Sharing Information on Progress Policy
2014
Rector’s message

Sustainability is a value that is now of strategic importance to our society. It is a concept which acts as a guideline, with social, environmental and economic dimensions.

We can no longer imagine embarking on any sort of activity without including sustainability amongst the key factors to support our choices. Acting and thinking on the basis of this criterion creates positive processes, with multiple effects on all areas involved. It is a large-scale and long-sighted choice to make.

For this reason we have made sustainability the main inspiration behind Ca’ Foscari: since 2010 our university is undertaking to become more fair, more sustainable and more meritocratic. To pursue these objectives many initiatives have been carried out to promote environmental respect, to increase social cohesion and to remove internal inequalities in order to give everyone in Ca’ Foscari the same studying and working opportunities.

The University can and should have a role in this process. Ca’ Foscari has not only created a platform for sustainability, it has taken on a leading role, thanks to its close collaboration with the Italian Ministry of the Environment.

We developed Sustainable Ca’ Foscari, that in just four years has become a model for sustainable administration within the spheres of environment, society and economics. The project has given enormous satisfaction and brought with it both national and international acclaim even while successfully meeting the challenges and overcoming the obstacles in its way.

It is a long way, but it is worth the effort.

Sustainability policy

Since 2010 Ca’ Foscari University has integrated sustainability in its strategic actions. This involved launching a systematic report into the university's responsibilities and duties towards its internal and external stakeholders, following the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and adopting practices that considered issues related to the environment, ethics and corporate governance. This led to the publishing of the sustainability policy, a document in which Ca’ Foscari highlighted strategic focus areas and action plans to support sustainability. This means both honouring its commitments and promoting values of social responsibility throughout the entire university community.

In 2011 the policy was integrated into the three-year Strategic Plan, with the aim of "Adopting multiarea sustainability measures", divided into:

1. Strengthening teaching about sustainability
2. Strengthening research into sustainability
3. Favouring the adoption of sustainable processes and practices
**Principle 1 | Purpose:** We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

The University is intent on developing efficient instruments for students to learn about sustainability both inside and outside of the teaching hall. Low impact and comfortable study environments are provided.

Student participation is vital for the University. Awards, seminars, study days on sustainability, projects and theses on related themes are just some of the activities promoted to encourage sustainable behaviours and lifestyles.

Many other initiatives and occasions with multidisciplinary characteristics have been provided to forward student participation.

Some examples are:

- Every year we organize, in collaboration with Ca’ Foscari Short Filmfestival, the Short&Sostenibilità (Short&Sustainability) competition to stimulate students to address the issues of economic, social and environmental sustainability in 5 minute videos.
- The 2013 edition of the competition **Climate Change – The Grand Challenge** invited the entire Ca’ Foscari community to submit works on climate change from the creative perspective of language used in social medias alongside narrative and images.
- In 2013 was developed **THE GARBAGE PATCH STATE** Project as a response to the enormous and growing quantities of waste found in oceans. Students were given the opportunity to get to know the work and the artist - Maria Cristina Finucci – firsthand and to give free reign to their own creativity by actively working on the project.
- Each year the University participates in national and European initiatives such as the **M’illumino di meno** (which means “I am using less light”; it is a famous Italian campaign on energy saving), the Energy Week for Waste Reduction and the European Sustainable Energy Week campaigns.

Moreover Ca’ Foscari participated in two particular projects that helped to develop and rise the sensitiveness of the students towards social commitment. The first project was the **Special Olympics 2014**, an international sports training programme and athletic competitions for persons - youths and adults – with intellectual disabilities, held in Venice 25-30 May 2014. The University actively collaborated with the Italian team undertaking to raise student and staff awareness of this specific issue. As volunteer work is seen as a precious and priceless gift, our aim and hope was to invite students to get involved during the different phases of the 30th edition of the Summer National Games.
The second project is the **University for Volunteer Work**, that has the aim to provide operators from local volunteer associations with specific training to better prepare them to carry out their work. The study programme was developed in order to support learning in those who desire to dedicate themselves to helping others and is directed to volunteers, aspiring volunteers and to members of volunteer associations. The course will last the 2014/2015 academic year and is to be held at the Treviso campus. At the end of the course participants will receive a Certificate of Completion.
Principle 2 | Values: We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

Ca’ Foscari sustainable teachings aims to take full advantage of the sustainable educational programmes offered by the University to enable students to choose their courses from a sustainable prospective. In the 2014/2015 academic year a study of sustainable teachings is carried out documenting sustainability in its three dimensions (environmental, social and economic) and taking into consideration all the study programmes available at the University.

