Sharing Information on Progress

PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

2016/17-2017/18
OUR CALLING

We develop innovative and socially responsible business leaders with a global perspective through education, inspired by research and grounded in practice.
I have had the honour of serving as Dean of the Beedie School of Business since January 2016. During this time, I have led an in-depth consultation process with a broad cross-section of internal and external stakeholders including faculty, staff, student, alumni, and industry partners to fully understand and articulate the School’s goals and values going forward.

The process of Building a Better Beedie (B3) has resulted in the revisioning of our mission and values statements, that considers our past and informs our future path. The re-affirmation of the Beedie 2022 strategic plan encapsulates what is core to the Beedie School with respect to our perspective and priorities – the first step in a long-view process, and identifies key areas where we need to further develop our capacity to deliver on our calling – to develop innovative and socially responsible business leaders. We are committed to putting Beedie 2022 priorities into practice across each area of our operations - from program review and development, pedagogy, research, faculty renewal and recruitment, to student engagement and activities.

The Beedie School has a history of broad engagement in the areas of innovation, social responsibility, and global perspective. Through our commitment to the Principles of Responsible Management Education, we seek to ensure we integrate our priority areas of engagement across our programs and in each of our students’ experiences at Beedie.

We look forward to reporting on our progress over the next 24 months.

Ali Dastmalchian
Dean, Beedie School of Business
Simon Fraser University
2016/17 - 2017/18 Reflection

Over the past 24 months, SFU Beedie has completed work on revisioning the school’s mission to reflect our core thematic emphases on innovation, social responsibility, and global perspective as part of the B3 process of Building a Better Beedie.

PRINCIPLE 2 (VALUES) GOAL: Re-examining our mission and values.

The school mission has been revised through broad consultation and has clarified core themes for the school. Following our “Build a Better Beedie” (B3) process, the faculty and staff ratified our new Beedie 2022 Vision and Calling. Through the B3 process, Vision to Action documents have been developed to articulate the connection between our core themes of innovation, social responsibility, and global perspective and our activities.

PRINCIPLE 3 (METHOD) GOAL: Continue to focus on creating more impactful programs by increasing internationalization, Indigenization, student engagement and experiential learning opportunities.

In alignment with Simon Fraser University’s commitment to reconciliation, the Beedie School has incorporated ethics, corporate social responsibility, and Indigenous content as required courses in the Full-time MBA and Executive MBA programs at the graduate level.

PRINCIPLE 4 (RESEARCH) GOAL: Renewing our continuing faculty line by recruiting faculty to support our program offerings and advance values.

We have hired Dara Kelly as Assistant Professor in Indigenous Business to support the School and University’s goals in the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action.

PRINCIPLE 5 (PARTNERSHIP) GOAL: Revitalizing our industry partnerships to reflect our mission and values.

The Beedie Advisory Board represents one of the key ways external industry partners can provide feedback and guidance on school activities and governance. In the past 24 months, we have reconstituted our Advisory Board, developing updated terms of reference and addressing board diversity. We are also creating new processes and opportunities to engage board members in school initiatives.
2018/19 - 2019/20 INTENTION

Over the next 24 month period, SFU Beedie will be actively engaged in specific projects to continue the work towards our broader Beedie 2022 goals that are a result of the B3 process. Our goal is to complete Beedie 2022 priorities and Academic Plan objectives that align with the specific PRME Principles outlined below:

PRINCIPLE 2 (VALUES) GOAL:
- Align curriculum and pedagogy with the strategic priorities, values, and themes identified (innovation, social responsibility, global perspective).
- Redesign undergraduate and graduate program-level learning goals and review current assessment practices.

PRINCIPLE 3 (METHOD) GOAL:
- Develop a core culture among the undergraduates of pride in the School, presence through deeper engagement in sponsored activities, and responsibility by owning their actions and showing commitment to our values.
- Expand co-curricular opportunities to support student leadership initiatives that demonstrate innovation; that create positive impact; and, that bridge connections between students, alumni, and industry.
- Continue integrating international and Indigenous content and contexts in curriculum and programs.

PRINCIPLE 4 (RESEARCH) GOAL:
- We seek to hire individuals who share our commitment to diversity and who demonstrate an affinity with our vision.
- Increase the percentage of faculty engaged in social responsibility, innovation, and global business research.

PRINCIPLE 5 (PARTNERSHIP) GOAL:
- Continue to develop and manage RADIUS to ensure engagement with students and faculty at SFU to further its community development and social initiatives, explore the social innovation opportunities in SFU’s designation as an Ashoka U Changemaker campus.

PRINCIPLE 6 (DIALOGUE) GOAL:
- Beedie will work to strengthen our Research Centres by focusing attention on supporting internal and external connections between students, scholars, and practitioners.
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.

From September 2016 to August 2018, SFU Beedie awarded 1,474 undergraduate degrees, 465 graduate degrees, 7 doctoral degrees.
2016/17-2017/18 HIGHLIGHTS

Beedie alumni featured on BIV’s Top 40 Under 40

Oct 04, 2016

A trio of Beedie School of Business alumni have been named on Business in Vancouver’s (BIV) prestigious 2016 Top 40 Under 40 list.

