

# UBC Geography Climate Action Plan

*Passed at department meeting, Feb 27. 2020*

Initial actions planned for March 2020

Status of item as of April 2021

## Teaching

- Host a departmental workshop for instructors and students on coping with [climate change anxiety](#), with resources and best practices.
  - *Student services team will put together a workshop for October 2020*
  - *Inquire with CTLT, UBC Student Services, and [UBC Climate Hub](#) to compile information for instructors to include in their course syllabus. This will include student resources on coping with anxiety issues that may arise around the discussion of climate change and other uncertainties.*
  - *2020/2021: Hosted or co-sponsored 3 events, all open to the public, advertised on social media*
    - *Two about Eco-Anxiety; co-hosted/sponsored by ClimateHub and CCUB/SEEDS (held in GEOS 102)*
    - *One on Energy Transitions featuring four experts/speakers (in GEOG 313)*
- Introduce a [joint human and physical geography graduate seminar](#) with some focus on climate change.
  - *Planned for September 2020*
  - *2020/2021: M Koppes & J Sundberg offered a joint human -- physical geography graduate seminar with a Climate Change focus titled GEOB 504A: Perspectives on the Anthropocene*
- Develop a new undergraduate course in [climate justice](#).

- *Forward a syllabus this spring (2020) with aim for course publication in the 2021/22 UBC Calendar*
- *2020/2021: This course has been developed as part of the Proposed GEOG-EAOS Climate Certificate currently undergoing consultations.*
- Explore development of an [interdisciplinary minor in climate change](#) with the Faculty of Arts.
  - *Work to be initiated in 2020, in close conversation with relevant departments and faculties like EOAS, IRES, etc. Coordinated by student services, head of department, undergraduate committee*
  - *2020/21: A proposed Climate Certificate under a USI Grant to J. Dempsey (GEOG) and T. Ivanochko (EAOS), has been developed and is undergoing consultations*
- Create a [climate change studies concentration](#) to provide students with a pathway through their existing Geography degrees that can focus on climate change.
  - *Placed on website and advertised to students by end of summer 2020, publish in calendar in 2021*
  - *2020/21: See Certificate mentioned above*
- Offer a 4th year seminar focused on [climate-related research projects](#) in 2021/22, in collaboration with the [UBC Climate Hub](#).
  - *Faculty in discussion with UBC Climate Hub and [SEEDS](#)*
- Include [climate change relevant case studies](#) in existing courses when relevant.
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty and sessional lecturers*
  - *2020/21: Faculty survey to follow-up during 2021/22*

## Research

- Half day [climate change department retreat](#) in spring 2020: presentations on what we are teaching and researching and how we might work together.
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty and postdoctoral fellows*
  - *2020/21: On hold due to COVID-19*
- Pursue an '[Excellence](#)' chair to focus on climate change studies, with potential focus on migration, energy transitions, climate justice, water and food security, landscape impacts.
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty and Head*

- *2020/21: Job search in place for new hire in Migration*
- Host **one colloquium event per year via video conferencing** to demonstrate low-carbon research dissemination. The event will be recorded and made available online.
  - *Relevant Actors: Colloquium committee*
  - *2020/21: All colloquiums were held over video conferencing due to COVID-19*
- **One colloquium panel per term** for the next three years will be directly related to climate change issues. This panel will be hosted within an undergraduate class, recorded and made available online.
  - *First event to be held in Geography 102 in Fall 2020*
  - *2020/21: Colloquium committee featured climate expert Rob Jackson for a talk titled: Restoring the Atmosphere*
- Pursue a **climate justice position / Indigenous environmental justice position**
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty and Head*
  - *2020/21: The Climate Certificate Leads advocated to the University to prioritize hiring of Indigenous faculty members with a signed letter*
- Fundraise for a climate change research or undergraduate scholarship with **focus on supporting BIPOC students** or on communities impacted by climate change and/or by climate change mitigation.
  - *Head and relevant faculty in conversation with Arts and beyond*
  - *2020/21: The Climate Action / Emergency Committees in GEOG & EAOS, in collaboration with the Climate Certificate working group, set up a fund via the UBC Development Office to cover 18 credits for one student/year pursuing the Certificate. Fundraising to begin contingent upon Certificate approval, early 2022*

