



UBC CLIMATE EMERGENCY ENGAGEMENT

# Final Report and Recommendations

This final report presents recommendations led and informed by the expertise and ideas from UBC's community on how UBC can enact its Declaration on the Climate Emergency on campus and beyond.

January 2021



# Acknowledgement

The University of British Columbia acknowledges the presence of its Vancouver campuses on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the xwmə0-kwəy'əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and səl' ilwətaʔɪ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples, and the Okanagan campus situated in the unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

UBC acknowledges the leadership and role of Indigenous Peoples - past, present, and future - as stewards and Knowledge Keepers to keep the lands, waters, coastal seas and territories healthy. Within its Climate Emergency declaration, UBC acknowledges that Indigenous communities bear the harmful impacts of climate destruction while being least responsible for the global acceleration of the climate crisis.

The recommendations within this report seek to present active steps to support and amplify Indigenous Peoples' human rights, including respecting Indigenous self-determination and aligning our policies, actions, and investments with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)<sup>1</sup> and the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act<sup>2</sup>.

*"...The Musqueam version of the [territorial] welcome has a very deep rooted history in where you're sitting right now... where our ancestors had a fortified village, a fortress, to raise our warriors to protect Mother Earth, around where we are, to be stewards...*

*Collectively, it is the responsibility of all of us to work forward ...*

*From the bottom of my heart, please take these conversations away and see if that seed is yours to plant and help to move these conversations forward in a good way..."*

- Morgan Guerin, Councillor, xwmə0k'wəy'əm (Musqueam)

Excerpt from the Opening Welcome, campus-wide forum at the UBC Vancouver Campus for the Climate Emergency engagement program, March 11, 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/un-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples/>

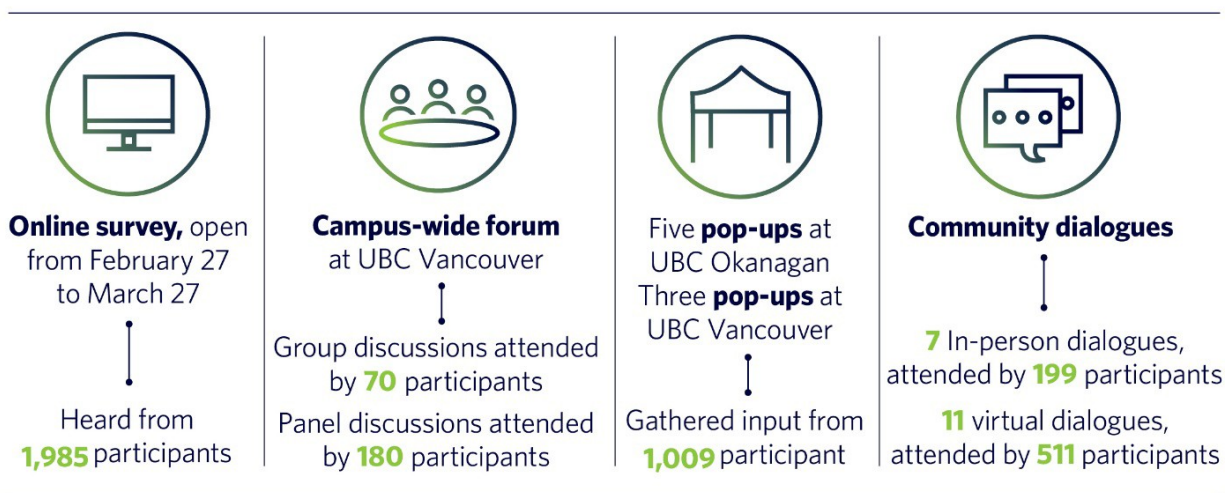
<sup>2</sup> <https://president.ubc.ca/letter-to-the-community/2019/12/05/climate-emergency-declaration/>

# Executive Summary

In December 2019, UBC renewed its commitment to climate leadership, declaring a climate emergency [in a statement](#) championed by the President and endorsed unanimously by the Board of Governors. The declaration recognized the severity, complexity, disproportionate impacts of, and disproportionate responsibilities for the climate crisis and committed UBC to develop a collective response that embeds climate justice throughout its activities and priorities. The declaration was prompted by a student-mobilized open letter<sup>3</sup> signed by over 1,600 students, staff, faculty and campus organizations and the participation of over 5,000 UBC students, faculty and staff in the September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Global Climate Strike.

The declaration committed UBC to assembling its climate emergency response in partnership with community members, recognizing that addressing the climate emergency will require systemic collective action; that UBC community members are already experiencing diverse impacts of climate change; and that they have long been championing bold climate solutions. In February 2020, UBC launched an initial climate emergency community engagement process, overseen by a task force of students, staff and faculty, and supported by a project team of UBC staff. Between February and June 2020, the Climate Emergency Task Force received input from nearly 4,000 students, staff, faculty, alumni and community members across UBC Vancouver and Okanagan campuses and beyond.

About **3,954** participants from UBC's communities provided their input through our community engagement activities:



There was a strong university-wide participation in the engagement activities, with significant response in particular from faculty and staff.

**Note:** Participant counts are not unique. Participants were welcome to engage in multiple formats.

<sup>3</sup> <https://docs.google.com/forms/UBC-Climate-Strike-Open-Letter>




Community input formed the basis for recommended actions, developed by working groups of community experts and Climate Emergency Task Force members in during the summer and fall 2020 and subsequently assembled into nine strategic priorities presenting a bold vision for UBC’s Climate Emergency Response.



