



University Alliance for Sustainability

The Innovation Potential of International Networks: Fostering Sustainability in HEIs Through International Cooperation

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Overview

- 1. The Role of Universities to Foster Sustainable Development**
- 2. Networking as an Innovation Factor**
- 3. “University Alliance for Sustainability”**
- 4. Innovation Potential: Best Practice Transfer from Partner Universities**
- 5. Facilitating Exchange: Networking Events**
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THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES TO FOSTER SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



“[Sustainability] is a problem in which the discovery and dissemination of knowledge will play a critical role. And it is a problem that must be faced ... in ways that universities are uniquely suited to model.”

President Drew Gilpin Faust, Harvard University

Universities

- are focused on research and teaching
- train the world's future leaders
- are public institutions, or have a public mandate
- are not directly tied to financial or political gain
- are single decision-makers and often owner-occupiers
- Universities have the capacity to test systems and technologies, and to advance innovative solutions to global challenges in ways that companies and municipalities cannot
- Universities may play a pivotal role in fostering social learning processes through education, research and community engagement

Networking as an Innovation Factor

Aims for networking are multidimensional (see Sliwka, 2003):

- *A political function:* Networks can serve as lobby groups for innovative ideas.
- *An information function:* Networking allows for the rapid exchange of information relevant for individual and organizational development processes.
- *A psychological function:* Innovators are often isolated within their organizations. Networking provides them with opportunities for collaboration and exchange and thus can empower innovative individuals.
- *A skills function:* Networking provides innovators with opportunities for learning skills from their colleagues.

Networking among institutions and individuals in education is seen as a powerful stimulus to organizational learning and development.

Networking - Challenges

- Stability of networks varies considerably, because of their loosely-coupled nature, they are relatively fragile social organisms
- Experience often described as doubled-edged => stimulating and frustrating (Sliwka, 2003)
- Management structures and institutionalized leadership for ongoing participation is needed
- In international networks mutual social stimulus and control are limited
- Trust is a precondition of “give and take”
- => trust and social competence need to be deliberately developed through training and team-building activities (Sliwka, 2003)

University Alliance for Sustainability

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Core partners: Freie Universität Berlin, Germany
Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
Peking University, China
Saint Petersburg State University, Russia
University of British Columbia, Canada



Guiding Principle

- **Whole Institution Approach:** implies the placement of sustainability issues in all structural and thematic entities of the universities, going beyond the usual segmentation of different parts of a higher education institution.

Annual topics

- Education for Sustainable Development (2015)
- Governance of Sustainable Development (2016)
- Societal Transformation to Sustainability (2017)
- Science and Sustainability (2018)

Mission and Objectives of the UAS

- intensifying the partners' efforts in researching, teaching, and managing sustainable development by
 - **researching** the interlinked aspects of sustainable development, particularly in the fields of ESD, societal challenges, governance and other related aspects in all scientific disciplines
 - creating a **network of both established and emerging researchers and practitioners** in various fields of sustainability that spans disciplines, institutions, and cultures
 - offering students **international study opportunities**, joint teaching modules and – in the long run – joint degrees with a special focus on sustainability
 - fostering **awareness** and providing basic knowledge as well as latest research results on sustainable development
 - **exchanging good practice**, developing joint policies, and acting as roles models in the field of sustainable campus management & outreach activities

Overview of measures

Stakeholder Mobility (both ways):

- For senior researchers, PhD candidates, students and administrative staff
- Volunteer Swap allows members of student initiatives to connect
- Increase awareness of the importance of international exchange esp. among operational staff

Conferences and Workshops (in Berlin)

- Annual Spring Campus conference with stakeholders from all status groups
- Teaching Incubators for the advancement of sustainability curricula
- Management Incubators for sharing good practice and developing joint procedures
- Research Incubators for developing new joint projects
- => + strategy meetings, research and management workshops at partner universities

Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

- Program management in Berlin and coordinators at all partner universities
- UAS Working Paper Series to disseminate first research results
- Joint website and communication outlets