## Travel

- Encourage department members to **reduce travel-related emissions** through information about alternatives.
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty and staff*
  - *2020/21: Geography is assisting in an EAOS initiative for student-led research to investigate and provide recommendations*

- Encourage department members to [reduce commuting emissions](#) by supporting carpooling, bike commuting and revisions in teaching schedule.
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty and staff*
  - *2020/21: Due to COVID-19 faculty members utilized virtual/remote options in their teaching that led to reduced commuting emissions*
  - *2021/22: CAC members working with other units in the Inter-departmental Climate Committee to pursue a remote workday*
- Send a department letter to UBC, Metro Vancouver and Translink to pressure for increased bus capacity and [expansion of rapid transit to UBC](#).
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty and staff*
  - *2020/21: [Letter sent to Transit Authorities](#)*
- Advocate for UBC-wide changes that [support a low-carbon research environment](#), including revision of merit and tenure criteria to support a low-carbon research footprint
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty and Head*
  - *2019/20: Department signed on to [this open letter](#)*
- Advocate for scientific societies (AAG, CAG, AGU) to move to bi-annual meetings.
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty*
  - *2020/21: Many societies are moving to virtual attendance options due to COVID-19; CAC to draft some communications with eg., AAG, CAG and AGU, in response to the resumption of in person activities*

## Advocacy & Communication

- Dedicate a [section of the department website](#) to climate issues; hosting information, research and a list of faculty researching climate change.
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty and staff*
  - *2020/21: Working with Communications on recently launched Climate webpage*
- Incentivize [public communication](#) by faculty on climate change.
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty and Head*
  - *2020/21: Climate Website features faculty/students climate-change related research*

- *Conducted interviews and collected several profiles of graduate and undergraduate students involved in climate action or research*

## Building / Facilities

- Invest in [further video conferencing facilities](#) in the building, including in room 229 and room 100.
  - *Submit within Academic Equipment Fund, May 2020*
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty, staff, Head*
  - *2020/21: Largely implemented as a result of COVID-19 structural changes*
    - *Full video conferencing available in several classrooms eg, 229, 100, 212, & 200*
- Purchase a [Zoom subscription](#) for department use.
  - *Relevant Actors: Staff and Head*
  - *2020/21: Implemented as a result of COVID-19 structural changes*
- Explore [covered bike storage](#) for the building.
  - *Relevant Actors: Staff and Head*
  - *2020/21: Investigated in 2021, but progress put on hold due to remote nature of COVID-19*
  - *2021/22: Working to create covered bike storage on North side of building under stairwells*
- Improve plumbing facilities to [reduce excessive water use](#).
  - *Relevant Actors: Staff and Head*
  - *2020/21: Department installed more efficient taps in washrooms with automatic shut-off function: and automatic lights in washrooms*
  - *2021/22: Still need to make changes to reduce the water use of toilets*
- Install [programmable thermostats](#) (both temperature and time of day settable) so that heating can be turned down/off outside office hours.
  - *Relevant Actors: Staff*
  - *2021/22 : Inquiries being made*

- Obtain the current [electricity, heating and water usage](#) of the building and track the department's reduction in usage.
  - *Relevant Actors: Staff*
  - *2021/22: Inquiries being made*

## Events and purchasing

- Order [only plant-based food](#) for events, and use caterers committed to reducing food waste.
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty, staff and Head*
  - *2020/21: catering put on hold due to COVID-19*
  - *2021/22: Investigating catering providers that offer plant-based options*
- Use the [UBC Sustainable Event Checklist](#)
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty, staff and Head*
- Use the [UBC Sustainable Purchasing Guide](#)
  - *Relevant Actors: Faculty, staff and Head*