However, this report acknowledges that not all of UBC’s community members were reached in the initial engagement process, and moving forward ongoing engagement is needed, particularly with Indigenous, Black and People of Colour (IBPOC) community members to further shape the direction of the recommendations and their implementation. In particular, in order for UBC to fulfil its stated commitments to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), consultation with Indigenous communities is imperative. Further, IBPOC perspectives are to substantively impact institutional priorities, practices, and policies, then consultation must occur in the commitments to develop and sustain relationships with IBPOC communities that are premised on trust, respect, reciprocity, consent, and accountability.



	<b>Strategic Priority</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	Operationalize UBC's commitments to climate justice: Support climate leadership and initiatives led by Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support fair compensation and representation for UBC's IBPOC community leading climate initiatives</li> <li>2. Support Off-Campus IBPOC-led climate initiatives</li> <li>3. Engage further with Black and POC Communities</li> <li>4. Examine and transform institutional practices and policies that reproduce inequalities for IBPOC communities at UBC</li> </ol>
	Demonstrate institutional leadership on climate justice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish climate justice standards for the University's activities</li> <li>2. Demonstrate and advocate for justice-based climate action</li> <li>3. Enact commitments to divestment and sustainable investment</li> </ol>
	Establish mechanisms and processes that ensure Indigenous perspectives, communities, and worldviews shape the development and implementation of climate related initiatives and policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leverage UBC's Indigenous Strategic Plan and Inclusion Action Plan as a basis for long-term engagement with Indigenous communities</li> <li>2. Provide resources that support staff to work on Indigenous engagement around UBC plans, policies and initiatives</li> <li>3. Create a standing Indigenous community advisory committee on the climate emergency</li> <li>4. Welcome and develop greater institutional capacity for engaging with the full range and complexity of Indigenous perspectives</li> </ol>
	Expand, strengthen and coordinate climate research at UBC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a body for climate research</li> <li>2. Start a climate emergency fellows' program</li> <li>3. Conduct climate focused faculty hiring</li> <li>4. Recognize and reward community engaged scholarship</li> </ol>
	Foster a culture of engagement & advocacy on climate action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage civic engagement</li> <li>2. Increase capacity and resources for engagement</li> </ol>
	Support community wellbeing in the face of the climate crisis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build capacity for mental health, resilience and community care strategies</li> <li>2. Update emergency preparedness and response plans</li> <li>3. Collaborate to expand public discourse around climate change and public health impacts</li> </ol>

	<p>Expand climate education opportunities and resources for the UBC community and broader public</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advance climate education opportunities across disciplines</li> <li>2. Support climate education pedagogy and curriculum development</li> <li>3. Expand climate education and professional development for UBC community members and UBC partners</li> </ol>
	<p>Develop new and strengthen existing partnerships to tackle the climate emergency</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coordinate a climate knowledge to action central contact</li> <li>2. Scale up Living Lab research collaborations with diverse partners beyond campus</li> <li>3. Community Councils - expand and deepen external engagements</li> <li>4. Develop a strategic partnership framework</li> </ol>
	<p>Accelerate emissions reductions at UBCV and UBCO in response to the Climate Emergency: Climate Action Plan 2030</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the forthcoming recommendations and new interim emission targets emerging from the Climate Action Plan 2030 process, which establish specific emissions targets responding to UBC's alignment with 1.5°C</li> </ol>

Together, the strategic priorities highlight UBC's mutually reinforcing roles as a leader, enabler and partner in addressing the climate crisis. Collectively, the priorities outline a vision for UBC's existing leadership in reducing local emissions to be paired with efforts to drive collective impact in local, regional and international climate action. Efforts to advance a just and sustainable society must be embodied in how UBC acts at an institutional level, supports and empowers its communities, and engages with its partners.

The priorities should be integrated, where possible, with existing UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan plans and initiatives (e.g. the UBC Strategic Plan, the Indigenous Strategic Plan, Inclusion Action Plan, Climate Action Plans). Recommendations must seek to inform or align with the values and visions set forth by these plans and initiatives, from embedding equity and diversity across university systems and structures, to meeting the Indigenous Strategic Plan vision of being a global leader in the implementation of Indigenous peoples' human rights.

The COVID-19 public health emergency and heightened public awareness of systemic racism against IBPOC communities have highlighted common threads between ongoing societal crises. These events deeply shaped what was heard from the community and ultimately articulated in the recommendations. The recommendations in this report are submitted with the understanding that climate justice must be advanced in conjunction with institutional responses to today's multiple intersecting crises - the pandemic, intense racial injustice and an economic recession - which compound inequalities faced by marginalized populations. A climate emergency response that seeks to advance justice must align with responses to current and future crises, including recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Participant quote:**

*"Given COVID, it's very possible for us to take significant action... and challenge institutional norms."*

<sup>4</sup> [https://aboriginal-2018.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/09/UBC.ISP\\_C2V13.1\\_Spreads\\_Sept1.pdf](https://aboriginal-2018.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/09/UBC.ISP_C2V13.1_Spreads_Sept1.pdf)

### **Who are we referring to when speaking about Indigenous, Black and People of Colour (IBPOC) and marginalized communities?**

- Groups that bear harmful impacts of fossil fuel extraction and climate destruction while being least responsible for the global acceleration of the climate crisis. These groups include lower-income communities, people in the Global South, climate migrants and refugees, Indigenous, Black and People of Colour (IBPOC), women, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities and those on the frontline of environmental devastation.
- Groups who have been historically, persistently, or systematically marginalized in ways that have excluded them from conversations and solutions on climate change and exacerbated social inequalities.
- These communities are often at the forefront of solutions to the climate crisis.