John Fraser, Janet Trpin, and Alfred Wong have been included in this year’s list, which highlights the best and brightest business talent in Vancouver. Each year the candidates are selected based on demonstrated excellence in business, judgement, community contribution, and leadership.

Fraser, a graduate of the Beedie Executive MBA program, is the general manager of the Vancouver Canadians Baseball Club.

Trpin graduated from SFU in 2004 with a joint major in Business and Science, and moved on to become co-founder and CEO of real estate investment advisory organization Western Wealth Capital.

Management of Technology MBA alumnus Wong is director of Asia Pacific sales for clean energy hydrogen fuel cells manufacturer Ballard Power Systems. Focusing mostly in China, Wong is responsible for 40 percent of the company’s global sales, which have grown to $40 million during his tenure.

Non-profit cofounded by Beedie student short listed for Democracy Innovation Award

Nov 29, 2016

Beedie School of Business PhD student Simon Pek has recently returned from the Council of Europe’s World Forum for Democracy, where work done by Democracy in Practice, the non-profit organization he co-founded, earned them a place as one of three finalists in the Democracy Innovation Award.

The Forum, held at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, provides a platform for activists, academics, and political decision-makers to come together and discuss solutions to the key challenges facing democracy. This year’s Forum brought together over 130 speakers and 2,000 participants from over 100 countries around the world.

Pek and Democracy in Practice’s other co-founder Adam Cronkright were invited to participate in the Forum for the first time this year, presenting their work and taking part in discussions and debates.

Democracy in Practice started in 2013 with the premise that current forms of democracy are largely unrepresentative and ineffective. As an international non-profit organization dedicated to democratic innovation, experimentation and capacity building, they seek to challenge established ways of thinking and develop innovative new approaches.

The organization works primarily in Bolivia and is in its third year of school-based projects that reinvent student government by introducing more inclusive and representative practices. These include selecting representatives from the student population at random, rather than by election, and rotating the individuals selected, to allow a broader range and larger number of students to get involved.

"It has been exciting to see a wide range of organizations, including student unions and student clubs, show interest in changes to their democratic practices that can have a substantial impact in making them more developmental, effective, representative, and legitimate,” added Pek. “This work also connects closely with Canada’s and BC’s modern reputation for experimenting with new forms of democracy, such as BC’s Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform and the recent Grandview-Woodland Citizens’ Assembly. I am happy to help any SFU student or group interested in seeing how these practices could be used in their organization.”
Self-sufficiency the goal of MBA grad’s work as CEO of Kanaka Bar Indian Band

May 03, 2018

As more communities seek ways to become more sustainable, they might look for inspiration at a small BC First Nations band moving towards self-sufficiency, thanks in part to SFU Beedie School of Business MBA graduate, Zain Nayani.

Zain Nayani is the CEO of economic and business development for the Kanaka Bar Indian Band located near Lytton, northeast of Vancouver. The band has about 200 members, with 60 or so living on-site year-round.

“We are trying to prepare the community for the effects of climate change and put in place measures to succeed and achieve self-sufficiency,” says Nayani, who is originally from Pakistan.

First hired in 2012 on an eight-month internship through the MBA program, Nayani, through his company ZN Advisory Services, continues to work with the band on various projects. He initially worked with the band to develop a new governance and financial management system. This set a foundation for the future community vision of achieving self-sufficiency in four areas: energy, food, employment and finance. The next step was to develop and implement a strategic plan for achieving the vision.

“It’s tough to say when we will achieve a state of true self-sufficiency, but we are moving in the right direction,” Nayani says. “It’s rewarding to implement plans, get dirty and make things happen.”

The band is making significant strides towards its vision.

In 2015, in partnership with Innergex Renewable Energy Inc., Kanaka Bar opened the 49.9 MW Kwoiek Creek run-of-river plant. It’s now working with BC Hydro on a second 500 kW run-of-river on Siwash Creek.

More recently, Kanaka Bar installed three grid-connected projects as well as a battery-powered solar project. The band is also exploring potential for wind turbines and roof-top solar.

To achieve food security, Kanaka Bar has built community gardens with the goal of producing enough to both feed the community and sell excess to others.

Kanaka Bar is also planning to develop its eco-tourism potential, starting with a rest stop powered by renewable energy on Highway-1 and featuring an EV charging station. The goal is to encourage people to explore the nearby trails and learn about Kanaka as they take a travel break.

“It’s been a rewarding and mutually beneficial experience,” says Nayani. “So much that I learned at SFU has helped me. I’ve been able to share my knowledge, help the band build capacity, and become a trusted member of the community.”

But, he adds with a chuckle, “I’m trying to phase myself out of a job. That’s what I’m passionate about, because it would be another measure of self-sufficiency for the band.”
Zain Nayani, second from right at rear, stands with band members at the site of their solar array.
U-bicycle, the first dock-less bikeshare program in Western Canada.
SFU alumni launch station-less bikeshare service in B.C.

