

OCAD UNIVERSITY

SUSTAINABILITY CURRICULUM STRATEGY

2022-2028



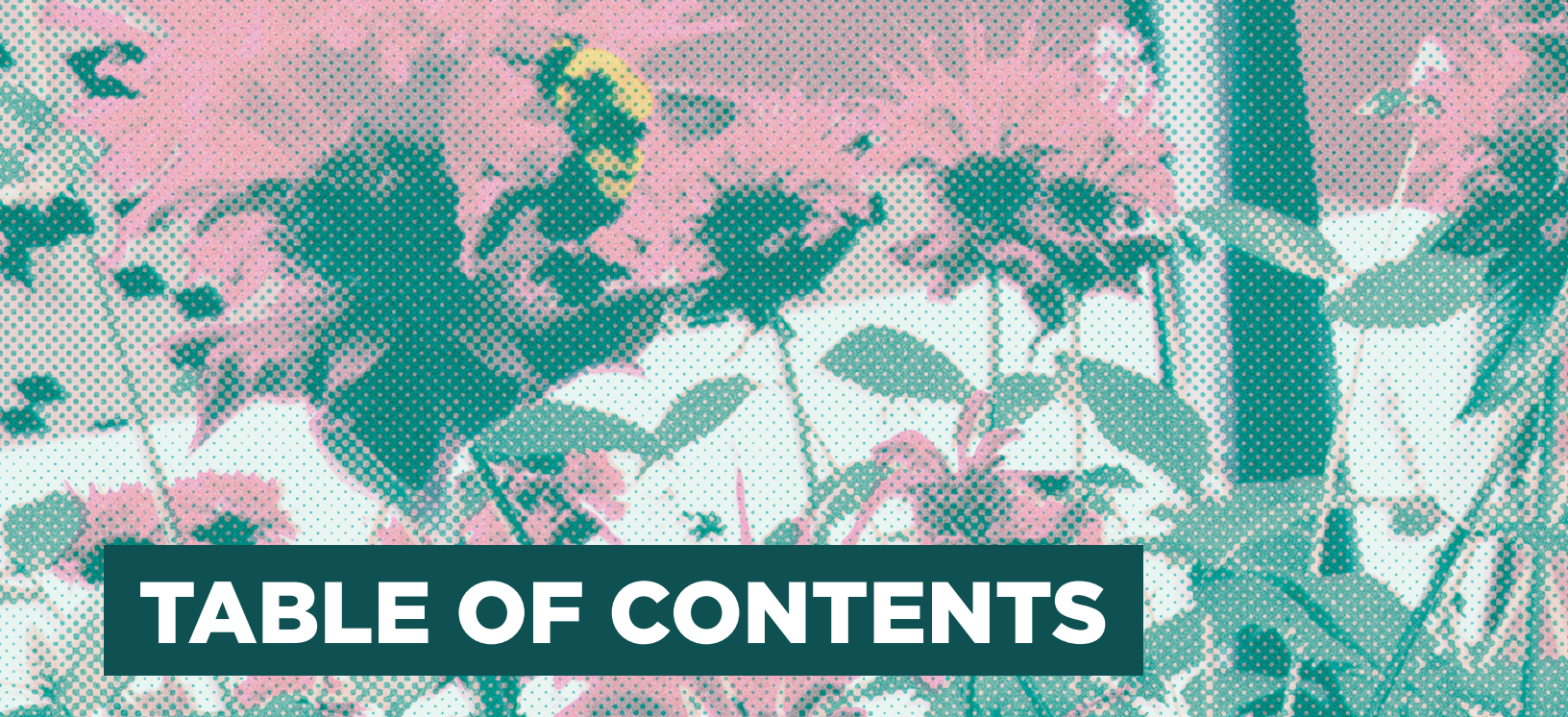


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The OCAD U Sustainability Curriculum Strategy reflects the ongoing and collaborative work of the University community. The Strategy was developed with intentional engagement and consultation with faculty, staff, and students and supported with guidance from the Sustainability Committee, the Teaching and Learning Committee, and the Senate Undergraduate Studies Committee. The Strategy was approved by Senate in April 2024.