This report presents the recommendations that have emerged from this process and provides recommended next steps for UBC's continued – and now accelerated – climate response. The approach to UBC's Climate Emergency Response must be both distributed and coordinated. It must be distributed, so that the principles of the climate emergency declaration are embedded within UBC's wide-ranging activities and priorities. It must also be coordinated to ensure the climate emergency remains a top institutional priority and those responsible for implementation are supported. To ensure accountability, the implementation phase of the climate emergency response should draw upon support from UBC leadership and governing bodies to build license; involve ongoing community engagement, particularly with IBPOC and members of marginalized communities, to refine and inform further actions; and leverage centralized staff for overall coordination and reporting.

Moving swiftly ahead with this report's strategic priorities and recommendations is the first important step in a new chapter in UBC's journey to support the global shift towards a just and sustainable future, inspired by the advocacy of youth and students who have quickly mobilized, both on our campuses and worldwide.



# About this Report

This report presents the recommendations that emerged from the UBC Climate Emergency community engagement process and were developed by the Climate Emergency Task Force and its working groups.

The content of this report has been prepared by the Climate Emergency Task Force and UBC Climate Emergency Project Team for the UBC Board of Governors and the UBC community. It is a follow-up to the interim report shared in June 2020.

Further information on the role of the Project Team, Task Force and its working groups can be found in Appendix A.

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# Project and Engagement Overview

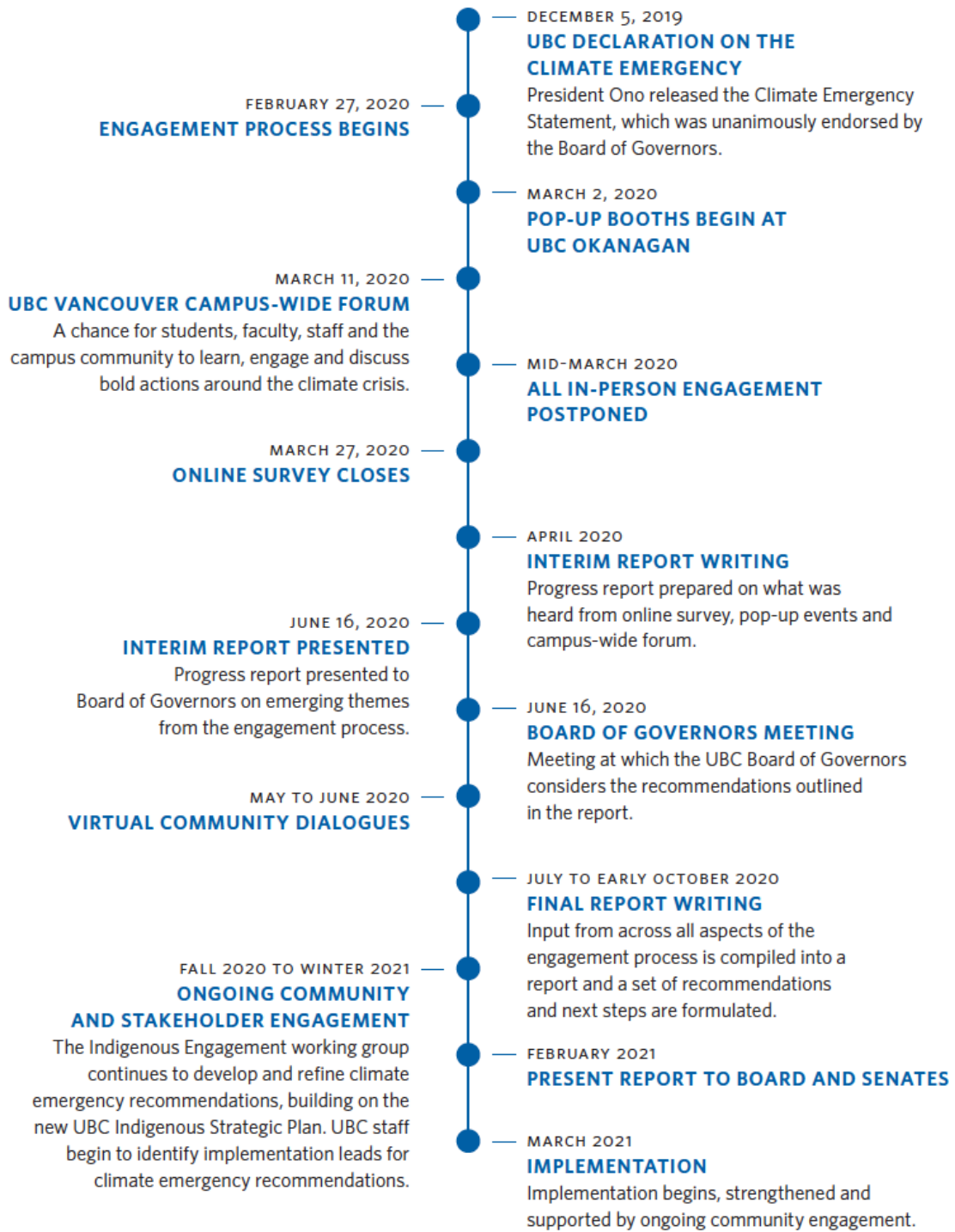
The Climate Emergency engagement process, illustrated below, heard from nearly 4,000 participants to inform UBC's actions towards addressing the climate emergency.