Mar 22, 2018

A team of three SFU alumni have launched U-bicycle North America, the first dock-less bikeshare program in Western Canada. The all-female leadership team comprises CEO Grace Min (BA, Sociology and Education), Chief Strategic Officer Angel Fu (BBA, Finance and Marketing), and Business, and Chief Marketing Officer Mandy Chan (BA, Communication).

After graduating, Min started a successful career as an entrepreneur, founding three businesses in the international trade, property, and travel sectors. Combining her entrepreneurial talents with a passion for cycling, Min sees U-bicycle as the perfect mix of business and making a positive impact.

“I grew up in Shanghai and in my childhood I really liked bicycles. I had some great, memorable moments with family and friends riding bicycles,” says Min. “But my husband and some friends suffered from lung diseases, it was very common because of the air pollution in China at that time.”

When she arrived in Canada to study at SFU, she was struck by the blue skies, clean air and cycling infrastructure and immediately saw the opportunity to promote cycling to help maintain the air quality, and reduce carbon emissions and traffic congestion.

Angel Fu, a close family friend of Min’s, was an Executive Director at Goldman Sachs in Hong Kong. She left this job to join the U-bicycle team, inspired by the idea of giving something back to the community. The two were joined by Mandy Chan, who draws on seven years’ experience in marketing and advertising at Microsoft, to complete the leadership team.

U-bicycle launched its service in Victoria, BC, in October 2017 and now operates 450 bicycles in the provincial capital. It is now looking to grow, both in Victoria and its surrounding areas and in the Lower Mainland, and the leadership team is in talks with several municipalities.

With 20 employees in North America and eight further crew members soon to be hired to support planned expansion, U-bicycle is growing fast. The company is committed to hiring local talent and partnering with business in its areas of operation, to promote local employment opportunities.

The station-less system means that users are not restricted by having to pick up or drop off bikes at specified locations. Instead, you can search for a nearby bike and unlock it using a smartphone app, and lock it up again when you reach your destination—wherever that is. The convenience of this system, which also removes the need for expensive infrastructure or the loss of parking spaces and revenues, makes it attractive to municipal governments.

For Min, the success of the venture is about far more than the number of bikes on the road; she is proud of the impact it will have on her community and the next generation.

“I can happily say that, when I look at my four-year-old son, Rick, zipping around on his bike, I am extremely proud of the life and example I am setting for him,” she says. “With U-bicycle I hope he can in turn teach others how to reduce our carbon footprint, not just for ourselves but for the generations to come.”
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.

Fall 2019 student orientations for undergraduate and graduate programs will begin to incorporate Indigenous content and perspectives as we welcome our incoming students.
2016/17-2017/18 HIGHLIGHTS

SFU Beedie appoints Joy Cramer to lead Indigenous programs
Jan 16, 2018

SFU’s Beedie School of Business has appointed Joy Cramer, a former Deputy Minister with the Province of Manitoba, to the newly created position of director, Indigenous Programs. In her new role, Cramer will lead the school’s strategy to grow Indigenous programming, integrate Indigenous learning into the mainstream curriculum, and increase engagement with Indigenous communities.

Cramer is a citizen of Sagkeeng First Nation, with maternal ties to Sandy Bay First Nation, both of which are in Manitoba and were signatories to 1871’s Treaty 1. She has a rich background of experience in senior governmental roles and in Indigenous advocacy. She worked for almost 20 years in various positions within the Manitoba provincial government, most recently as Deputy Minister, Family Services. She has also gained a deep understanding of the needs and aspirations of Indigenous people through her work in Indigenous communities. This includes on-reserve and urban social services delivery, serving on boards, and First Nation policy experience.

SFU Beedie to host Indigenous governance program
Feb 28, 2018

SFU’s Beedie School of Business is partnering with the Native Nations Institute at the University of Arizona to host June in Vancouver (JiV), a new program in Indigenous governance, economic development and business.

The two-week interactive program offers a series of eight non-credit courses, running from June 4 to 16, 2018, at SFU Beedie’s Segal Graduate School in downtown Vancouver. Students who complete six courses in either program are eligible for a non-credit certificate from the Native Nations Institute.

The JiV program provides professional development opportunities for Indigenous leaders and those working in the area of Indigenous affairs, informed by the best available research and the deep experience of the course instructors. JiV is not only a venue for the dissemination of best practices in Indigenous governance and business.

SFU Beedie hires Indigenous business assistant professor Dara Kelly
Jul 1, 2018

SFU’s Beedie School of Business has hired Dr. Dalene (Dara) Kelly, to a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of Indigenous Business.

