



# EAUC-Scotland Conference

## The Elephants in the Room

Tuesday 26 November 2019  
The Lighthouse, Glasgow



## The purpose of Further & Higher Education in a Climate Emergency

### Ray Walkinshaw, Head of Estates & Sustainability, Ayrshire College

We need to concentrate on the big ticket items. Gas & electricity consumption account for more than 90% of our emissions so we need to:

- Reduce the need for consumption (reduce the size of the estate, the temperature of offices & opening hours)
- Reduce heat loss (improve insulation)
- Increase renewables (e.g. Solar PV, Micro-hydro)

### Pete Higgins, Director, Learning for Sustainability Scotland

- Research is part of the status quo but it is often motivated by competition & ego
- We need to focus on understanding the issues
- We need a 21<sup>st</sup> century enlightenment for 21<sup>st</sup> century problems
- We need to change the way we think about research
- We need to change the way we teach & engage with society

### David Duncan, Chief Operating Officer & University Secretary, University of Glasgow

- There is genuine interest from senior management & governing bodies, however most universities in Scotland are in financial deficit this year
- Universities & colleges can help to develop a shared understanding of climate change and bring people together
- We can make a difference to the wider world and bring people together

### David Beards, Senior Policy Officer, Scottish Funding Council

- The level of public engagement is higher than ever before
- Sometimes discussion is not easy and we need to be ready for opposition
- The declaration of a climate emergency has already changed how people think and will require new ways of working collaboratively
- As civic institutions we must encourage students and researchers to address the climate emergency and challenge orthodoxies
- We need to increase the focus on climate change, constructive discourse and collaboration

## **Dhruti Chakravarthi, Sustainable Development Student, University of Edinburgh**

- Grew up amid inequality and now studying to save the world at the University of Edinburgh
- Unlearning and reimagining the world
- Intricate values not engineered logic - This process is missing from policy & culture
- Through the process of sustainable development we find solutions to combat the climate emergency but we are neglecting to imagine how we want to build the world. What if we reframed around conserving, nurturing and balance?
- What would my home be like in a sustainable world? What kind of work would I do? What do we see and what do we not see?

## **Jamie Pearson, Environmental Sustainability Manager, Edinburgh Napier University**

- I am a human-sized bumble bee and pollinator
- I audit, report & share best practise
- Work collaboratively & am known as a trusted source of information
- Build & sustain confidence
- Ensure change
- Spot opportunities & risk
- Test Academic Theory
- Be the change that is required to introduce the elephants to colleagues
- We can't assume everyone knows or appreciates our purpose

## **Christine Calder, Academic Development Lead, Dundee and Angus College**

- Several years ago I began to notice a change in one of my students named Willie. He became withdrawn and unkempt. We spoke and it transpired he had become homeless and was sleeping in his car
- As lecturers in Scottish Colleges we need to embed sustainability into our teaching
- Students want to talk about climate change
- However for students like Willie, climate change is not a priority so we need to look at meeting the Sustainable Development Goals
- For those students at the top of Maslow, I think we need to work more closely with Student Unions and with Universities