A Task Force, consisting of UBC students, faculty and staff from both Vancouver and Okanagan campuses, was assembled to steer the engagement process and lead the development of community-informed recommendations that align with the spirit and intent of the declaration. The development of these recommendations drew on the expertise of working groups with faculty, staff and student participation.

UBC also re-allocated existing staff and resources to form a dedicated climate emergency project team, which included members of UBC Climate Hub, a student-driven initiative.

More information on the project team and Task Force can be found in Appendix A. The detailed set of recommendations developed by the Task Force and its working groups can be found in Appendix B. The full engagement report can be found in Appendix C, including more detailed information on participation and the themes that emerged.

# Overview of the Climate Emergency engagement process



# Recommendations

In declaring a climate emergency, UBC committed to accelerate its contribution to addressing climate change. UBC recognizes that this emergency has been experienced for decades by communities around the world, in particular by Indigenous Peoples. This section presents the emerging recommendations from the engagement process, led and developed by the Climate Emergency Task Force and its working groups.

## About the recommendations

The recommendations are bundled within **strategic priorities**, which provide direction and focus for UBC's action on the climate emergency. The following **considerations**, drawn from UBC's declaration, were used to shape the strategic priorities and confirm the recommendations put forward:

- High level of impact or ambition
- Consistency with input from the community engagement process
- Applies a climate justice lens
- Identification of an implementation pathway
- Consistency with conversations across multiple working groups
- Demonstrability of concrete action and accountability to the climate emergency declaration

The recommendations are summarized in this section, along with (where applicable) their alignment with existing UBC plans and strategies.

An overview of the recommendations' development process can be found in Appendix A. Additional details on each of the recommendations can be found in Appendix B, which provides more extensive background information, implementation pathways and actions, and success indicators.

Declaring a Climate Emergency is a commitment to the following elements. Any "climate-themed" activities stemming from the recommendations must work in service of at least one of these three commitments:

- 1) **Addressing the impacts of climate change:** The climate crisis is posing and will continue to pose extensive and disastrous threats to peoples' lives and livelihoods both locally and globally. It is contributing to famine, migration, disease and armed conflict worldwide and wide-ranging impacts on individual physical and mental well-being. At UBC, climate justice cannot be limited to campus populations but must extend to all communities impacted by the University's activities. UBC is not isolated from the world around us; what we do on campus has far-reaching impacts on broader society. UBC must support its community and affected communities around the world in coping with climate impacts.

- 2) **Addressing past and ongoing contributions to climate change and shifting to practices and policies at UBC and beyond that minimize or eliminate human-related climate change:** Acting on climate change means aligning the global economy, institutions and policies with the science of a 1.5°C world. Keeping warming within 1.5°C is necessary to prevent tipping points that would lead to irreversible warming and to mitigate widespread drought, flooding and resource depletion which would make many parts of the global South uninhabitable. Staying within 1.5°C requires:
- a) Drastic emissions reductions across all economic sectors: Globally, the 1.5°C pathway means we need a drastic reduction in net global emissions by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050, all relative to a 2010 baseline.
  - b) A transition to a fossil fuel free economy: Current policies related to fossil fuel extraction and production place the world on a trajectory to more than double<sup>5</sup> the allowable emissions that would be compatible with a 1.5°C scenario in 2030 (see the Production Gap Report). Not only is new exploration and production incompatible with limiting warming to 1.5°C, but much of the existing fossil fuel infrastructure will need to be phased-out or re-purposed long before the end of its lifespan.
- 3) **Embedding a lens of climate justice:** Climate justice refers to the inequities associated with the causes, impacts and solutions to climate change. The climate crisis is rooted in the long-standing and ongoing exploitation of the planet and the world's marginalized communities, as defined in the executive summary. Climate change has a "multiplier effect,"<sup>6</sup> meaning that its impacts, such as extreme weather, famine, forced migration and armed conflict, will exacerbate existing injustices and inequalities. Climate solutions often threaten the same communities that are exploited by extractive industries and made vulnerable by climate impacts. Because of existing power imbalances, solutions will inevitably cause further harm to marginalized communities if justice is not prioritized.

### **What does a climate justice approach involve?**

Climate justice involves:

1. Addressing the disproportionate impact of past and current fossil fuel extraction and climate change effects on marginalized groups.
2. Mitigating the impacts of current and future climate action and the energy transition on affected groups.
3. Assigning costs of climate mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage to the countries and groups that have contributed to and profited most from the crisis.
4. Giving marginalized communities ongoing power in decision-making.
5. Repairing the harm done to individuals and groups by undoing existing inequalities and existing systems of oppression.

A detailed overview on climate justice, with probing questions that informed the development of recommendations, can be found in Appendix D.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://productiongap.org/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/01/1031322>

## Operationalize UBC'S Commitments to Climate Justice: Support Climate Leadership and Initiatives Led by Indigenous, Black and People of Colour



In the Climate Emergency Declaration, UBC made a bold commitment to advance “just and inclusive climate solutions that work towards dismantling historic and existing barriers faced by marginalized communities”. Building on priorities laid out in UBC’s Inclusion Action Plan, the Indigenous Strategic Plan, and other related strategic commitments, it is essential to honour and amplify the labour of IBPOC community members through adequate compensation and integration of their ongoing feedback throughout UBC’s climate emergency response. This work cannot be done in isolation; must be woven throughout UBC’s priorities and activities addressing the climate emergency and connected to commitments and priorities laid out in other plans. This strategic priority also highlights the alignment with, and commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by UBC’s climate emergency response, as laid out in the Climate Emergency Declaration.