Dr Dara Kelly is from the Leq’á:mel First Nation, part of the Stó:lō Coast Salish. Her doctoral research at the University of Auckland Business School was entitled, “Feed the people and you will never go hungry: Illuminating Coast Salish economy of affection,” and explored Coast Salish philosophy of freedom, unfreedom, wealth and reciprocity, and how that shapes Coast Salish philosophy of economy. A paper stemming from her thesis won the Best Paper in Sustainability Award at the Sustainability, Ethics and Entrepreneurship (SEE) Conference in Puerto Rico in February 2017.

Currently Dr Kelly is working on the Coastal First Nations (CFN) Legacy Project. CFN is an alliance of First Nations communities on Haida Gwaii and the North and Central coasts of British Columbia.
Sleep apnea treatment device wins Triple Bottom Line prize at OppFest innovation competition

Mar 31, 2017

SFU’s brightest young entrepreneurs gathered at the university’s Surrey campus on Thursday, March 23, 2017, for the seventh annual Opportunity Fest (OppFest) event, showcasing their innovative ventures and competing for prizes in a number of categories. The overall grand prize winner for the venture that best exemplifies commitment to a Triple Bottom Line – taking into consideration People, Planet and Profit – was won by Zennea Technologies, which is creating a portable device to treat sleep apnea, replacing traditional unwieldy solutions. The Triple Bottom Line award and the OppFest event as a whole are sponsored by Vancity.

“Winning the prize means a lot to me,” says Nell Du, a Mechatronic Systems Engineering student and part of the Technology Entrepreneurship @ SFU program, and one of the team behind Zennea Technologies. “It showed us that we are moving forward in the right direction, and that affirmation from the judges is really important to us at this stage. Right now, we feel more confident about our product and even more motivated to push it forward.”

This year’s event was the biggest yet, with more than 50 ventures presenting their ideas to a distinguished panel of expert judges, drawn from the world of business, entrepreneurship, the community and the University. The entrants also reflected SFU’s commitment to making a positive impact in the world; the Impact category of previous years was so oversubscribed that this year it was divided into two separate categories, Most Impact Environmental Opportunity and Most Impactful Social Opportunity. Even so, these were still the two largest categories in this year’s competition.

The event also included “junior innovators” from Fraser Heights secondary, giving local high school students the opportunity to showcase their own projects to the innovation community and SFU students, and gain advice to help them make their ideas a reality.

The full list of winners in each category is as follows:

**Triple Bottom Line (sponsored by VanCity):** Zennea Technologies - Zennea Technologies is creating the world’s smallest CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) device to treat Sleep Apnea.

**Most impactful environmental opportunity:** SIM Globe - SIM Globe aims to improve honey production efficiency using 3D printed honeycombs.

**Most impactful social opportunity:** Zodiac - The venture’s emURGENCY app will increase hospital efficiency by providing medical information to doctors prior to the patient being diagnosed.

**Most innovative technological solution:** Zennea Technologies

**Most investable opportunity:** Open Spot - The “airBnB of parking”, facilitating the communication between private lot owners and drivers looking for a cheap parking spot openspot.ca.

**Entrepreneurs Choice:** Ecoffee - Upcycling coffee grounds from coffee shops in Vancouver to optimize the use of a valuable resource.

**“Junior Innovators” award:** CHAAC the AstroPi - A cost effective solution that monitors and records weather parameters such as temperature, humidity and air pressure.
The team behind Zennea Technologies, creators of the world’s smallest CPAP device to treat sleep apnea, and grand prize winners at Opportunity Fest.
BUS 361 Fall 2016 students who raised $25,800 for the Canadian Cancer Society.
Beedie students raise over $25,000 in one semester for the Canadian Cancer Society

Jan 25, 2017

A group of Beedie students raised $25,800 for the Canadian Cancer Society last semester, in an initiative run as part of a project management class at the school.

Students enrolled in the Bus 361 Project Management class, taught by Beedie lecturer Dr. Kamal Masri, raised the funds through the 25toLife initiative, a joint project between the class and the Canadian Cancer Society. This is the fourth consecutive year that Masri has run the project in the fall semester of his project management class raising a total exceeding $109,000 to support cancer research.

25toLife gives students the opportunity to put the lessons they learn in the project management class into practice as they organize a series of fundraising events and activities. After meeting for the first time on September 12, 2016, the class came up with a series of seven events to run throughout the month of November.

The students teamed up with a range of corporate sponsors to deliver a diverse program that included a gala dinner, an XBOX gaming tournament, a five-pin bowling event and an obstacle-course race.

“The opportunity to learn project management principles in class and apply them toward a tangible result was truly a breath of fresh air in post secondary education,” says Beedie student Tim Kwon, who participated in the program. “The structure of the course allowed us to gain deeper insight into the reality of the work involved as a project manager, and knowledge of risk management gained in the classroom helped us mitigate potential issues.

“In the end, the course was extremely rewarding, not only because we raised over $25,000, but for the amount of collaboration between students and the relationships formed during the process,” he concludes.

Dr. Kamal Masri’s work to establish the 25toLife project has earned him significant recognition, including a Surrey Leader Community Leaders Award in 2016 and the Canadian Cancer Society’s Community Champion Award in 2015. Masri is also a two-time winner of the TD Canada Trust Distinguished Teaching Award, the highest teaching honour available at the Beedie School of Business

However, he does not let awards distract him from his true mission: helping students to learn while making a positive impact on his community.

