

## The University of British Columbia President's Declaration on the Climate Emergency

In declaring a climate emergency, the University recognizes:

- That the climate crisis is posing and will continue to pose extensive and disastrous threats to peoples' lives and livelihoods both locally and globally, contributing to famine, migration, and disease worldwide, including impact on individual physical and mental well-being.
- The need for drastic emissions reductions and a decisive shift away from fossil fuels toward alternative energy sources, as laid out by the science of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#), the [UN Production Gap Report](#) and the [Paris Agreement](#), to be achieved via rapid and far-reaching transformations across all economic sectors.
- That UBC as a public institution is a recognized leader in taking action to combat climate change and has a mandate to effect change beyond our institutional boundaries, with a fundamental responsibility, as outlined by our purpose statement, to advance a sustainable and just society across British Columbia, Canada and the world.
- That addressing the climate crisis is critical to the University's key functions of research, learning and engagement as UBC strives to prepare students for their futures and conduct leading research on pressing societal issues.
- That UBC as a Living Laboratory has incorporated sustainability into many aspects of its operations through construction, procurement, and service delivery, and as an early adopter of low-carbon solutions, new technologies and systems into city-scale solutions.
- That UBC's education, research, and innovation capacity in sustainability is creating breakthrough solutions for the most pressing challenges of the climate emergency and transition to a fossil fuel free economy.
- That meaningful climate action must take active steps to support and amplify Indigenous Peoples' human rights. This includes respecting Indigenous self-determination and implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). British Columbia has become the first province to adopt and commit to implementing UNDRIP, which outlines the minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous Peoples. As an institution located within BC on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the *xwməθkwəy'əm* (Musqueam) and Syilx (Okanagan) Peoples, the University has a responsibility to align its policies, actions, and investments with UNDRIP and the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.
- That Indigenous and marginalized communities bear the harmful impacts of fossil fuel extraction and climate destruction while being least responsible for the global acceleration of the climate crisis.
- That strong support for climate justice has been demonstrated by the UBC community, with over 5,000 members of the campus community participating in the September 27th Climate Strike and over 1,600 signing onto the open letter calling on UBC to declare a climate emergency, in addition to decisive student and faculty referendums in support of fossil fuel divestment.
- That the UBC Board of Governors' new Sustainability Committee, to be formed on December 5, 2019, includes in its terms of reference the commitment to fully explore divestment from fossil fuels and support for sustainable investment. The University administration is committed to engaging with the Board of Governors on this and areas that encompass sustainability and a response to the climate emergency.

Therefore, we join with other universities and communities in declaring a climate emergency, while recognizing that this emergency has been experienced for decades by communities around the world, in particular by Indigenous Peoples. UBC acknowledges the urgency of the climate crisis and will directly face its challenges. At this pivotal moment, the decisions and actions we take today will reverberate beyond our own borders and lifetimes.

To move UBC to further action, with this declaration I am establishing a climate emergency community engagement process. The purpose of this consultation will be to provide the UBC community with opportunities to come together to consider the full scope of our impact and align UBC's emissions reductions plans with 1.5°C; to embrace the need for a managed decline of fossil fuel use and a rapid and just transition to a sustainable economy that also aligns with UNDRIP; to infuse climate justice throughout our activities, priorities, and decision-making frameworks; and to support community coping and adaptation in the face of climate crisis.

In the new year, the President's Office will launch a community engagement process to inform our collective response to the climate emergency. The process must exemplify dignity, justice, and equity. In doing so, we will create intentional spaces for UBC's marginalized communities on campus and centre their voices in the development of recommendations.

It is essential that this process engenders transparency and accountability, connects to our Indigenous Strategic Plan and Inclusion Action Plan, and commits to charting a globally ambitious future for climate action on campus. This process will offer three modes by which the community can provide input and initiate action:

1. Conversations within and across academic departments, campus communities, and staff units.
2. Larger campus-wide town hall events to gather input and encourage dialogue across communities.
3. A resource website for community members to submit input and ideas. It will also house updates, highlights, and further information on the climate emergency engagement process.

To oversee this process, I will establish a Climate Emergency Advisory Committee that is both intergenerational and representative of the diversity of UBC's community, as called for in the [UBC Climate Strike Open Letter](#). I will announce publicly the membership of the Advisory Committee once it has been assembled. This Committee will oversee the community consultation process to ensure that it is broadly engaging; adopts a wide scope; incorporates the latest research in science of climate change and adaptation, and the engineering of practical solutions; embeds climate justice; and is inclusive of all members of the community, particularly the most marginalized.

By late spring 2020, the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee will consolidate input from both in-person and online consultations into a public report that defines the pillars of climate emergency and outlines recommended actions. The report will be submitted to the new Sustainability Committee of the UBC Board of Governors for consideration. Recommendations will include but not limited to:

- I. Increasing ambition and materially accelerating timelines for existing actions under the UBC Strategic Plan and Climate Action Plan, including adding new actions to help reduce GHG emissions beyond UBC's current climate targets, such as emissions from travel and food.
- II. Improving sustainability criteria for investments and asset management by UBC, including concrete commitments to move towards full divestment from fossil fuels within UBC's controlled endowments.
- III. Embedding climate justice into other UBC wide policies and plans that have not previously used a climate justice lens, such as policies related to health and wellbeing and investments.
- IV. Enacting climate solutions that reflect our commitment to UNDRIP and the human rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- V. Identifying the funding and resources required to support departments and campus communities to implement their own actions to address the climate emergency.
- VI. Building just and inclusive climate solutions that work towards dismantling historic and existing barriers faced by marginalized communities.
- VII. Incorporating further actions stemming from the community engagement process and ensuring that reporting on progress is easily accessible, transparent, and accountable.