### Recommendations

#### **Support fair compensation and representation for UBC's IBPOC community leading climate initiatives:**

Hire and fairly compensate IBPOC staff, faculty and students who are working in research, education, mental health support, and advocacy on climate and racial justice. Ensure hiring committees for these positions include IBPOC representation.

**Support off-campus IBPOC-led climate initiatives:** Extend resources to IBPOC communities off-campus to advance climate change and climate justice. Support grassroots initiatives and amplify their work; formalize more partnerships with IBPOC-led climate organizations and UBC faculties, departments, and units; expand research capacity for IBPOC communities off-campus; and ensure relationships between UBC and community initiatives are grounded in respect, reciprocity, trust and consent.

**Engage further with Black and POC communities:** Leverage UBC’s Inclusion Action Plan, support continued engagement with racialized communities to inform the ongoing development and implementation of UBC’s Climate Emergency Response and develop recommendations that work towards dismantling historic colonial and racist structures for these communities.

**Examine and transform institutional practices and policies that reproduce inequalities for IBPOC communities at UBC:** Commit sustained efforts and resources to examining and transforming the ways that existing institutional practices and policies reproduce unequal, extractive, and paternalistic relationships with IBPOC communities, both within and beyond the UBC campus. Then commit to supporting structures of accountability that embed Black and POC perspectives into the Climate Emergency recommendations and future climate plans, policies, and initiatives.



## Demonstrate Institutional Leadership on Climate Justice



To meet the goal of embedding climate justice throughout UBC's activities and address the inequities associated with the causes, impacts and solutions to climate change, UBC must demonstrate consistent institutional leadership on climate justice. The climate crisis is rooted in the long-standing and ongoing exploitation of the planet and the world's marginalized communities, including but not limited to people in the Global South, Black, Indigenous and racialized communities and the poor. In order to undo the systems of oppression that enable this exploitation, UBC should acknowledge and reckon with its own role in contributing to the climate crisis, while leveraging its intellectual and moral authority as well as its social and financial procurement power to advance climate justice in other organizations and advocate for broader social change beyond its institutional boundaries. Further, climate justice cannot be limited to supporting new projects but must also involve phasing out harmful initiatives. This process must be informed through consultation and established partnerships with consultation with Indigenous communities.

### Recommendations

**Establish climate justice standards for the University's activities:** Develop and implement a climate justice framework to guide external affairs and university decision-making. Apply criteria based on the principles of the Climate Emergency declaration and consultation with University stakeholders, including IBPOC communities, to influence activities across departments including external funding partnerships, procurement, financial management, recruiting.

- o **Alignment:** UBC Strategic Plan, Strategy 16; CAP 2030.

**Demonstrate and advocate for justice-based climate action:** Advocate as an institution for 1.5°C-aligned climate policy, racial justice and a justice-based recovery from COVID. Advocate for public policy action at all levels of government, encourage other institutions to adopt similar Climate Emergency responses, and address UBC's past and ongoing roles in contributing to the climate change impacts that are disproportionately burdening marginalized communities. This includes examining and enacting redress for past harms, and being responsive to accountabilities for current actions and activities that continue to reproduce harm.

- o **Alignment:** UC3 Strategy 3.1 & 1.3, UC3 Research for Policy Platform, Strategic Plan Strategies 3, 16 & 19. Responds to the President's Roundtable on Climate Action report.

**Enact commitments to divestment and sustainable investment:** Fully divest from fossil fuels across all asset classes by 2025, embed climate justice values into investment screening, reinvest 5% of investments in just community projects, involve the UBC community in determining investment priorities, and publicly report on progress. Careful consideration should also be given to the ways sustainable investments can reproduce modes of social and ecological harm, and negatively impact marginalize communities.



This strategic priority highlights the alignment with, and commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by UBC's climate emergency response, as laid out in the Climate Emergency Declaration. The negative impacts of climate change disproportionately affect Indigenous peoples due to their relationship and dependence on the environment. In addition, Indigenous peoples' legal position in settler societies and institutionalized colonialism limit their ability to adapt to and cope with climate change. This amplifies the need for Indigenous perspectives, communities, and worldviews within broader institutional climate emergency plans, strategies, and activities.

## Recommendations

**Leverage UBC's Indigenous Strategic Plan and Inclusion Action Plan** as a basis for long-term engagement with Indigenous communities in the ongoing development and implementation of UBC's Climate Emergency Response and commit to accountability structures that embed Indigenous perspectives into the Climate Emergency recommendations. These engagements should be rooted in deep forms of trust, respect, accountability, reciprocity, and consent and responsive to community capacities for Indigenous community participation.

**Provide resources that support staff to work on Indigenous engagement** around UBC plans, policies and initiatives concerned with climate change and to develop sustained relationships with Indigenous communities.

**Create a standing Indigenous community advisory committee on the climate emergency** whose members would be duly compensated for their participation, and whose recommendations are integrated into institutional decision-making processes.

**Welcome and develop greater institutional capacity for engaging with the full range and complexity of Indigenous perspectives, given the heterogeneity of Indigenous communities:** This should include a specific commitment to hold space for critical Indigenous voices that challenge and seek to reimagine and renegotiate existing institutional practices and modes of Indigenous engagement.