“I am excited that the 25toLife project we started four years ago continues to be successful both in giving students real, hands-on experience in project management and in raising funds for this important cause,” says Masri. “Experiential learning is central to what we do here at Beedie, and I look forward to running this project for many years to come.”
PRINCIPLE 3: METHOD

We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

Starting in the Fall 2019 term, dedicated courses on CSR and Indigenous business are being added to specific graduate degree program study plans.
2016/17-2017/18 HIGHLIGHTS

Beedie graduate programs ranked among world’s best for integrating sustainability

Oct 18, 2016

The Beedie School of Business has been ranked as one of the top 25 graduate business schools in the world for its dedication to integrating sustainability into the education of future business leaders.

Corporate Knights Magazine ranked Beedie 23rd worldwide and sixth in Canada in their annual Better World MBA Ranking. The unique ranking weights programs on how they prepare graduates to solve business problems that intersect with larger social problems, such as climate change and inequality.

Beedie associate professor Stephanie Bertels credits the School’s long-term commitment to sustainable business education for its high ranking.

“No sustainability was a core course in our MBA program long before it became fashionable,” says Bertels, who is also the Director of Beedie’s Centre for Corporate Governance and Sustainability. “Every year our students work with a real client, grappling with how to embed sustainability into organizational decision-making — coming up against real constraints along the way. Through hands-on experiences, we train leaders that are ready to tackle the world’s most pressing problems.”

The programs ranked include the top 100 programs on the 2016 Financial Times (FT) Global MBA rankings and other accredited programs (AMBA, AACSB, EQUIS) who choose to participate. Programs are assessed on the number of core courses that incorporate sustainability, including corporate responsibility and ethics, as well as faculty research and institutes dedicated to the practice of sustainable business.

Upon releasing the ranking, Corporate Knights noted that the Better World MBA Ranking often places schools not traditionally recognized on the FT Global 100 MBA Ranking in higher standing. It also found that the top 40 schools on the Better World list offered more than double the exposure to sustainability themes than the FT 100 Global MBA Ranking.

“SFU Beedie’s inclusion in Net Impact’s top 50 schools for Environmental and Sustainability Impact is a testimony to the kinds of people you find at SFU Beedie,” says Grace Potma, the 2016 President of Beedie’s Net Impact chapter, who led Beedie’s nomination for the rankings. “Every year SFU’s Net Impact student group volunteers significant time and energy to help young professionals have a positive ‘net impact’ through their careers, and these efforts flourish because of SFU’s institutional champions for environmental and social impact issues.”

Beedie named in top 50 business schools for Environmental Sustainability Programs

Feb 22, 2017

Beedie School of Business has secured a place in the Top 50 Environmental Sustainability Programs ranking in the 2016 Guide to Business Schools for Social & Environmental Impact report, published by Net Impact, a non-profit empowering transformational change in the workplace. Beedie is the only Canadian school named in the list, which features leading business schools from around the world.

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Clean-tech membrane wins SFU science and tech venture pitch competition

October 13, 2016

A portable DUI-testing headset, a revolutionary clean tech membrane, and a home diagnostic for chemotherapy patients were just some of the pioneering ventures pitched to a panel of guest judges at SFU’s Invention to Innovation Venture Pitch competition.

The competition, held on October 12, was the capstone event for the inaugural cohort of The Graduate Certificate in Science and Technology Commercialization at Simon Fraser University’s Beedie School of Business.

The certificate program equips scientists and engineers from SFU and UBC with the business skills required to make their inventions a commercial success.

Six of the students from the first cohort, which graduated on October 7, were chosen to pitch their ventures to a panel of judges with experience in angel and seed investment and mentorship for science-based ventures.

The Product Ready venture category was won by SFU chemistry PhD student Ben Britton.

Britton’s venture, Ionomr, manufactures the most pH-durable, mechanically strong anion-exchange membrane in the world, with potential for use in clean-tech energy, water purification and treatment systems, and next-gen fuel cells.

“The Graduate Certificate has taught me how to talk to investors in terms they understand, which as a scientist, you don’t always do,” says Britton. “Without the experience of the Certificate and the visibility it has given me I simply wouldn’t have made a successful company.”

SFU chemistry PhD student Finlay MacNab, placed first in the Emergent Venture category, for ventures that are not yet ready for market. His venture, N=1 is a home diagnostic device that monitors life-threatening infection during chemotherapy treatment, allowing doctors to intervene early.

“I have built a strong network with my cohort and I could envision each of them winning this competition,” says McNab. “As a scientist I have a deep technical knowledge but the ability to communicate in a business environment is something that requires a whole different set of skills. The Graduate Certificate helped me to learn those skills.”

Other ventures presented at the competition include:

Ophthalight: an accurate, portable, and automated eye test device that can monitor for a variety of diseases and also serve as a DUI test.

