PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

PRINCIPLE 3: METHOD

We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

Sustainability in Course Content

In 2022, students at Gustavson were exposed to a range of sustainability topics throughout all our programs: Bachelor of Commerce, Master of Business Administration, Master of Global Business, Master in Management and PhD*. Deepening the integration of sustainability and social responsibility concepts, cases and tools throughout the curriculum of all our programs is one of the CSSI’s key objectives. As a result, we ensure that our graduates have the knowledge, skills and mindsets to guide them as responsible and ethical business leaders.

To help measure the integration of sustainability and social concepts and content in the required courses of our program, each semester, we ask all instructors to provide information on how they include sustainability in their course content.

Programs at a Glance (2022)

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Required courses are courses that must be completed by all students in the program. These numbers do not include non-credit, elective or specialization courses.

Our BCom, MBA and PhD programs each have a required course dedicated to business and sustainability. This is in addition to deliberate integration of sustainability content throughout the curriculum.

* The MGB program is delivered by three partner universities on three continents. The number of courses listed covers only the time spent at Gustavson.
For over 10 years, third-year Bachelor of Commerce students have engaged in Mission Impossible. You may notice the unique spelling; no, that’s not a typo. Mission Impossible is spelled that way to emphasize the four pillars of the Gustavson School of Business: International, Integrative, Innovative and Sustainable and Socially Responsible. These four pillars are all emphasized in this competition that runs in the first month of the students’ core year.

The students’ mission, should they choose to accept it, is to develop a pitch for a business that addresses a social or sustainable issue. Each team is comprised of four domestic students and one international student, and the teams focus their ideas on the international students’ home countries. Each group was given less than one day to put their concept together and then pitched it in four minutes or less to two judges. The judges are made up of local business people and Gustavson faculty who volunteered their time.

Each year, Mission Impossible brings fresh and innovative ideas, and this year was no different. Five outstanding teams took home the prize money—one for each cohort.

1. Cohort 1 – Lakshmi Cup. The Lakshmi Cup is a sustainably produced, reusable, affordable menstrual product for women in India.
2. Cohort 2 – Clean Bin. The Clean Bin is an attachable filter for placement on Hong Kong’s rubbish bins to help improve air quality (pictured below).
3. Cohort 3 – Shukshare. The Shukshare is a non-profit app that allows market vendors in Israel to advertise produce that is near ready for disposal that local soup kitchens can claim instead.
4. Cohort 4 – Seak Sparkle Waste Solutions. To address ocean and beach pollution in Amoy China, this group pitched an idea to collect and sort waste robotically into the appropriate recycling streams.
5. Cohort 5 – Kabuki Cayman. The kabuki-style cab is pulled by bikes and allows for cheap, sustainable, and safe transportation in the Cayman Islands.

While the primary goal of Mission Impossible is to encourage students to think creatively about sustainability initiatives, a second important goal is to help them learn to work together in a team. Bridging international divides in just the third week of class sets the students up for success for the rest of the semester.
Faces of Sustainable Co-op

The University of Victoria’s Co-operative Education department offers the option to distinguish specific co-op work terms with a “sustainability-related” or “sustainability-focused” tag, which allows students to self-identify whether their work term has a sustainability orientation to the work or if the company itself is a sustainability firm. Using these tags, CSSI identified students doing interesting sustainability work. Below are a few examples from 2022.

FACES OF A SUSTAINABLE CO-OP:
Joel Vandermark (BCom) – Environment and Climate Change Canada

What was your co-op placement and what did the position entail?
My last co-op placement was a Junior Policy Analyst position at Environment and Climate Change Canada. The position entailed running virtual events for ECCC employees, briefing my managers/conducting presentations, and completing various tasks my colleagues needed support on.

What are some key things you learned from your placement?
One of my key lessons is that being transparent about how I was feeling was incredibly important. In the past, I would hide the fact that I was overwhelmed and would just let the stress eat away at me. During this co-op, I was much more open and honest with my supervisor about how I was handling my workload, and it helped greatly. I was able to get clarification on what tasks were most important and my colleagues were happy to support me.

What motivated you to work there?
My co-workers were by far my biggest motivator. Everyone was so conscientious and helpful, it was amazing. I think almost every single person messaged me saying if I needed help to just reach out and ask questions and they would be glad to support me.

Did this placement inspire your future career path?
This co-op definitely inspired my future career path. I am much more open to applying for future co-ops and full-time positions in the public service. I also feel confident that I could succeed in a future role regarding sustainability and the environment.

FACES OF A SUSTAINABLE CO-OP:
Spencer Mumford (MBA) – Cryo Logistics Refrigeration Technologies

What was your co-op placement and what did the position entail?
My co-op placement was at Cryo Logistics Refrigeration Technologies. They are a net zero refrigeration company that utilizes CO₂ as the coolant for their transportation refrigeration. The CEO has a mission to reduce emissions and food waste in the industry and accomplishes this by eliminating temperature fluctuations during transportation. Unfortunately, the transportation logistics industry is laggard when it comes to embracing sustainable technologies, as most companies prefer to keep doing things the way they have always been done. My job was to evaluate the market and see what the opportunities are. Through this market research I built a business plan for them to expand their market presence.

