

Full name(s) of VIU faculty involved in the project and their Department(s): Drs. Lindsay McCunn, Psychology and Don Alexander, Geography and Community Planning

Contact person email: Lindsay.McCunn@viu.ca

Award: Gather Grant

Number of undergraduate student(s) involved: 3

Number of graduate student(s) involved: 0

Number of community partner(s) involved: 0

Abstract for the project:

Gather Grant Application McCunn and Alexander

ABSTRACT (LESS THAN 300 WORDS)

The proposed event will be developed and held at Vancouver Island University as a workshop implemented by VIU's Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC). In 2018, the SAC held a workshop similar to the proposed event in support of VIU's core value of sustainability and well-being in its Academic Plan. Given the success of that event, the main goal of the 2019 workshop is to foster, and build upon, its momentum by affording an additional opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to meet and discuss some of the points raised at the 2018 event with respect to educational and research-oriented opportunities concerning sustainability at VIU. One objective of the workshop will be to act as a formal setting for participants to strategize building sustainability into courses offered at VIU, and to solidify knowledge about 'who is teaching what' with respect to sustainability at each of VIU's campuses. Another objective is to discuss and record strategies for creating a peer mentorship framework among faculty and students to foster growth concerning sustainability-related teaching and research. A third objective is to afford a place to discuss the feasibility of developing a summer institute of society and sustainability at VIU. Initial planning has begun to develop a model in which a 5-day program at VIU's Nanaimo campus is offered such that faculty from a variety of disciplines teach and interact with students, community members, and professionals about sustainability, climate change, and how these topics intersect with the social, political, and economic facets of society. The workshop will afford rich qualitative data from a variety of VIU stakeholders and will be analyzed and communicated formally with the university, as well as with the SAC, to make informed, evidence-based decisions about how to highlight sustainability across curricula on all VIU campuses.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (4 PAGES MAX)

The proposed event will be developed and held at Vancouver Island University (VIU) as a workshop implemented by VIU's Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC). In February of 2018, the SAC held a workshop similar to the proposed event in support of VIU's core value of sustainability and well-being in its Academic Plan. The title of the 2018 workshop was "Sustainability Across Curricula;" the event we are proposing to occur in February, 2019 will expand upon the rich ideas and insights that emerged from the over 30 faculty, students, and staff who actively participated. Indeed, a presentation of knowledge gathered from the 2018 event has been accepted to the annual international conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic, and Social Sustainability scheduled to be held in Vancouver in January, 2019. We have also submitted to present at the BC Land Summit in Vancouver in May, 2019 (we are awaiting confirmation of acceptance). Arguably, we can expect that a qualitative and systematic analysis of ideas shared at the proposed event in 2019 will be similarly mobilized in academic, public, and professional arenas.

Given the success of the workshop in 2018, the main goal of the 2019 workshop is to foster, and build upon, its momentum by affording an additional opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to meet and discuss some of the points raised at the 2018 event with respect to educational and research-oriented opportunities concerning sustainability at VIU. Thus, one objective of the workshop will be to act as a formal setting for participants to strategize building sustainability into courses offered at VIU, and to solidify knowledge about 'who is teaching what' with respect to sustainability at each of VIU's campuses. Another objective of the workshop is to discuss and record strategies for creating a peer mentorship framework among faculty and students to foster growth concerning sustainability-related teaching and research.

A third objective of the workshop is to afford a place to discuss the feasibility of developing a summer institute of society and sustainability at VIU. Drs. Alexander and McCunn are in the process of planning a model in which a 5-day program at VIU's Nanaimo campus is offered such that faculty from a variety of disciplines teach and interact with students, community members, and professionals about sustainability, climate change, and how these topics intersect with the social, political, and economic facets of society. A summer institute centering on society and sustainability may attract participation from a number of sectors and, thus, become a new revenue stream for VIU. It may also raise VIU's profile as an institution that capitalizes on its interdisciplinary expertise within a specific geographical context, as well as the energy and motivation shown by faculty and students who wish to be a part of a cohesive new program to communicate sustainability at local levels and beyond.

The workshop would also draw connections between teaching sustainability and VIU's commitment to reconciliation with First Nations, its policy of making post-secondary education accessible to First Nations students, and its use of the expertise of local First Nations elders. Already, courses taught at VIU focusing on sustainability exist -- some are co-taught by elders and regular faculty. In addition, field trips and field courses incorporate First Nations content and practical work in some geography courses, and in the work of the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute (MABRRI), focus on assisting First Nations communities in a practical manner. Each of these elements may act as examples for discussion.

VIU is actively linking itself with the UN's sustainability development goals (SDGs). These 17 goals have been put forward by the UN to guide and unify governments and institutions as they make decisions that affect social and environmental changes on a global scale. The SDGs encompass the environmental, social, economic, and governance related aspects of sustainability,

and both reflect curricular topics already being emphasized at VIU, as well as areas where we can expand. It is timely and prudent for an innovative and forward-looking university to support events and programs initiated by faculty that utilize the SDGs, as well as the breadth of cultural knowledge proximal to all of VIU's campuses. Doing so would undoubtedly help to create a novel and unique program for VIU to market and expand upon in the future. This, along with the positive feedback we have encountered during initial conversations with faculty in programs such as nursing, business, psychology, geography, and geology, may afford a strong starting place for conversations about the feasibility of a summer institute at the proposed workshop.

