

Update on the UBC Climate Emergency & Student-Focused Recommendations

In December 2019, UBC endorsed and declared a climate emergency. The declaration was prompted by a student-mobilized open letter signed by 1,500 students, staff, faculty and campus organizations and in response to the participation of more than 5,000 UBC students, faculty and staff members in the Global Climate Strike at UBC Vancouver's campus (thousands more students marched concurrently in core climate strikes across Vancouver and the Okanagan).

A Task Force, consisting of UBC students, faculty and staff from both Vancouver and Okanagan campuses, was assembled to steer the engagement process and lead the development of community-informed recommendations that align with the spirit and intent of the declaration. The Climate Emergency engagement process heard from nearly 4,000 participants to inform UBC's actions towards addressing the climate emergency, including robust student input. The development of the recommendations drew on the expertise of working groups with faculty, staff and student participation. UBC also re-allocated existing staff and resources to form a dedicated climate emergency project team, of which core members came from the UBC Climate Hub, a student-driven initiative.

This table highlights some of the core climate emergency recommendations that are student-focused.

Key Recommendations for Students	Notable Potential Actions for Students ¹
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support fair compensation and representation for UBC's IBPOC community leading climate initiatives 2. Support Off-Campus IBPOC-led climate initiatives 3. Engage further with Indigenous Communities 4. Engage further with Black and POC Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a dedicated pool of funds to ensure that on-campus IBPOC-led initiatives receive adequate funding and support • Provide dedicated funding & honoraria for Indigenous, Black and POC students who engage in the process • Support the implementation of an IBPOC youth engagement strategy for the climate emergency that hires students to conduct peer-to-peer engagement • Provide specific Teaching & Learning support programs to meet the needs and interests of IBPOC students
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a body for climate research 2. Start a climate emergency fellows' program 3. Recognize and reward community engaged scholarship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new, comprehensive climate research body for faculty, graduate students, community members, university staff and administration • Research body fellowship intake of at least ~ 5 PhD students and 1 postdoctoral researcher annually • Public outreach PhD fellowship programs (Fellows receive a course release to compensate them for their time engaging with the community)

¹ These actions remain 'guidance' provided by the Climate Emergency Task Force working groups that generated the recommendations, rather than commitments. They are to serve as examples of what can potentially be accomplished for students through the funding of the suite of recommendations.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage civic engagement 2. Increase capacity and resources for engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A UBC Activist Lab that works with all students who want to be involved; funds activist fellowships; incubates student activist projects (e.g. mentorship opportunities, Ambassador programs, workshops, toolkits) and supports student learning of active civic engagement • Create activist fellowships, where UBC students can be compensated for advocacy-related activities on climate change for the duration of the academic year. • A self-directed for-credit course for students to work on climate engagement and advocacy projects. The course would support a peer learning environment for students to share their goals, reflections and results and learn from one another. • Engage with climate justice focused researchers, academics, community activists and leaders to develop resources for students, staff and faculty to understand and apply climate justice to their work (e.g. Workshops, toolkits, publishing opportunities for taking action/volunteering) • Establish a long-term governance model & funding that secures the Climate Hub as a student-led, administration-supported research, policy, and action-oriented centre at UBC. This would expand their projects and offer micro-grants to enable, support and compensate student-led climate action • Build opportunities for climate emergency awareness-building into first-year student orientations and transition programs through partnership with Imagine, Jump Start, Firstweek, Create, Collegia, Residences and Student Unions • Develop foundational climate literacy educational modules that could be widely accessed by students in leadership roles, and the broader student community
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build capacity for mental health, resilience and community care strategies 2. Update emergency preparedness and response plans 3. Collaborate to expand public discourse around climate change and public health impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build capacity to support students experiencing climate-related worry and distress • Develop strategies for peer support for coping with climate change and train students, staff and faculty in implementing these strategies in community spaces. • Create group spaces for conversations around climate change for community members to process grief/anxiety/distress
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advance climate education opportunities across disciplines 2. Support climate education pedagogy and curriculum development 3. Expand climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a climate change course listing, host climate-themed sessions during the annual Advising Conference hosted at UBC-V, provide content to Faculty Advising offices for distribution in newsletters • Create interdisciplinary climate change and justice credential(s) at UBC, ranging from 9 -12 credit certificates to an 18-credit minor. • Develop certification that complements graduate research training programs, with cross-campus integration.

education and professional development for UBC community members and UBC partners

- Continue to support initiatives like the Climate Teaching Connector at UBCV, which provide guest lectures (upon request) by UBC grad students on topics relating to climate and climate justice for undergraduate classes across all disciplines
- Expand opportunities for students to engage in place-based learning locally and abroad for academic credit, through increased funding and pedagogical support for instructors and academic programs.
- Leverage existing champions for transformative learning pedagogies (e.g., SEEDS, FNHL, UBC-V CCEL, UBC-O ICER) to expand student engagement in high value climate-related learning opportunities.
- Provide centralized support and leverage existing units such as co-op programs, Work-Learn, and professional development offices to ensure all students are aware of climate-related professional development, applied learning, and climate-related on campus job opportunities.
- Expand opportunities for students to engage with community partners and engage with real-world projects that address the climate crisis.
- Expand and develop student volunteer opportunities (e.g., UBC Climate Hub) and community based-projects and grants (e.g. CCEL)