UBC's core contributions to the climate crisis will be made through its primary roles of teaching and research. There are still many gaps preventing a full understanding of the complex consequences of climate change, the potential pathways towards a just and equitable future, and the best avenues to meaningful action at the scale of the crisis. As a major global research university, UBC can address this challenge within and across wide-ranging disciplines. Climate researchers within UBC's ranks are making considerable contributions, however not in nearly sufficient numbers given the scale of the climate crisis and its many research areas. Without an investment to scale up faculty, PhD and postdoctoral capacity along with a focal point that brings them together with students and staff support, climate research at UBC will continue to be scattered, uncoordinated and limited in impact.

### Recommendations

**Establish a body for climate research:** Create a comprehensive, cross-campus, interdisciplinary Institute, Centre or Body with programming to facilitate climate research, including an accessible repository for sustainability programs and research. This initiative can support climate literacy, and facilitate climate advocacy, with capacity to integrate partners beyond campus into the visioning of UBC climate emergency research. It should be oriented by principles of climate justice and weave into its fabric the priorities and perspectives of IBPOC researchers and communities.

- o **Alignment:** UC3 Strategy 3.2

**Start a climate emergency fellows' program:** Establish a fellowship program attached to the Climate Research 'Body' for PhD students and postdoctoral researchers to focus on climate research. The program should recruit a diverse cohort of fellows and embed consideration of traditional knowledge, lived experience and community engaged scholarship, with priority to IBPOC individuals. This might include opening the fellowship program to community members who are knowledge holders in their own traditions, but not otherwise affiliated with UBC as students or researchers.

- o **Alignment:** UC3 fellowship pilot program

**Conduct climate focused faculty hiring:** Expand the impact of UBC's climate research through multidisciplinary faculty hiring focusing on the climate crisis. The hiring process should be equitable with prioritized hiring of IBPOC individuals, especially those with lived experiences of traditional knowledges and practices and those who work closely with systemically marginalized and racialized communities. Hiring should be oriented by expansive, culturally diverse notions of what constitutes "climate focused" research. IBPOC-centred initiatives and research are also encouraged.

- o **Alignment:** UBC's Inclusion Action Plan and Indigenous Strategic Plan

**Recognize and reward community engaged scholarship:** Recognize and support community-based forms of scholarship in graduate programs, tenure and promotion considerations and faculty hiring. This is especially important for supporting and sustaining the research of IBPOC and other systemically marginalized scholars

- o **Alignment:** UC3 Strategy 2.2

## Foster a Culture of Engagement & Advocacy on Climate Action



Fostering a culture of engagement and advocacy across campus is foundational to a just climate emergency response. A culture of inclusion and empowerment will mobilize community members to advance the principles of the climate emergency declaration and build solidarity around a shared vision, both on UBC's campuses and beyond. To succeed in fostering this culture, UBC's community members must be equipped with the tools, resources and support needed to flourish. We know that many people at UBC want to engage in this work but lack capacity given other demands of the University, or license to take action. While the engagement must be wide-reaching, it must also come with the recognition that particular emphasis, time and resources must be allocated to engaging systemically marginalized communities, with commitments to uphold space for difficult conversations, investing in rebuilding relationships that are already damaged, and creating spaces for the University to receive critical feedback.

### Recommendations

**Encourage civic engagement:** Create a culture of advocacy and civic engagement at UBC that encourages and empowers climate justice action by students, staff and faculty through student engagement in elections, a robust culture of climate advocacy among UBC community members, and empowering students to be engaged global citizens and activists.

- o **Alignment:** UBC Strategic Plan (Strategy 15 & 16, Freedom of Speech); UC3 Research for Policy Platform.

**Increase capacity and resources for engagement:** Create comprehensive, highly visible, system-wide resources for students, staff, faculty and the wider community to engage on topics of climate action, climate justice and climate leadership, while investing in student-led climate action initiatives and creating intentional spaces for marginalized community members.

## Support Community Wellbeing in the Face of the Climate Crisis



Research indicates climate change impacts increase and magnify community risk of depression, anxiety, PTSD, fear, eco-grief, stress, irritability, anger, and the expression of emotional distress as physical pain, like stomach or headaches<sup>7</sup>.

Climate impacts can also trigger feelings of existential dread, eco-despair, hopelessness and suicidal ideation. The effects of climate change on individual and community mental health and wellbeing are already being witnessed locally and

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2017/03/mental-health-climate.pdf>

globally. There is a growing need for climate-driven mental health and wellbeing impacts to be prioritized across community planning, policy, and decision making. A holistic approach to wellbeing must be community-based, intersectional and systemic, with a focus on improving wellbeing through community building and collective action. Both Vancouver and the Okanagan experience a range of climate-related events and hazards every year, and UBC has emergency plans to support the majority of responses. As the frequency and severity of climate-related events increase, we must build community resilience and wellbeing more strongly into risk reduction and emergency preparedness.

## Recommendations

**Build capacity for mental health, resilience and community care strategies:** Develop mental health, resilience & eco-anxiety supports, skills, and services for UBC community members that are implemented through a lens of climate and racial justice, recognizing that learning and responses impact affective and relational capacities with human and other-than-human beings in direct and indirect ways.

**Update emergency preparedness and response plans:** Update UBC Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans with community resilience and wellbeing considerations that respond to the climate crisis with diverse social connections and supports, proactive mitigation and adaptation strategies, and the incorporation of climate impacts into cooling, drinking water access, air filtration, food security and refuge spaces.