The event's audience would likely consist of between 40-60 individuals. Faculty at VIU who wish to teach and research topics to do with sustainability and society, as well as those who wish to see such topics receive more attention at the institutional level, may choose to attend. Students will also be encouraged to attend and share their visions of what a future summer institute of society and sustainability could be like if it utilized, and augmented, existing connections across faculties. Having a student voice about other topics at the workshop, especially concerning the development of a peer mentoring framework, would also be valuable. Community members and professional stakeholders may also attend to offer feedback on the feasibility and content of a summer institute.

This potential (and diverse) audience would be engaged first through a keynote speaker at the start of the event. We have contacted the Director of the University of Victoria's (UVic) Human Dimensions of Climate Change interdisciplinary minor/certificate program, Dr. Martha McMahon, to ask programmatic advice and we may invite her to speak if the event is funded. Indeed, compensation for Dr. McMahon (or another speaker if she is unavailable at the time of the event) is reflected in the budget found in this application. Reaching out to those at UVic who

are already working with an interdisciplinary, revenue-creating model for a similar program helps VIU better connect with proximal institutions and will undoubtedly help drive outward-facing discussions that combine topics having to do with humanities, politics, the social sciences, as well as the natural sciences.

Although the agenda of the workshop has not been finalized, we expect that audience members would also be engaged during a panel discussion of speakers who have experience teaching in teams about concise topics that are of interest to both university students as well as community members and professionals. Possible speakers may be educators and researchers affiliated with UVic's Human Dimensions of Climate Change interdisciplinary minor/certificate program, the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium, and from VIU itself. Finally, a data-gathering activity, such as a World Café, would also be undertaken at the event to collect feedback and ideas from participants in order to inform decisions about the topics addressed at the workshop. Key questions asked during this activity would centre on strategizing ways to insert sustainability into curricula at VIU by discussing peer mentorship among faculty and students, as well as what participants believe might help or hinder the development and operation of a summer institute in society and sustainability at VIU.

We anticipate that the proposed event will afford rich, qualitative data for an undergraduate research assistant, supervised by Dr. McCunn in her Environmental Psychology Research Lab in the department of psychology, to systematically content analyze. Emerging themes and categories can then be communicated formally with the university, as well as with the SAC, to make informed, evidence-based decisions about how to highlight sustainability across curricula on all VIU campuses.

BUDGET AND JUSTIFICATION (1 PAGE MAXIMUM; \$3,000 MAXIMUM)

ITEM	JUSTIFICATION	DOLLAR AMOUNT
Keynote speaking compensation/honorarium	We may ask a Director from the Human Dimensions of Climate Change program at the University of Victoria to speak, but we may also invite someone else from another institution to speak and we would like to ensure that they are appropriately compensated for their time and effort in terms of preparation time	\$100
Keynote hotel cost (1 night in downtown Nanaimo)	We would like the keynote speaker to stay overnight to apply less pressure on their travel time	\$200
Keynote gas mileage	Because we intend to invite someone local (i.e., on Vancouver Island), we would like to help pay for their gas mileage	\$50
Keynote food expenses	The event would have a catered lunch through VIU's food services but he or she could be compensated for other meals	\$50
Research Assistant time	An undergraduate research assistant would need to be hired to undertake the content analyses of all qualitative data produced at the event. Dr. McCunn is the Director of the Environmental Psychology Research Lab and has access to students who have been trained to conduct this analysis.	\$800
Event catering	We will need to have the event catered by VIU's food services. This value is slightly above what we paid last year (\$722.29) because we expect more people to participate	\$750
Poster printing and other advertising	We would like to advertise the event using posters around campus and in the community as well as in environmentally-friendly ways (e.g., online)	\$50
Conference fee[s]	Abstracts using data from the workshop held in 2018 have been accepted to conferences but we have found the conference fees to be steep and we are often unable to attend without financial support from VIU. Therefore, we have decided to build in this form of support in this application.	\$1000
	TOTAL	\$3,000

PROJECT TEAM AND ROLES (1 PAGE MAXIMUM)

The project team consists primarily of the co-Chairs of Vancouver Island University's (VIU) Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC): Drs. Don Alexander and Lindsay McCunn. Dr. Alexander has been a Professor of geography at VIU for fourteen and a half years and has published extensively in the areas of land use planning, smart growth, and place-making. Dr. Alexander is also affiliated with, and teaches in, the Masters of Community Planning program at VIU. Dr. McCunn has been a Professor of psychology at VIU since August, 2017. She is an environmental psychologist and currently serves as the Chair of the environmental psychology section of the Canadian Psychological Association. She also sits on the board of the *Journal of Environmental Psychology*. Both Drs. Alexander and McCunn have co-Chaired the SAC since the summer of 2018 and, with others on the SAC, implemented a workshop in 2018 titled "Sustainability Across Curricula." It is this previous workshop that has, in part, inspired the event outlined in this application. Other members of the SAC are also part of the team that will develop and undertake the 2019 event, including Drs. Nadine Cruikshanks and David Paterson. Margo Croft, MA, provides administrative support to the SAC and has the capability to be responsible for the logistics and administrative details of event planning. Other faculty members have expressed interest in developing a summer institute in society and sustainability at VIU, such as Martin Martens (business), Sandra Johnstone (Geology), Jeff Lewis (Geography), Lynn Rollison (Nursing), and Maureen O'Connor (Nursing). Although not formally part of SAC, Dr. Wendy Simms also played a significant role in helping to organize the workshop in 2018, serving as a panelist. Because those on the SAC were able to successfully deliver a workshop of similar stature on the Nanaimo campus in 2018, we are convinced that the team will once again host a bigger and better workshop in the spring of 2019.