

DRAFT: Terms of Reference CUSP Steering Committee

Preamble:

The idea for a Canadian Alliance of College and University Sustainability Professionals (CUSP) was formed at an Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) 2008 conference session chaired by UBC (Appendix A). Further development of the organizational mission was discussed at the Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO) session, Leadership for Sustainability in Higher Education, in March 2009. Through its membership CUSP has representation from almost all provinces. The network has a Steering Committee which serves as connection to regional campus sustainability networks¹.

1. Mandate of the Steering Committee

The CUSP steering committee aims to guide activities of the network and increased the number of network members. The objectives of the Steering Committee include:

- 1.1 Determine a long-term organizational structure.
- 1.2 Determine a structure for long-term financing.
- 1.3 Develop and facilitate a communications framework.
 - 1.3.1 Peer to Peer Communication: Provide platform for best practice and information exchange.
 - 1.3.2 Establish the network as hub for information flow through local, provincial/territorial governments and national organizations.
- 1.4 Develop strategy for membership expansion and alliances.

2. Objectives of the CUSP

2.1 Facilitate Peer to Peer Communication: Provide a platform for best practice and information exchange

- Be an information exchange resource for a Canada-wide network for College and University Sustainability Professionals.
- Educate peers via regular webinars to exchange information on sustainability successes, current initiatives and challenges that face post-secondary institutions across the country.
- Facilitating information sharing and data gathering through electronic mediums such as list-serve, a social networking platform, survey software, and resource directory and web presence.

¹ Ontario Sustainability Coordinators Association (colleges and universities); Atlantic Universities and Colleges Sustainability Network ; BC Campus Sustainability Working Group; CREPUQ (Quebec)

2.2 Offer face-to-face networking opportunities

- Coordinating face-to-face networking opportunities at existing events such as AASHE and CAUBO conferences.

2.3 Support information flow through local, national and provincial governments and organizations

- Championing policy and programs that impact members to government and key organizations (like AASHE)

2.4 Build on existing Sustainability Alliances

- Create linkages with existing networks and alliances such as AASHE, ACUPPC, CAUBO ...

3. Organizational Framework

The CUSP Steering Committee is an informal, flexible group formed from representation of regional networks across Canada. Each member is expected to act as liaison between CUSP and existing regional networks. The Steering Committee meets via quarterly conference calls. The steering committee self selects a Chair or rotates the Chair position. The Chair is responsible for hosting the quarterly teleconference calls. All other work is divided amongst Steering Committee members.

3.1 Steering Committee Members (2010/2011)

Western Canada

University of Northern British Columbia: Danielle Smyth, Sustainability Coordinator

University of Alberta: Len Sereda, Director, Energy Management and Sustainable Operations

Central Canada: **TBD**

Eastern Canada

University of Toronto, Ontario: Beth Savan, Chair of the Steering Committee: Director, Sustainability Office; Ashley Taylor, Sustainability Coordinator, Sustainability Office

McGill University, Quebec: Kathleen Ng, Environmental Officer, Sustainability Office - Campus and Space Planning

Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia: Rochelle Owen, Director, Sustainability Office

Northern Canada: **TBD**

4. Actions 2010/2011

4.1 Organizational Stability

- Explore opportunities to partner with existing organizations to advance mutual objectives and provide administrative resources for the network
- Recruit new board members

4.2 Communications framework

- Develop a communications plan to reach new members and share information
- Promote CUSP on individual university websites.