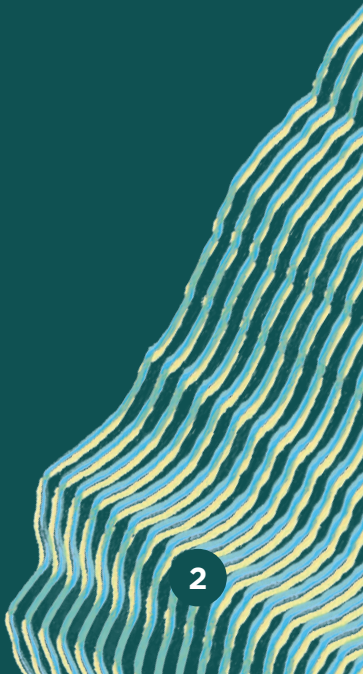
The Strategy is a joint project of both the Office of Diversity, Equity and Sustainability Initiatives (ODESI) and the Faculty and Curriculum Development Centre (FCDC), led by Victoria Ho,

Advisor, Strategic Sustainability, and supported by Sarah Chu, Manager, Hybrid and Online Learning.

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Wave visualizations created by Mauricio Eduardo Villar Martinez.

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sustainability work at OCAD University is committed to upholding Indigenous epistemologies and practices, and our relations with the Land and Indigenous peoples. OCAD U acknowledges the ancestral territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabeg and the Huron-Wendat, who are the original owners and custodians of the land on which we live, work and create.

The Sustainability Curriculum Strategy supports the OCAD U Academic & Strategic Plan 2022-2028, which further considers: How can we pursue the future without first reconciling with the present? How do we meaningfully reckon with our individual responsibilities and how does this compel us to act? How do we move forward with intention, in an act of communal wayfinding, and build and keep good relations? How do we continue the work of decolonization knowing that it begins with Indigenous lands? These critical considerations frame the Sustainability Curriculum Strategy and the meaning of sustainability in teaching and learning at OCAD U.

CONTEXT

We are in a critical decade for OCAD University and our community of artists, designers, and scholars to play material and cultural roles in the collective tackling of the climate crisis and sustainability challenges. The [United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) report](#) released in August 2021 sounds a “code red for humanity.”¹ But there’s good news: coordinating efforts now, at all scales, may stave off the worst impacts of a warming planet as the actions of humans hold great potential for influencing a positive climate future.²

OCAD University embraces the role of sustainability through the [OCAD U Sustainability Policy](#) and as one of seven core strategic priorities in our [Academic and Strategic Plan 2022-2028](#), the priority to Pursue Environmental Sustainability, which includes Objective A: “Centre, engage and protect Indigenous voices and knowledges to guide sustainability curriculum” and Objective C: “Embed sustainability learning outcomes in over 80 per cent of curriculum by 2028”. As Canada’s largest art and design university, we aim to “pursue environmental sustainability” by fostering “regenerative relationships between people and land.”³ As a community of learners, educators, and leaders, we recognize that to embrace sustainability as a core priority means proceeding from an intimate and respectful connection and responsiveness to place, relationships, and community, and to the journey we share as living beings on Turtle Island, the traditional lands of diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. The OCAD University model of sustainability is necessarily rooted in Indigenous epistemologies and the principles of Respect, Relationship, Reciprocity, and Responsibility which guide Indigenous Learning Outcomes in our curriculum.⁴

Broadly speaking, an OCAD University Sustainability Curriculum Strategy will proceed from a commitment to wholistic and decolonizing approaches and a valuing of Indigenous knowledges and methodologies as part of our shared learning ecology.

¹ United Nations. (2021, August 9). Secretary-General Calls Latest IPCC Climate Report ‘Code Red for Humanity’, Stressing ‘Irrefutable’ Evidence of Human Influence [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sgsm20847.doc.htm>

² International Panel on Climate Change. (2021, August 9). Climate Change Widespread, Rapid, and Intensifying – IPCC [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.ipcc.ch/2021/08/09/ar6-wg1-20210809-pr/>

³ “OCAD University Academic and Strategic Plan (ASP) 2022-2028.” OCAD University. May 5, 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.ocadu.ca/academic-strategic-plan/#/>

⁴ “OCAD University’s Indigenous Learning Outcomes.” OCAD University. April 29, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.ocadu.ca/about/governance/VP-academic-and-provost/indigenous-learning-outcomes>

CONTEXT

The responsibility of decolonizing curriculum and decolonizing sustainability movements themselves requires continuous recognition of Indigenous priorities and expertise. It requires noticing where relationality to land and to each other has been severed and how connection can be restored. Where mainstream environmental movements have previously advanced colonial-capitalist harm and depended on infinite economic growth models that rely on human and ecological exploitation, a more wholistic approach to sustainability requires tender examination of the social, cultural, and ethical spheres of sustainability that reach out seven generations ahead.

