

**ABSTRACT
PARALLEL WORKING SESSION**

SUSTAINABILITY

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Transforming the academy to deliver education for sustainability

In the twenty first century every person in a leadership role in society will need to understand issues of sustainability. Universities must find ways to provide this type of education to all students, whatever their disciplinary or professional interest.

Universities have an important role to play in achieving a just and sustainable society; through their research and teaching and increasingly by acting as models of sustainability in the community. Higher education has the responsibility to impart both the moral vision and technical knowledge needed to ensure a high quality of life for future generations and ecological integrity. But universities have in fact been criticized for their contribution to current global environmental problems by producing leaders incapable of addressing what are now seen as critical sustainability issues. Indeed the segregated nature of academic study at most universities has posed barriers to creating the kind of innovative cross-campus interdisciplinary programs necessary to prepare graduates to become the future leaders needed to address the complex challenges we face.

Dalhousie University, a leading Canadian comprehensive, doctoral university recognizes the role it can play in preparing society for collective action towards sustainability. It recently launched a new College of Sustainability and a novel model for interdisciplinary education which are seen as breakthroughs in education for sustainability. The new program is available to students across all Faculties. This presentation describes the academic and administrative model and the process which led to its successful implementation. The College of Sustainability at Dalhousie was recognized in 2009 by UNESCO as one of 25 "World Good Practices in Education for Sustainable Development", short listed for an Innovative Educational Practice Award at the first World Innovation Summit on Education, Doha, and is profiled in the forthcoming book Transformative Eco-Education for Human Survival in the 21st Century by Lin and Oxford.