Post-secondary Faculty

This section is for individuals and organizations that support, deliver, or provide environmental and sustainability education to educators currently teaching or planning to teach in post-secondary colleges and universities in Ontario.

Outcomes

Post-secondary faculty will:

1. Acquire or deepen their understanding of environmental issues and ecological concepts, and their complex relationship to society, technology, and the economy

Sample Indicators:
- They attend multidisciplinary seminars, forums, and workshops on **environmental literacy**, environmental issues, and the integration of E&SE into individual and interdisciplinary teaching practice.
- They integrate environmental issues and ecological concepts into their teaching.
- They balance traditional **anthropocentric** learning with a comparison to "**ecocentric**" learning, and explore the ramifications of this type of worldview.
- They include environmental connections and concepts in their research and writing.
- They are familiar with local environments, their features and issues, and recognize the value of environments as teaching models.

2. Access quality environmental and sustainability information and resources

Sample Indicator:
- They reference and provide environmental and **sustainability** information and materials that are current, scientifically accurate, and **bias-balanced**.

3. Teach effectively to foster the understanding of ecological concepts, and the development of skills required to deal with environmental issues

Sample Indicators:

- They apply their ecological knowledge to provide effective, critical **environmental education** both within their own disciplines and in cross-disciplinary work.
- They acknowledge and discuss existing gaps between the current economic growth model, mainstream practices, design and planning, and ecologically sustainable behaviour.
- They emphasize the skills of inquiry, communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making in their teaching, both within core disciplines and in interdisciplinary teaching.
- They establish and become involved in interdisciplinary courses, team teaching, self-directed learning, alternative learning, **integrated learning communities**, and open-ended curricula.
- They foster opportunities for learning across departments and disciplines.
- They interact with other faculty to create more **holistic**, theme-based education and course opportunities, and facilitate integration of **environmental education** across disciplines.
- They seek to help students experience a paradigm shift to a more ecologically sustainable world-view, and discuss the potential benefits of corresponding behaviour changes.
- They offer examples and case studies of successful shifts towards environmental change, both at home and around the world.

4. Support positive role models in the learning community, and student environmental activities on campus and in the larger community

Sample Indicators:

- They discuss the comparative ecological and **sustainability** implications of policies, technologies, institutional practices and personal behaviours on ecosystems and human health.
- They support and encourage the use of environmentally friendly alternatives and sustainable practices throughout the college or university.
- They support "green campus" projects and community environmental projects (e.g., waste reduction and diversion, stream rehabilitation, naturalization, greener transportation, and energy conservation).
- They support environmental internship programs and field trips.

Needs

Post-secondary faculty need:

- Recognition of environmental and **sustainability** learning as the basis for human health and well-being into the future

- Recognition of and commitment to environmental and sustainability education—by students, parents, administrators, governing bodies, and government officials—as a basic and critical component of post-secondary education
- The means to deepen their knowledge of ecological principles, natural systems, environmental issues, and the interactions of the environment with society, technology, and the economy, and integrate this knowledge into their disciplines
- Access to current, significant, appropriate, quality information and resources
- Good methods for teaching and applying critical thinking to an examination of environmental and **sustainability** issues
- Good models of sustainable institutions and practices, effective programs and courses, and faculty collaboration
- Ways and opportunities to overcome barriers to interdisciplinary communication and collaboration, and to explore the potential for synergy among the various disciplines in a college or university
- Ways and opportunities to engage the college or university community, including faculty, students, and administration, in communication about environmental and **sustainability** issues and participation in environmental initiatives
- Methods of foregrounding prevailing societal attitudes and values on practices (such as consumerism) that undermine sustainable lifestyles, practices, and resource use, and practical ideas of how to counteract them
- Opportunities to discuss and address the controversy around concepts such as sustainable development, stewardship, environmental ethics, globalization, and risk analysis
- Support and incentives, including financial support, for institutional initiatives such as environmental audits, environmentally responsible purchasing, energy conservation, and waste reduction
- More support and recognition of initiatives, efforts, and excellence in teaching, sustainable practices, and campus and community involvement that help the environment

Strategies

Programs, Projects, and Policies

1. Create inclusive forums—with representation from government, college and university administration, faculty, and students—to produce action plans to increase and improve environmental and sustainability content throughout all post-secondary programs.
2. Promote institutional environmental **sustainability** by
   a) inviting environmental studies programs to bring faculty from across the academic community to unite their expertise in the goal of achieving a more ecological world-view and a more ecologically sound society and economy;
   b) providing multidisciplinary seminars, forums, and workshops that help faculty develop ecological ideas and seek synergies among different academic perspectives;

c) facilitating collaboration on interdisciplinary planning, programs, and courses;

d) creating faculty networks to facilitate collaboration on environmental learning and projects;

e) developing **sustainability** policies for campuses, buildings, and institutional practices, and use university communication channels to ensure that the policies are known and implemented;

f) providing dedicated staff to administer campus **sustainability** programs and projects; and

g) including a commitment to environmental **sustainability** in college and university mission statements, and post such information on the college or university website, in calendars, and in other publications.

3. Pursue funding which supports research and development of ecologically sound technologies and systems design.

4. Communicate with decision-makers to support the adjustment of funding formulas and priorities to provide changes and additions to programs, courses, and modes of instruction such as interdisciplinary courses.

5. Introduce the concept of tying funding to commitments and achievements in programs and practices that advance **environmental education** and **sustainability**.

Resources

1. Provide funds and resources for sustainable campus projects and broad involvement in ecologically sustainable practices (e.g., University of Toronto levied a small increment to the student activity fee to support environmental activity on campus).

2. Improve access to information about environmental issues and ecological concepts for all faculty members through college and university publications, resource lists, audio-visual departments, textbooks, libraries, and Internet resources.

3. Devote a website or part of the college or university website to environmental policy, administrative support, initiatives, projects, activities, events, and practices, including cooperative ventures with the community.

4. Source and make available information about good models of sustainable institutions and practices, effective programs and courses, and faculty collaboration.

5. Invite environmental studies faculties, programs, and institutes to serve as a resource for the improvement of **environmental literacy** of all faculty.

6. Facilitate partnerships with non-governmental organizations, government agencies, businesses, and community groups as resources to enhance the **environmental literacy** of faculty.

7. Provide access to information about good models of sustainable institutions and practices, effective programs and courses, and faculty collaboration.

Support

1. Make Canada's commitment to the United Nations' **Agenda 21** a driver to increase and improve **environmental education**.
2. Broaden the criteria for hiring, tenure, and promotion to increase recognition of thinking and involvement "outside the box," achievement in moving from theory to practice, and excellence and initiative in teaching to further the goals for environmental **sustainability**, as stated in this strategic plan.
3. Stimulate the influence of more post-secondary faculty in educating environmentally literate students who, in turn, will become faculty at post-secondary institutions, schoolteachers, or leaders in business, government, and other fields.
4. Provide financial incentives for initiatives such as environmental management plans and audits, environmentally responsible purchasing, energy conservation, and waste reduction, and provide the administrative staff to manage the initiatives and account for progress.
5. Present awards to faculty, administration, and institutions for excellence in **environmental education**, achievements, and practices.

Please see Appendix 1 for a list of useful websites.