4.3 Website development and webinars

- Organize three webinars per year - Webinar content based on CUSP member survey result
- Develop a web presence

4.4 Expand the network

- Expand to representation from all provinces and territories

4.5 Meeting

- Potential meeting of CUSP members at:
 - AASHE conference in October 2010 in Denver²
 - NECSC conference in October 2010 in Montreal³

4.6 Collaboration with AASHE

4.7 STARS working group

² <http://www.aashe.org/conf2010>

³ <http://www.mcgill.ca/sustainability/events/necsc>

Appendix A

History of the Committee

(from the original proposal to the AASHE conference)

October 15th, 2008

Proposal for a Network of Canadian Post-Secondary Sustainability Offices

There are 107 universities in Canada and approximately 300 colleges. Increasingly, campus sustainability is a strategic priority in focus. While some have been actively pursuing the sustainability agenda for many years, other universities and colleges are just beginning down the path.

Throughout 2008/2009, the Presidents of Canadian universities and colleges will be invited to sign the University and College Presidents' Climate Change Statement of Action for Canada (Statement) found in Appendix A. In March 2008, six BC University Presidents signed on to the Statement. This fall, the University of Calgary signed on as well. The Statement expands on the successful American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), which now has over 550 signatories that have committed to becoming climate neutral. Like the ACUPCC, the Canadian Statement focuses on both the responsibility of universities and colleges to reduce emissions, as well as opportunities to accelerate larger solutions beyond campus.

University Presidential recruitment to the Canadian Statement of Action has occurred through Presidential associations both at the provincial and national levels (G-13 and AUCC). Currently, the BC University President's Council (TUPC) is collecting signatures.

The following proposal creates a formal Network provisionally called the ***Canadian University and College Sustainability Alliance (The Alliance)***. This preliminary concept piece has been drafted based on discussions with various campus sustainability offices in Canada.

The Alliance will bring together Canadian Campus Sustainability staff to support mutual initiatives that build knowledge, create capacity and leverage up the role of Canadian Universities and Colleges in accelerating sustainability and climate solutions within their own institutions and broader jurisdictions. The Alliance will provide specific support to the Statement of Action in the first instance.

Areas of Action

The Alliance is proposed to undertake initiatives within four areas of activity:

- 1. Peer to Peer Communication:** Initially an electronic discussion list will be set up to facilitate exchange specific to the climate agenda. Provincial and or regional based working groups of Sustainability Offices are self organizing and will become an important vehicle platform on which to build.
- 2. Best Practice Exchange:** An interim webpage will be set up that identifies the Alliance members with contact information. Signatories of the Statement will be identified. It is proposed that regular video-/web based conferences be organized to exchange information on sustainability successes, current initiatives and challenges that face post-secondary institutions across the country.

3. Continuous Education: We propose a national conference which brings together campus sustainability leadership to exchange ideas on strategic issues facing campuses, and identifying opportunities to work together share information on key sustainability issues/approaches.⁴

4. Information Flow through Local Organizations: National and provincial associations of universities and colleges provide an ideal venue for regular tracking and discussion related to the implementation of the Statement. We would aim to set this up in each province or nationally.

5. Build on existing Sustainability Alliances: Creating linkages with existing networks and alliances. For example, the Post Secondary Transportation Demand Management Alliance (PSTDM).

Organizational Framework

The Alliance will build on the work of AASHE. It is not intended to provide an AASHE alternative but is rather meant to complement and augment the AASHE network. One option could be to become a Canadian Chapter of AASHE. There are two function areas for which AASHE has developed services that we may use, namely:

Progress Reporting: AASHE collects data and reports progress by the signatories of the ACUPCC, and as such the Alliance will need to determine a similar mechanism or approach or request that AASHE provide this support.

Resource Development Support for Capacity Building: It would not make sense to re-invent the wheel but rather to use the extensive online resources developed by AASHE.

There may be other possible organization options for delivery Canadian alliance services such as

- i. Led by a particular university
- ii. A stand alone association
- iii. An association housed within a Canadian national organization such as CABOU

Canadian Roundtable at AASHE Conference

These ideas will be discussed at a Canadian Roundtable at the annual conference of AASHE in November 2008 (see Appendix B.)

⁴ It is noted that CAUBO and the Conference Board of Canada's Quality Network of Universities will host events in Toronto, March 2009.