Learning from Best Practice Examples

All UAS partner universities share experiences and lessons learned from projects, initiatives or governance structures in the network



■ University of British Columbia

- UBC Sustainability Initiative (USI) aims to create institutional culture change
- Use campus as living lab and buildings as research instruments
- Teaching and learning vision: Integration of sustainability curriculum across the university in “SEEDS Program” and “Sustainability Pathways” (UBC Sustainability Academic Strategy, 2009)



Learning from Best Practice Examples

■ Freie Universität Berlin

- 74%

IN GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS
SINCE 2000/2001 (incl. renewable electricity
procurement)

-31 %

REDUCTIONS IN WATER
USE SINCE 2004

-23%

REDUCTIONS IN TOTAL ENERGY
USE SINCE 2000/2001

- Sustainability Mission Statement
- Participation: sustainability teams, steering committee, initiative Sustain It!
- Annual efficiency programs for buildings
- Green IT program
- Recycling paper policy
- Urban gardening projects
- Training for lecturers on how to include sustainability in their courses





■ Hebrew University of Jerusalem

- Green Campus certification and management
- Sustainability guidelines for procurement
- Paper as an educational tool to teach basic concepts in environmentalism (reduce , recycle, re-use)
- Recycle vs. Reducing- change the default of printers to two-sides printing



■ Peking University

- Student inspired “yellow bike” share model implemented on campus (grew to a start-up working beyond campus today)
- Project courses in industrial design: students work on innovative solutions for sustainability issues on campus
- Protection and study of biodiversity on campus
- Energy-saving awareness is enhanced among the staff and students



■ St. Petersburg State University

- Research Park of Saint-Petersburg State University provides modern infrastructure for research and education
- Summer field trips and excursions for students => applied research
- Waste collection and recycling project in student dorm “EkoPUNKt”
- Environmental education of students and staff; ecological events
- Cooperation with third parties



Facilitating Exchange

- UAS offers different opportunities to enhance bi- and multilateral networking, e.g. workshops, incubators and individual stakeholder mobility
- Whole institution approach and interdisciplinary aspiration => stakeholders across the university are invited to engage in the network activities
- Activities culminate in annual Spring Campus Conference
- Annual topic builds the frame for discussion in the Opening Day
- Key event for best practice exchange and development as well as follow-up of joint project ideas

Spring Campus Conference

April 9-13, 2018 in Berlin

- **one-week event under annual topic, composed of:**
- **Public Lectures:** half-day lectures by experts in the field
- **Research Workshops** to develop joint research projects
- **Management Workshop** to develop an understanding of each other's policies and develop and implement joint ideas and practices
- **PhD Workshop:** intensive training for doctoral students



Spring Campus, April 9-13, 2018 in Berlin

„Moving Beyond the Ivory Tower: How Science and Universities Contribute to the Sustainability Transformation“

Monday, April 9	Tuesday, April 10					Wednesday, April 11					Thursd Apr 12	Friday, Apr 13
	Plenary Session					Plenary Session					PhD Confer ence	PhD Confer ence
	Coffee Break					Coffee Break						
	Workshop I	Workshop II	Workshop III	Workshop IV	Workshop V	Workshop I	Workshop II	Workshop III	Workshop IV	Workshop V		
Registration	Lunch					Lunch						
Welcome Address						Excursion						
	Coffee Break											
Keynote Speeches												
Discussion Reception and Dinner	Campus Tour and evening program					Farewell Dinner						

Challenges and Conclusion

- Extend existing strategic partnerships in the field of sustainability
 - Communication routines have to be consolidated
 - Coordinators and committed key stakeholders at each university need to be identified and integrated into the program
 - Mobility program and individual research projects need to be tied into the wider framework of the program
 - Establish a framework for network and connected projects that are sustainable
- *We will use the multidimensional opportunities of this network to trigger innovation in sustainable development both at our home university and in the overall sustainability discourse of universities.*



Thank you for your attention!



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