What are some key things you learned from your placement?
My time at Cryo Logistics enlightened me on how to be a sustainable entrepreneur and what that entails. I learned how by embracing sustainable solutions, a business can qualify for increased government funding. With this funding and the increasing market desire for sustainability, I learned that sustainable solutions are not only feasible but can be successful as well.

One of the biggest hurdles for me was adapting to a science-focused environment. I do not have a science background and working in an environment where mostly everyone is a scientist presented an interesting challenge. I was thrown into an area that I had no familiarity with, and it forced me to learn on the go. I’m hoping to use this same technique in future careers, by challenging myself to step outside my comfort zone and expand my learning.
What was your co-op placement and what did the position entail?
I am a project analyst with the ministry of environment and climate change strategy in the strategic services division. I’m in the business improvement unit. There are two sides: corporate reporting and team coaching. I really love the job, because it is very dynamic, and I don’t do the same thing every day or week. My primary role is to assist teams throughout the ministry with team-building exercises. Additionally, the second half of my role required me to work on corporate reporting. I help by reeling in the information from different divisions, sorting through and putting into all that information into a shared document.

What are some key things you learned from your placement?
The primary skill that I advanced while working with the ministry was how to work in teams. Historically, I’ve always assumed that you need to make sacrifices to have a successful team. However, with the ministry of environment, I had a successful team experience that did not require me to sacrifice anything, and actually had me gain from my team. We all helped each other. This was largely due to the amazing passion that everyone at the ministry had to do their best every day. Working with these people did not feel like work.

Curiously, I decided to apply and get some insight into how things happen from within. I figured that the corporate reporting aspect of the job was immediately appealing, because I’ve always been a people person. Ultimately, I’ve heard a lot of great things about working for the public service from my friends, and I’m glad I made the jump. I’ve actually extended my co-op placement for an extra term, so that I can see my projects through to their end.

Did this placement inspire your future career path?
Yes, but not in the way you think. While I really enjoyed team coaching, I do not think I will pursue it as a career goal. That said, the skills I learned from being a team coach has opened up my comfort level with taking on leadership positions. Further, I feel like I’ve opened my eyes to a possible position with the public service. There are a lot of types of positions with the government that I never knew existed.
St Margaret’s School

How do business schools attract students who are interested in sustainability? By working with high school students who are learning about sustainable business models. On April 14, shortly after her Business and Sustainability course for third year BComs ended, professor Heather Ranson hosted a group of six young women from St. Margaret’s School in Victoria. The high school students came to UVic with their vice-principal and teacher to present their business concept of roasting and selling sustainable coffee. The group had been working on sourcing, commissioning a roaster, packaging and sales of a special blend of coffee to their school community for about three months. They learned about concept development, market research, sustainable packaging and waste management in their classes and presented a very well developed and tested concept to CSSI members Alex Berthin, Anni Kurta and Heather Ranson. The students then worked on a project for CSSI: developing a travel strategy to reduce carbon at the Gustavson School of Business. Students left the session excited to be part of a sustainable business school and CSSI left the session with fresh new ideas from the next generation of business students.

St Margaret’s School

Placemaking event

In July of 2022, Gustavson Master in Management (MM) students hosted the event ‘Many Faces for Better Places’. This outdoor event’s theme was “placemaking” and invited students and employees to turn an unused space on campus into a “place”. The following is an interview with Ameena Sarvath, one of the students organizing the event.

What does placemaking mean to you?
Placemaking for us means “changing spaces into places” for healthy and prosperous communities in our learning, working, and dwelling premises.

What inspired you and the other MM students to host this event?
Social sustainability and purposeful value creation were always the core of our MM program. As we traveled across the UK (on the international trip associated with this degree) and met some wonderful organizations carrying out innovations in the field of sustainability, we were inspired to throw an event that would contribute to the physical and mental well-being of the residents of Victoria. The answer was green spaces and a well-connected community. As we dug deeper, we stumbled upon the idea of placemaking where the communities come together and activate unused spaces.

Many Faces for Better Places

Join us on campus to talk about placemaking as a tool to promote better communities and organizations.

Was the event successful?
Yes! We think the event was an absolute success because we were able to get people from different walks of life, like people from Victoria placemaking community, to a normal school kid, our professors, our families, people from government organizations and private companies. Our goal was to create awareness, establish unlikely partnerships and open the floor for conversations around placemaking on campus, organizations and communities, which are the major circles of socialization in one’s lifetime. The David Turpin courtyard was lit up like never before with the active participation of our guests and they all loved it! So yes, it was a successful event. But if I were to say about what we would like to do more, then it would be to leave behind a legacy and make a permanent shift in the way the place looks with more time and resources!