□ **Alignment:** UC3 Strategy 1.4

**Collaborate to expand public discourse around climate change and public health impacts:** Collaborate with UBC leadership, researchers, and community members at UBC and beyond to mobilize and expand messaging related to climate impacts, food justice, and public health, including emphasizing the heightened impacts on the health of systemically marginalized communities.

## Expand Climate Education Opportunities and Resources for the UBC Community



Educators at UBC must prepare their students to engage as leaders in the world and address contemporary intersecting global challenges such as the climate crisis, Indigenous rights and recognition, systemic racism, massive wealth inequality, and the global COVID-19 pandemic. Educators must not only integrate new climate content but empower students to think critically, make moral judgements and engage in social change. Though many UBC faculty are already leading climate-related coursework, they are dispersed across different campuses, faculties, and departments without any structural framework to coordinate them. Support is needed on both UBC campuses to develop aligned interdisciplinary and accessible climate education within and beyond the classroom. A comprehensive climate education should address knowledge deficits by improving climate literacy, expand climate-themed educational and professional opportunities and experiences, engage with Indigenous scholarship, and incorporate principles of wellness for UBC community members and the public.

## Recommendations

**Advance climate education opportunities across disciplines:** Ensure that all undergraduate and graduate students have access to climate education within their discipline by further promoting existing program pathways (e.g. majors, minors, certificates, etc.), developing new pathways, and providing avenues to embed climate education into existing curriculum with integration of principles of climate justice, Indigenous and community engagement, and wellbeing.

□ **Alignment:** UC3 Strategy 1.2

**Support climate education pedagogy and curriculum development:** Provide consistent cross-campus support for educators to develop pedagogy and curriculum initiatives that embed interdisciplinary climate education across the disciplines in alignment with existing efforts to support transformative learning experiences and build collective capacity to have challenging conversations about complex climate-related topics.

□ **Alignment:** UC3 Strategy 1.2

**Expand climate education and professional development for UBC community members and UBC partners:** Expand climate-related professional development opportunities (e.g. co-op and mentorship programs, free and accessible open education resources, workshops/seminars led by IBPOC community members and scholars etc.) for students, alumni, staff, faculty and the communities that UBC serves, while providing specific support for historically marginalized communities.

□ **Alignment:** UC3 Strategy 2.4

## Develop New and Strengthen Existing Partnership to Tackle the Climate



UBC's external engagements and partnerships are a critical component of its capacity to accelerate the global shift towards a 1.5°C-aligned future. To leverage these engagements effectively, UBC can support new initiatives and innovations of UBC community members and scale up those that already demonstrate success. Concurrently, UBC must recognize the strength and value of reciprocity and be willing to create space for the knowledge and best practices of external partners to be integrated into its own institutional policies. Most importantly, UBC's external engagements cannot be effective without recognizing the importance of active, ethical partnerships with Indigenous, Black, POC and marginalized communities.



## Recommendations

**Coordinate a climate knowledge to action central contact:** Establish staff resources to coordinate a Climate Knowledge to Action central contact that will be a strong external presence; facilitate knowledge translation and disseminate climate research; and build resilient partnerships with First Nations, governments, and marginalized communities to increase the impact of UBC's climate research.

- o **Alignment:** UC3 Strategy 2.4 & 3.2

**Scale up living Lab Research collaborations with diverse partners beyond campus:** Scale up the UBC Campus as a Living Lab model in both Vancouver and the Okanagan by increasing collaborations with external partners, such as Indigenous communities, municipal and other governments, utilities, corporations and not-for-profits; piloting the inclusions of social sciences and humanities Living Lab projects (in line with the principles of the Climate Emergency); and devoting greater resources to engagement and partnerships for Living Labs projects off-campus that generate new, diverse and proven ways of responding to climate change beyond UBC's campuses.

- o **Alignment:** UBC Strategic Plan Strategies 3, 8, 9, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20; and UC3 Strategy 1.1.

**Expand and deepen external engagements through Community Councils:** Create 'Community Councils' composed of UBC's external partners, with support to ensure councils adequately reflect the perspectives of those most affected by the climate crisis - including Indigenous peoples, youth/student, communities on the frontlines of climate disaster, vulnerable populations and international perspectives - to embed the external advisory role of the President's Roundtables and establish the necessary structure and continuity for long-term conversations.

- o **Alignment:** Strategic Plan, Strategy 20; UC3 Strategy 2.1.

**Develop a strategic partnership framework:** Develop a strategic partnership framework that builds off of existing MOUs for UBC to engage with local governments, First Nations and regional & international partners around climate action, applied research and scholarship; rooted in principles of climate justice.

- o **Alignment:** Strategic Plan Strategy 20 and UC3 Strategy 2.3 & Goal 2 overall.

## Accelerate Emissions Reductions at UBCV and UBCO In Response



As called for in UBC's Climate Emergency Declaration, the UBC Climate Action Plan (CAP) is being rapidly updated to set new interim emissions targets, chart a path to achieve them, and monitor and reduce Scope 3 emissions for the first time. Over summer 2020, more than 150 stakeholders and experts worked across eight working groups to increase ambition to align with the 1.5°C target identified in the Climate Emergency Declaration. Distinct plans developed in parallel for UBCV and UBCO will identify strategies tailored to both UBC campuses. Interim recommendations from the CAP2030 process will be presented to the UBC Board of Governors in February 2021.

Emerging directions include:

- o The UBC Vancouver District Energy System (DES) should be 100% low carbon energy by 2030.