Renaissance BioScience: a unique yeast innovation company producing specialized yeast tailored for individual products.

CoPILOT: automated wheelchair technology, similar to Google’s self-driving cars.


“The quality of the venture pitches on display this evening perfectly demonstrates the journey these students have made in the past year,” says Elicia Maine, academic director of the Graduate Certificate in Science and Technology Commercialization.

“The program was designed to help Canada’s world leading scientists and engineers get the perspective they need to lead innovation throughout their careers. The students showed this evening that they now have the knowledge and skills required to turn their inventions into viable innovation.
Ben Britton, won the Product Ready category for Venture Pitch 2016.
Enactus SFU makes history at regional entrepreneurship competition

Mar 13, 2017

SFU became the first school to win all four categories at the Enactus Regional Exposition for Western Canada, a competition where teams of students present community outreach projects and business ventures to a judging panel of business leaders. This year’s Regional Exposition for Western Canada was held in Calgary from March 2-3, with 19 universities competing for the regional champion titles. Enactus is a community of student, academic and business leaders who are using entrepreneurial action to create a better, more sustainable world.

The Enactus SFU team, including several Beedie students and alumni, secured first place in each of the Regional Exposition’s four categories: the TD Entrepreneurship Challenge, the Capital One Financial Education Challenge, the Scotiabank EcoLiving Green Challenge, and the Scotiabank Youth Empowerment Challenge. Having won the Regional Exposition, the SFU students will now face the top teams from across Canada at the National Exposition in Vancouver from May 9-11.

“I am incredibly proud of my competition teams, supporters, and execs,” says Enactus SFU President Rajin Shokar. “We made history in Calgary, becoming the first team to win all four categories at the Western Canada Regional Exposition. It’s even more special this year, as our teams will now be competing on home turf at the National Exposition.”

During the competition, the teams showcase how their school’s programs have impacted the local community to a panel of industry judges.

Beedie undergraduates Halie Minhas and Samantha Vuong teamed up with SFU’s School of Interactive Arts and Technology (SIAT) student Joyce Aquino, and were coached by Beedie students Dynamic Tang and Kim Venn to present Count on Me, a program aimed at teaching financial literacy skills to disadvantaged youths, winning the Capital One Financial Education Challenge.

In addition, Count on Me came out on top in the Scotiabank Youth Empowerment Challenge. The program was presented by Beedie students Joshua Chareunsouk and Christina Will with SIAT student Kosuke Futsukaichi, and coached by Leslie Chow and Judy Liang, both Beedie Alumni.

The winning initiative in the Scotiabank EcoLiving Green Challenge category was Coast Cards, Enactus SFU’s newest social enterprise program which upcycles used coasters from restaurants into handmade greeting cards. It was presented by Beedie students Napassorn Limapichat and Shilpa Lakshmy, along with SIAT student Ashley Wu, and coached by Beedie student Lara Ahmad and alumnus Aamir Sheriff.

Coast Cards was also showcased in the TD Entrepreneurship Challenge category championed by Beedie undergraduates Zahra Hirji and Jessica Truong with SIAT designers Jason Chung and Carolyn Yip, who were coached by Beedie students Hangue Kim and Nikhita Bhatt.

To learn more about Enactus SFU, visit http://enactussfu.com/.
**Beedie team takes home win in SFU Net Impact Sustainability Challenge**

Mar 31, 2017

A team of Full-Time MBA students recorded a memorable win for the Beedie School of Business at the fourth annual SFU Net Impact Sustainability Challenge, overcoming strong competition in the final round from American University’s Kogod School of Business (finishing second), Oregon’s Lundquist School of Business (third) and Western’s Ivey (fourth).

Organized entirely by students in the SFU Net Impact Segal chapter, each year the Sustainability Challenge connects graduate students from across Canada and the US for two days of sustainability-focused competition and networking.

Headline sponsor of the Sustainability Challenge, FortisBC, once again provided the case to competitors two weeks ahead of the presentations, which took place on March 25. This year’s case focused on the delivery of natural gas energy to customers within First Nation communities, and invited the teams to evaluate the considerations that would need to be taken into account.

“This event is so great because, apart from being a lot of fun, we use a live case based on a real issue currently being faced by our title sponsor, FortisBC,” says Robert Hamill, Vice President of Net Impact SFU. “The case issues are complex, vague, and really test the skills of competitors. Also, the judges are all extremely knowledgeable and passionate about the issues. Students that compete gain access some really critical insight that they would not otherwise.”

The winning team, comprising Shannon Bridson, Alex Novikov, Yashu Mittal and Lindsay Cervenko were awarded the grand prize of $4,000 at the event’s closing reception, hosted by event sponsor TELUS at the TELUS Garden building, the organization’s LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) platinum-rated headquarters. Their victory in the competition was the first for an SFU team. The second and third placed teams took home prizes of $2,000 and $1,000 respectively. The competition also awarded a best presenter in each of the competition rooms. Both awards went to Beedie students: Rita Hayre (Part-Time MBA) and Shannon Bridson (Full-Time MBA).