Identifying teachings held in sustainable manners completed the analysis. In other words, enquiries and actions were made to promote teachings which reduce the use of paper resources and favour interactive online resources and open source software.

A significant initiative launched by Sustainable Ca’ Foscari with regards to teaching are the **Sustainability Competencies Project** (CDS).

Started in 2012, this scheme aims to promote the development of topics surrounding sustainability in all its aspects and, further, proposes to widen the culture of sustainability in participants. The acquisition of sustainability competencies targets the Ca’ Foscari student body as a whole, is on a voluntary basis and results in 1 extracurricular credit (CFU) for the student.

Students who acquire the credit (CFU) relative to sustainability competencies receive a special mention during their graduation and are given a certificate. The certificate is on Shiro Alga paper, offered by Favini srl, and is realized with algae, reaped from lagoon areas to avoid the de-oxygenation of lagoon waters, combined with FSC fibres. 1221 students adhered to the project in the 2013/2014 academic year.

Regarding the integration of sustainability into the activities and processes Sustainable Ca’ Foscari launched in 2013 an important project called **Sustainable Campuses** to extent the sustainable management model, already successfully implemented at the main University building, to Departments, Schools and Campuses. The Sustainable Campuses Project began within the SELISI School (School for Economics, Languages and Entrepreneurship) at the Treviso campus and it will see the active involvement of students and staff in managing and exploiting the teachings, research, initiatives and events promoted to that purpose in each single building. Sustainable actions such as recycling, the Book-cycler, the “My Sustainable Campus” competition and special events like the EU Week for Waste Reduction, the Green Week and the EcoCampus Day have been hosted and promoted at the Treviso Campus.
Principle 3 | Method: We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

The Sustainable Ca’ Foscari project was inaugurated in 2010 with an aim to include sustainability as a guiding principle for all University activities. Aware of the important role a tertiary institution has in educating future generations and in the spread of learning within society, Ca’ Foscari decided to take a frontline position in promoting and realizing behaviours and actions in favour of social and environmental sustainability.

Sustainable Ca’ Foscari thus began as a “special project” limited in scope which, through the years, has involved increasingly wider spheres of University activity. Mapping the four years of Sustainable Ca’ Foscari has actively worked towards greater sustainability via activities and projects aimed at reducing the institution’s impact on the environment and on natural resources as well as bettering students, faculty and staff well-being. A number of initiatives and events have also been realized with a view to educating students in sustainability. Our hope is that the teachings students have acquired during their university experience will be considered when taking decisions and actions in the future.

In just four years Sustainable Ca’ Foscari has become a model for sustainable administration within the spheres of environment, society and economics. A consolidation of the values it promotes and the adoption of the new managerial models has also positively impacted the development of University processes and activities. These, in turn, have been met by a renewal in University planning and accounting processes.

The Sustainability Commitments Charter (CIS) is the principle University document that maps the University’s long-term plan of sustainable action and objectives, and is used to audit and evaluate all achievements. It is the across the board operational document which puts Objective 10 of the Strategic Plan into effect, by enhancing teaching on sustainability, increasing research and favouring the adoption of processes and sustainable behaviours. The Sustainability Commitments Charter is revised and adjusted annually following a review of University activities and a check of obtained objectives.

A number of changes have been made to the CIS over the years in its growth from an initial experiment to becoming a full-fledged project. In the 2013-2015 CIS, the overall number of undertakings has decreased, widening the scope of the remaining objectives, indicators have become more specific and many of the projects and experimental actions started in previous years have become standard practice. The
2014-2016 CIS puts strategic objectives and operational objectives on a par relinquishing the term “strategic”.

Now activities defined by law and standard practice have been excluded from the Charter and minor objectives have grouped under banners wider in scope. Further, for the first time, the 2014 – 2016 CIS has completely taken into account all the comments and suggestions gathered from the stakeholder panel meeting held in October 2013. And, to increase comprehensibility to the wider public, commitments have been grouped together in 8 larger areas and reworked.

The new divisions take into account the 4 University’s principal activities and, that is, Governance, Teaching, Research and Supply Chain as well as the 4 major stakeholders, Students, Staff and Faculty, Environment and Community.

Thanks to the CIS Ca’ Foscari has a major impact on the community providing a clear and open channel of communication transmitting the values, principles and priorities undertaken by the University with the added benefit of increased credibility.

The points outlined in the Sustainability Commitments Charter (CIS) have also been included in the Performance Plan along with organizational, transparency and anticorruption objectives.