- o No new fossil fuel equipment installed in new buildings and existing building equipment replacements.
- o All new fleet vehicles should be zero emissions vehicles.
- o Scope 3 emissions (including emissions from air travel, food, commuting, and embodied emissions associated with buildings) should be reduced by 45-50% by 2030.
- o UBC should implement an internal carbon price in its decision-making process for energy supply projects, energy conservation projects, building renewals, and infrastructure planning. In the absence of an internal carbon price, many of the actions identified by the CAP2030 working groups will not present a compelling business case and UBC will risk failing to take the strong action needed to accelerate decarbonization.
- o The CAP project team is working with UBC Strategy and Decision Support to develop a comprehensive resourcing strategy for implementation of the CAP2030 plan.
- o The UBC Okanagan campus is rapidly advancing a strategy to identify decarbonization pathways and targets for its low carbon district energy supply system, alongside a strategic energy management plan for existing buildings. The largest source of Scope 3 emissions is being tackled through the development of the UBC Okanagan Transportation Plan, which will accelerate targets and actions to reduce commuting emissions.



# Next Steps

Less than a year since the university's Climate Emergency declaration in December 2019, this report and its recommendations are representative of the UBC community's response, care and commitment to urgent climate action. The recommendations are the culmination of input and collaboration from nearly 4,000 students, faculty, staff and alumni who shared their perspectives through the community engagement process, a 20-member transdisciplinary Task Force and its 46 working group members, and an interdepartmental cross-campus project team.

This final Climate Emergency Engagement report will be presented and discussed in February 2021 to the Sustainability and Climate Action Committee, a subcommittee of the UBC Board of Governors. Similarly, this report will be circulated to the appropriate committees at each Senate, and then presented and discussed to both the Vancouver and Okanagan Senates.

To translate the recommendations into action, UBC must take an approach that is distributed so that it is embedded across all parts of the University and coordinated to ensure it remains a top priority that is adequately resourced for implementation. We recommend the following steps for implementation of the recommendations outlined in this report.

## **Support from UBC leadership and governing bodies**

A clear mandate from the UBC Executive and governing bodies, including the Board and Senates, will propel action across all aspects of the university.

## **Cross-portfolio integration and alignment with the climate emergency priorities**

During fall 2020, the climate emergency project team will engage stakeholders in order to identify leads for each emerging recommendation, evaluate timelines for implementation, and leverage intersecting commitments within UBC's existing plans. Collective buy-in will be essential to implementing the strategic priorities and recommendations, which relate to diverse activities across UBC's portfolios and campuses.

## **Avenues for community involvement**

The community engagement process has demonstrated the depth, breadth and ambition of the UBC community's ideas for climate action. Continued community involvement will keep the ambition high and empower community members to translate their ideas to action. Access to decision-makers will allow for more direct translation of ideas into action. Some recommendations for ensuring continued community involvement include, but are not limited to, the creation of a Climate Advisory group (for example, to advise the President and identify opportunities for UBC to advance its climate leadership) and hosting town halls to provide community members with ongoing avenues for feedback.

Additionally, while this report's strategic priorities and recommendations drew upon a breadth of community input, the engagement process did not adequately engage Indigenous, Black and POC community members such that recommendations were crafted with their perspectives and lived experiences in mind.

To address this gap in upholding the values of climate and racial justice fundamental to the climate emergency process, we suggest that UBC seek to immediately advance two recommendations in particular - *Further engagement with Indigenous communities* and *Further engagement with Black & POC communities*. These recommendations were developed specifically to act as provisions for expert IBPOC community members to adjust the implementation pathways of recommendations where necessary. For *Further engagement with Indigenous communities*, the existing Climate Emergency Indigenous Engagement Working Group will spearhead this work; for *Further engagement with Black & POC communities*, existing Black & POC leadership bodies on both campuses should be engaged to develop a process for gathering community input. This ongoing work will ensure all the university's climate action efforts are conceptualized and operationalized in ways that both involve IBPOC communities and address impacts on them.

## Reporting to the public and governing bodies

To keep the community and governing bodies updated on the progress of UBC's climate emergency response, we recommend that staff complete regular reporting. This includes:

- o Public reporting on UBC's progress implementing the climate emergency recommendations to highlight the work already underway; communicate priorities; reinforce a thread of accountability that turns community input into action; and invite ongoing community involvement and feedback.
- o Annual reporting through the UBC Executive to the Board and Senates to highlight progress made and priorities for upcoming cycles.

## Dedicated anchor and staff support for coordination, accountability and action

We recommend a dedicated support staff team be supported to maintain the momentum that has been generated thus far and keep lead units accountable to implementing the recommendations. Staff should have climate justice expertise on hand to support units that are new to working in this area.

Following the roll-out of these 5 implementation pillars, UBC will have a clear pathway to proceed with the implementation of its climate emergency response.

As evidenced by the myriad actions that make up the climate emergency recommendations, as well as the diversity of timelines and breadth of collaboration needed to fully realize the strategic priorities, UBC's climate emergency response will not end with the completion of a set of actions; rather, it will require the ongoing mobilization of resources to meet the unfolding challenges of the climate crisis. This report, its strategic priorities and recommendations are merely the first step in a new chapter in UBC's journey to support a global shift towards a just and sustainable future for everyone.

*To follow along with the next steps of UBC's climate emergency response and stay in the loop, you can sign up at [climate.emergency@ubc.ca](mailto:climate.emergency@ubc.ca).*