Art and design education has a vital role to play in creating makers who proceed from this paradigm. Already, artists and designers are engaging decolonizing imperatives, Indigenous epistemologies, and sustainability aims in their creative and cultural work, thereby “breaking down false boundaries between aesthetics and politics and claiming culture as an important and effective catalyst for, and site of, sustainability.”⁵

The [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), referenced in the OCAD U Sustainability Policy, provides a welcome framework for recognizing the intersectional nature of sustainability. Advancing global sustainability and the Goals, which include SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13: Climate Action, and SDG 17: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, is only possible by recognizing the interdependency of the Goals and by addressing the Goals simultaneously. There is a role for every member of the OCAD U community to join.

We know that OCAD University is invested in building cultural sectors that can transform mindsets, inspire compassion, enhance connections across worldviews, demystify complexity, and open us up to imagine alternative futures. This Sustainability Curriculum Strategy, and its connected projects and initiatives, will serve as OCAD U’s foundation for reaching its curricular sustainability goals.

⁵ Salzberg Global Seminar. (2014). “Beyond Green: The Arts as a Catalyst for Sustainability.” Session Report 561. Retrieved from https://www.iau-hesd.net/sites/default/files/documents/salzburgglobal_report_561_online_.pdf

CONTEXT

Weaving Sustainability into Curriculum

This strategy identifies curricular approaches to integrating sustainability into art and design education. The proposed approaches broadly aim to support sustainability learning across the degree from first year to final year and to engage discipline-specific opportunities for students to connect theory to practice. Specifically, the approaches seek to:

- Create a meaningful, dynamic, and generative interrelationship between our Indigenous Learning Outcomes and sustainability curriculum and pedagogies across our undergraduate programs, including through the creation of land-based learning opportunities for all learners and prioritizing Indigenous students;
- Create foundational opportunities to learn about sustainability in first year in all programs, introducing sustainability concepts and, where relevant, grounding them in disciplinary practices;
- Enable students to dive deeper into sustainability by enhancing sustainability learning throughout their programs;
- Enable students to draw interdisciplinary connections by making sustainability content and courses visible to students;
- Empower students to apply their sustainability-focused inquiries through learning experiences that integrate theory and practice and by investigating sustainable materials use across disciplinary practices; and
- Build capacity for curriculum development, renewal and innovation through faculty professional learning, course-based pedagogical research and knowledge-sharing that showcases faculty expertise and innovations in sustainable pedagogies and curriculum.

Overall, this strategy promotes thematic connections across program areas while highlighting discipline-specific interpretations and applications of sustainability.



CONTEXT

Our Current Sustainability Context

OCAD U's curriculum commitments to sustainability are already rooted in policy and planning:

- i. The OCAD U Sustainability Policy notes, "OCAD U's goal is to prepare students with the knowledge, disposition, values, and skills to cultivate a viable future through critical teaching and research, while demonstrating sustainability in University operations and decisions."
- ii. The [Academic and Strategic Plan 2022-2028](#), Priority 2: Pursue Environment Sustainability - foster regenerative relationships between people and land.

On the ground, OCAD U's [Sustainability Committee](#) and our community of faculty, staff, and students have been deepening relationships and opportunities for collaboration in academics such as with the 2023-24 Sustainable Futures Faculty Fellowship (SF3) program, a Community of Practice, a Sustainability Hub for teaching and learning resources, experiential learning placements, a new sustainability course inventory, a new Environmental Design student award for Excellence in Sustainable Design, an annual strategic visioning retreat, and ongoing professional development trainings and events.

VISION 2028:

Each student will graduate with wholistic knowledge of sustainability and an ability to apply this knowledge in their practice, employment, and scholarship.

FIVE-YEAR CURRICULUM GOALS

GOAL 1:

Provide all incoming OCAD U students with a foundational learning experience in sustainability during their first year.

	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	ACCOUNTABILITY
1.1	Identify opportunities to enhance land-based learning in first year experiences in relation to and framed by the Indigenous Learning Outcomes. Prioritize land-based learning experiences for Indigenous students.	Short term (0-2 years)	Curriculum Committees
1.2	Work with Program Chairs and faculty to develop a sustainability-focused course learning outcome in one required first year course in each program area to ensure sustainability is embedded in disciplinary practices.	Medium term (2-5 years)	FCDC and Office of the VPAP
1.3	Integrate sustainability into existing or new first and/or second year elective interdisciplinary courses that broaden access to sustainability curriculum for students in programs that do not already have sustainability-focused courses in first and second year.	Medium term (2-5 years)	Program Chairs and Curriculum Committees

FIVE-YEAR CURRICULUM GOALS

GOAL 2:

Ensure ongoing disciplinary sustainability learning opportunities for students throughout their program, building on the foundational knowledge in disciplinary contexts.