In this way, the Plan has become a tool the institution uses to better its actions in sustainability and evaluate the results it achieves.
Principle 4 | Research: We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.

Similarly to teachings, Ca’ Foscari decided to increase research on social and environmental topics that cross over into all the fields of study offered by the University.

Put into practice, this commitment saw the University support the startup of projects which closely examined the theme of sustainability from a scientific point of view and which explored diverse analytical perspectives.

The institution also fostered the sharing of technologies and different scientific approaches. What resulted was the creation of multidisciplinary synergetic relations which matched study programmes offered by the University with research in sustainability.

The number of specific research projects has risen significantly over the years and existing competencies held by faculty have been put to full use.

Sustainable Ca’ Foscari is committed to relating all the research projects and publications on sustainability on an annual basis.

Moreover the research is also the heart of an event that the University organizes every year: the **Venetonight**, an event arranged by Sustainable Ca’ Foscari together with University faculty and local institutions such as the Academy of Fine Arts of Venice. In this event has been highlighted the most important research projects with a special focus on the research projects on sustainable topics.
Principle 5 | Partnership: We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.

Ca’ Foscari means to increase its involvement in the Venetian territory, by identifying local needs and involving the major players in the search of synergies and partnerships that create new value.

The Institution is also committed to promoting a policy of sustainability among the local, national and international community by holding promotional and scientific events.

The University is particularly committed to promote sustainability through the establishment of beneficial relations with like-minded partners and suppliers. Our desire is for our work-related relations to confirm reciprocal commitments based on long term initiatives and promotional events, and not just the supply of goods and services.

Also the relations with other institutions is a very important issue for Ca Foscari. Italian institutions have only recently felt the need to address sustainability and, because of this, it is important to establish good relations with all institutions involved and adopt a view to sustainability so that all can share their ideas and open the road to a virtuous cycle of reciprocal motivating encouragement.

We, at Ca’ Foscari, are in fact convinced that it is fundamental the wider community be involved first hand in the events, relations with external stakeholders and the circulation of scientific results. We hope, in this way, to achieve real social integration.

Our dedication to the local territory is also seen in specific projects such as the Ca’ Foscari Sociale Project launched to boost relations and competencies in favour of national and international voluntary services.

To increase awareness of the University’s civic role and, at the same time, to be more visible and effective in the area, Ca’ Foscari has launched specific projects to enter the sphere of territorial welfare. It is in this way that the Ca’ Foscari Sociale Project was inaugurated with a view to putting together and satisfying the different needs manifested by non-profit associations active in the area with people desiring to do volunteer work.

Our objectives are twofold. We endeavour to increase the University’s social role by evidencing individual’s professionalism and their sometimes hidden abilities and, then, we work to making these abilities fully available to the diverse volunteer community.
An agreement was signed on October 1st, 2013 with the seven Voluntary Service Centres of the Veneto Region to structure relationships with these partners.

From the outset, participation has been very active and, as a result, an on-line wall has been created to rapidly match offer and demand.

A number of special projects such as the Special Olympics and the University for Volunteer Work fall within Ca’ Foscari Sociale.
Principle 6 | Dialogue: We will facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organisations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

Sustainability means actively listening to the needs and the requests of those who work and study at Ca’ Foscari as well as of those who live in the area. In compliance with this policy, since its outset, the Sustainable Ca’ Foscari Programme has factored in moments of consultation with its stakeholders with a view to open and frank discussion.

Relations with our internal stakeholders - namely, the students, faculty, administration, collaborators and graduates - are of fundamental importance. Their suggestions and comments have aided Sustainable Ca’ Foscari in updating and reworking its objectives as well as offering welcomed challenges.

In short, their invaluable input has allowed us to grow. Similarly, the activities of networking and meeting with the larger international community have been just as important. Canvassing these views and experiences has allowed Ca’ Foscari to compare its activity with that of other universities worldwide enabling a fruitful exchange of good practices regarding sustainability.

Engaging with our stakeholders has become so important that it was standardized in 2012. From that date on, a panel including members from the University, local and national bodies and institutions is invited annually to comment on the Sustainability Report at its release.

The decision to invest in new communication technologies and resources in aid of innovation policies has also resulted from ongoing exchanges with all our stakeholders.

As of 2011, Sustainable Ca’ Foscari has a website dedicated to this and as of the following year has been active on all the major social networks.

Open communications with our stakeholders has, as always, given positive results and has allowed Ca’ Foscari to receive valuable feedback on its Reporting and on the activities engaged in. These moments are, in fact, fundamental to our programming future activities and to reviewing those already in place.
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