BCIT School of Business Progress Report to Sept 2019

The British Columbia Institute of Technology’s School of Business is committed to the Principles of Responsible Management Education. This is our progress report for the past year.

As a way to launch the 2019-20 academic year, the School of Business hosted a Welcome Back event for all faculty and staff featuring guest speaker Jay Friedlander, co-founder of the Abundance Cycle (https://www.abundancecycle.com/). Friedlander presented on how to introduce sustainability more broadly across our curriculum and school using the Abundance Cycle model. The group activity included each department sitting together to brainstorm ways to implement sustainable practices into our teaching and school operations.

As an outcome of the Welcome Back workshop on the Abundance Cycle, a number of faculty expressed interest in working on a ‘made in the School of Business’ approach to embedding sustainability in the curriculum and in the School. This has led to the creation of two Sustainability in Action Committees, one with a focus on curriculum and the other focused on the operations of the School of Business itself.

The School of Business currently has two programs that focus on sustainability. The Sustainable Event Management Certificate aims to develop professionals in the event management field using globally accredited sustainability standards. Graduates from this program will be able to execute business meetings and events for organizations around the world and lead the shift toward ethical and sustainable event management.

The Sustainable Business Leadership (SBL) Advanced Certificate develops business leaders who promote socially just and ecologically sustainable business approaches and initiatives within established organizations and new ventures. The program’s central goal is to educate business leaders to generate not only economic, but also social and environmental value, to help drive business to operate within the planet’s carrying capacity. The SBL Advanced Certificate is currently undergoing a curriculum review. As part of this review, we are conducting a needs assessment for additional credentials such as an Advanced Diploma for Sustainability Practitioners (in addition to our existing leadership offerings) as well as shorter Graduate Certificates in specific aspects of sustainable business. Our focus is on upskilling the existing business workforce to tackle social inequity and the climate emergency. The SBL program is also working with BCIT Business’s Corporate Training group to develop just-in-time training workshops for businesses looking to upskill their workforce.

Dr. Tessa Jordan, Program Head for the Sustainable Business Leadership program has also designed an elective course in the Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration program. The course, Social Return on Investment (BUSA 5028) is using Trico Foundation cases as part of the curriculum. This course is now in such high demand that it is repeatedly full with a substantial waitlist.

BCIT is currently in the process of developing a multi-year program to support the ongoing sustainability initiatives across the Institute. In addition, we are building on the unique legacy opportunities occurring as a result of hosting the 2019 Eco-City World Summit (http://ecocity2019.com/): a multi-disciplinary
gathering of individuals from around the world - spanning academic, professional, and civic spheres with a desire to transform cities into ecologically healthy and social just places. BCIT School of Business students are scheduled presenters on topics such as the Power of Sustainable Procurement Processes and Use of Non-Virgin Materials, as well as Sustainable Business Leadership at BCIT, and both faculty and management will be in attendance to represent the School of Business at the Summit.

Institute wide, BCIT has a long history of interaction with concepts and issues of sustainability. One of our first records is from 1989, when a Business student began research into a recycling program for BCIT. By 1990, the provincial government funded the program start-up for white and mixed paper in partnership with the BCIT administration and the Student Association, together with industry support for aluminum can recycling with Alcan (now Rio Tinto Alcan). Since then, BCIT staff, students and faculty have continued to embrace this concept.

Today, BCIT is proud to commit funds to an Institute of Sustainability to advance and embed social and environmental objectives into education and operations through the power of community engagement. Operationally, BCIT has committed to reducing waste by 20% within the 19/20 fiscal year, and dramatically improving energy efficiency and decarbonizing energy sources across our built environment.

The School of Business has made great strides at embedding sustainability in the curriculum across multiple programs. Our other Schools in both technology and trades education have also made significant impacts such as the development of the Sustainability Energy Management Program which trains professionals in sustainable energy management, with focus on the energy demands of commercial, institutional, industrial and community facilities.

Sincerely,

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Leelah Dawson
Dean, School of Business
British Columbia Institute of Technology