	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	ACCOUNTABILITY
2.1	Embed sustainability-focused learning opportunities and outcomes throughout curriculum, including in discipline-specific program courses, to meet the ASP goal: “Embed sustainability learning outcomes in over 80 percent of curriculum by 2028.”	Medium term (2-5 years)	Program Chairs and Curriculum Committees, with support from FCDC and Office of the VPAP
2.2	Embed support for the development of sustainability-focused learning outcomes into regular curriculum review processes at the program-level and degree-level (i.e., during IQAP Cyclical Program Reviews).	Short term (0-2 years)	FCDC and Office of the VPAP
2.3	Ensure sustainability is included in student feedback mechanisms for Cyclical Program Review processes to understand student experience and exposure to/awareness of existing sustainability learning opportunities.	Short term (0-2 years)	FCDC and Faculty Program Teams

FIVE-YEAR CURRICULUM GOALS

GOAL 3:

Enhance sustainability content across the whole curriculum by increasing opportunities for sustainability learning.

	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	ACCOUNTABILITY
3.1	Complete a course inventory of sustainability courses to identify how sustainability resides in course descriptions, assignments and activities, assessments, and course learning outcomes.	Ongoing	Program Chairs, with support from ODESI
3.2	Make courses with sustainability content apparent to students in Course Catalogue.	Ongoing	Office of the Registrar, with support from ODESI
3.3	Continuously review curriculum for courses that are eligible for the Sustainability Minor, including by streamlining curriculum review processes to communicate course eligibility for the Sustainability Minor and/or other sustainability-related communications (e.g., course tagging).	Ongoing	Liberal Studies Chair, with support from Sustainability Committee
3.4	Assess student access to the Sustainability Minor and identify processes to ensure easy completion.	Ongoing	Liberal Studies Chair, with support from Sustainability Committee
3.5	Increase for-credit on-campus and off-campus sustainability-related experiential learning opportunities.	Ongoing	ODESI, in collaboration with CEAD
3.6	Integrate Campus as a Living Lab opportunities for students to conduct research on campus buildings and operations.	Medium term (2-5 years)	ODESI, in collaboration with OCAD U departments
3.7	Establish a tracking and reporting framework through Senate to monitor attainment of sustainability curriculum goals.	Short term (0-2 years)	Office of the VPAP

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

The above sustainability curriculum development activities will be supported by ongoing professional learning opportunities, community engagement programming, and special projects as identified through the stakeholder consultation process. These activities will be initiated and undertaken across different areas of the university and through collaborative partnerships facilitated by the Sustainability Committee.

The following types of activities will **enhance institutional knowledge** through faculty and staff professional learning:

- Create a regularized annual professional learning offering available to faculty to provide foundational and consistent access to sustainability definitions, approaches, and frameworks from a decolonizing perspective, to support integration of sustainability within the curriculum.
- Host a sustainability-focused Community of Practice.
- Host ongoing professional learning opportunities for faculty to learn about how their course can map on to decolonial and anti-racist sustainability frameworks, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and be inclusive of pedagogical models such as land-based learning and Traditional Ecological Knowledge.
- Make curriculum resources available through the Sustainability Hub.
- Develop a Sustainable Futures Faculty Fellowship program to provide opportunities for faculty to enhance sustainability-related pedagogical research capacity and share sustainability-related teaching approaches and pedagogical strategies.
- Showcase examples on the FCDC website of faculty who are incorporating sustainability into their courses, including faculty who have recently revised their courses.
- Support discipline-specific knowledge sharing and peer relationship-building with other AICAD institutions such as through Partnership for Academic Leadership in Sustainability (PALS).

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

The following types of activities will engage critically with programs to **improve the impacts of our material production and applications:**

- Pilot sustainable exhibition design strategies with a Faculty of Design course that can be applied to GradEx.
- Create a faculty residency program to explore sustainable materials use in art and design practice.
- Create research opportunities about sustainable materials in art and design.
- Create curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students from different program areas to collaborate on a common interdisciplinary sustainability related project. Project focus may include buildings and operations, campus engagement, community partnership, etc.