“Participating in the case challenge has been the most rewarding experience of my MBA to date,” says Shannon Bridson. “It was a fantastic opportunity to learn hands-on about the complexity behind real sustainable decision making through social, environmental, and economical lenses. It was an honor to be part of SFU’s first team to win the challenge and humbling to receive a best presenter award. I would like to thank my team for their great work and dedication, as well as the organizers for hosting such a wonderful event.”

In addition to FortisBC and TELUS, the Sustainability Challenge was also sponsored by Finning International, the CPA Center for Sustainability, the SFU Center for Corporate Governance and Sustainability, and the SFU Beedie School of Business.
The winning team, comprising Alex Novikov, Lindsay Cervenko, Yashu Mittal and Shannon Bridson
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.

Lieke Ten Brummelhuis, Associate Professor of Management and Organization Studies, published articles on workaholism and health in Academy of Management Discoveries and Harvard Business Review.
Is workaholism bad for your health? It depends how engaged you are in your job

Aug 31, 2017

A new study investigating the phenomenon of ‘workaholism’, whose sufferers feel compulsively driven to work long hours and feel guilty when they are not working, has found that – as might be expected – it can have negative impacts on both mental and physical health.

What is more surprising, however, is that these health issues are correlated to workaholism only when a person has low engagement in their work; for those who feel highly engaged and enjoy their work, the study, published in Academy of Management Discoveries [DOI: 10.5465/amd.2015.0115], found that having an obsessive work mentality doesn’t necessarily lead to negative health outcomes.

"Engagement is key,” says Lieke ten Brummelhuis, Assistant Professor of Management and Organization Studies at SFU’s Beedie School of Business, “There’s a big difference between workers whose propensity to overwork and inability to detach after hours stem from absorption in the challenges their job presents (in other words, engagement) and those for whom it reflects, say, anxiety about the job or obsessive ambition.”

The researchers, who also included Nancy P. Rothbard of the University of Pennsylvania and Benjamin Uhrich of the University of North Carolina Charlotte, analyzed questionnaire responses from 1,277 workers at a large international financial consulting firm, followed by medical screening results from 763 of that group.

The results showed that working long hours on its own was not an indicator that someone would suffer stress-related physical symptoms, such as headaches or stomach upset, or the risk factors for heart disease and diabetes.

However, workaholism was significantly associated with stress-related physical complaints. But evidence that these would lead to heart disease or diabetes was found only for employees with below-average work engagement. Workaholics with above-average engagement showed no sign of being at risk for these serious health disorders. Indeed, their risk factors were lower than those of non-workaholics, suggesting a surprising health benefit of working compulsively at something one loves.

Businesses that show commitment to sustainability inspire greener customers

Aug 25, 2016

Spending a little to prove a commitment to sustainability can help tourism industry businesses such as hotels inspire customers to conserve resources—and save money in the process. The study found that hotel guests’ willingness to conserve resources is affected by how “green” they perceive the hotel to be. The more environmentally friendly consumers perceived the firm to be, the more they conserved.

The paper, “Turning Off the Lights: Consumers’ Environmental Efforts Depend on Visible Efforts of Firms,” was co-authored by Brent McFerran, associate professor at SFU’s Beedie School of Business; University of Michigan marketing professor Aradhna Krishna; and Wenbo Wang, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology [DOI: 10.1509/jmr.14.0441].

The researchers tracked participants staying in two different hotels, one high-priced, and the other more economical. In both hotels, half of the rooms had notes asking guests to conserve electricity and set the thermostat to a certain temperature, while the other half contained no notes. Each room was also randomly assigned
either an environmentally friendly, but more expensive bamboo toothbrush—signifying a visible effort on the hotel’s part to be green—or an environmentally unfriendly, but cheaper plastic toothbrush.

The study found that guests in the rooms containing the notes requesting them to conserve resources were willing to do so if the room also contained the environmentally friendly bamboo toothbrush. Guests staying in rooms with the plastic toothbrush did not conserve electricity, even when asked to do so. Interestingly, guests staying at the higher-priced hotel in rooms with the cheaper toothbrush used more electricity than normal when asked to conserve resources.

“This effect is driven in part by hypocrisy: high-price firms asking consumers to conserve when the firm does not do so itself results in a backlash,” says McFerran. “Firms should always couple their requests to consumers with proof that the firm is also exerting its own effort.”

Although the bamboo toothbrush cost more to purchase, the higher cost was more than offset by the savings in electricity consumption.

Welfare recipients judged negatively when making ethical purchases

Apr 26, 2016

Society believes that those on social assistance – or “welfare” – should not be paying a premium to purchase ethical goods instead of cheaper alternatives, according to a new study from Simon Fraser University’s Beedie School of Business.

The research found that consumers earning a moderate to high income who purchased ethical items – such as organic food, or environmentally friendly cars – were viewed as moral for doing so, while welfare recipients were judged immoral for making the exact same choice.

