs and implications of waste <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ cost of water bottles to buy and then the associated recycling/disposal costs versus reusable cups) ▪ energy costs associated with computer hardware left on overnight versus when shut-off <p>Advice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key players • Create a shared language • Be prepared to take risks • Build relationships and partnerships • Stay ahead of the game – plan ahead and collaborate on planning 	
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	<p>Future SOS-UK Campaigns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the Future UK • Sustainability Summit – 4 November 2019 at Sheffield Student’s Union • Students for Trees — National Tree Charter Day 30 November 2019 • Green Impact for Students Union • SDG Global Goals Teach-in — February 2020 	
7	<p>AOB</p> <p>Additional Resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability Sharing Series: Working with your Students Union on Sustainability Guide <p>Consultation opportunity for Students’ Unions and Associations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Bodies Reporting Consultation – Closes 4 December 2019 – Make your voice heard <p>Case Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Stirling Students Union — Green + Blue Space • Students Union at University of Greenwich — The Hub • Students Union at UWE Bristol — Bring your own bowl (Additional presentation resource from EAUC Conference 2019) • Glasgow Kelvin College - White Ribbon Campaign 	
8	<p>Next meeting: Spring 2020</p> <p>Potential topic – Staff Members as Sustainability Champions</p> <p>How to identify, recruit, support and utilize champions at your institution</p> <p>It was recommended that this TSN meeting be held virtually and invitation extended across the UK in order to expand reach and have more cross-institutional learning and engagement</p> <p>If you have any topic ideas or would like to contribute, contact scotland@eauc.org.uk</p>	<p>All: Advise on next meeting location and discussion topics</p>
9	<p>THANKS AND CLOSE</p> <p><i>Lauren La Rocca, Chair, Sustainability Engagement Project Officer, EAUC-Scotland</i></p>	