The paper, “Wealth and Welfare: Divergent Moral Reactions to Ethical Consumer Choices” was co-authored by Brent McFerran, assistant professor at the Beedie School of Business; Jenny Olson, assistant professor at the University of Kansas; Andrea Morales, professor at Arizona State University; and Darren Dahl, professor at University of British Columbia [DOI: 10.1093/jcr/ucv096].

The results consistently showed that consumers earning more money were viewed as more deserving of choice, and consequently were viewed as more virtuous when choosing ethical products.

“The research suggests that society believes that people receiving government assistance should go for cheap alternatives – they are punished for making more expensive, pro-social choices,” says McFerran.

“The public views the choices made by those spending tax dollars as though it were our own money. Because consumers on financial aid receive greater scrutiny over their purchases they face not only financial challenges but cultural challenges as well. It is possible that this judgment could affect their decision making.”

The academics ran five experiments, telling volunteers the incomes of the consumers making the purchases and asking them to make judgments accordingly.
This cross-country study investigates the antecedents and outcomes of corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices. Based on institutional theory and stakeholder theory, we conducted an empirical study among 519 firms in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. We found evidence that supports a significant positive relationship between stakeholder pressures, CSR practices, and business outcomes in the total sample. While our data reveals similarities between the three countries, differences in some areas can be observed as well. Implications for institutional theory and for CSR are derived.


There has been an upsurge of interest in compressed workweek schedules because of the opportunities they provide for enhanced organizational efficiency and more balanced work and life roles for employees. This study tested a moderated mediation model of the effects of compressed work hours satisfaction on absenteeism with the purpose of exploring both the mediation effects of emotional exhaustion and physical health and the moderating effects of sex on this relationship. It utilized data drawn from a sample of 236 contact-centre service workers linked to absenteeism data collected for a period of 12 months following the survey. Results indicated that compressed work hours satisfaction was associated with lower absenteeism and that this relationship was mediated sequentially through emotional exhaustion and physical health. Although the indirect effect of compressed work hours satisfaction on absenteeism through emotional exhaustion and physical health was not significantly different between women and men, the relationship between compressed work hours satisfaction and physical health was positive for women but not for men. The implications of these findings are discussed.


The case features WaterHealth International India (WHIN) – a subsidiary of WaterHealth International [WHI] Inc. WHIN was launched in 2006 with the vision to “be the leader in providing scalable, safe, and affordable water solutions to underserved populations through an innovative business model.” The company incorporated a Build-Operate-Transfer model with decentralized production and distribution. Following a successful pilot project, WHIN installed its WaterHealth Centers in 175 sites throughout rural India by 2009, and attracted a $15 million
investment from the International Finance Corporation to further expand its operations in India. Mr Vikas Shah, the Chief Operating Officer of the company, is faced with the issue of assessing scalability and sustainability of the company’s business model. He needs to examine and evaluate the company’s value proposition, resources and capabilities, and decide how to generate economic value while maintaining a focus on its social vision. The latter entails an ability to create shared value for stakeholders as an important contributor toward the company’s sustainability. Additionally, Mr Shah is evaluating alternative public-private partnerships in terms of their suitability for the Indian context and viability to drive profitability.


International organizations, ranging from large MNCs to small born global firms, are increasingly recognizing that multicultural employees can help them operate across countries and across cultures. However, multiculturals – individuals who identify with and internalize more than one culture – are a diverse group, and organizations seeking to leverage their potential can benefit from a deeper understanding of the resources they possess and the challenges they face. We conducted three studies with a total of 1196 participants to test relationships between multicultural identity patterns and personal, social and task outcomes. Consistent results across studies indicated that individuals with more cultural identities (higher identity plurality) had more social capital and higher levels of intercultural skills than those with fewer cultural identities, while individuals who integrated their cultural identities (higher identity integration) experienced higher levels of personal well-being than those who separated them. Based on these results we advocate for two directions in future research on multicultural employees: moving beyond cognitive mechanisms alone, and examining monocultural and multicultural individuals simultaneously along the spectrum of identity plurality.


The striking growth of online communities in recent years has sparked significant interest in understanding and quantifying benefits of participation. While research has begun to document the economic outcomes associated with online communities, quantifying the social value created in these collectives has been largely overlooked. This study proposes that online health communities create social value by addressing rural-urban health disparities via improved health capabilities. Using a unique data set from a rare disease community, we provide one of the first empirical studies of social value creation. Our quantitative analysis using exponential random graph models reveals patterns of social support exchanged between users and the variations in these patterns based on users’ location. We find that, overall, urban users are net suppliers of social support while rural participants are net recipients, suggesting that technology-mediated online health communities are able to alleviate rural-urban health disparities. This study advances extant understanding of value production in online collectives, and yields implications for policy.


The purpose of the research was to develop a tool for measuring antecedents of customer aggressive behavior (CAB) in healthcare service settings, by identifying its roots in organizational and interpersonal dynamics.
The concept of CAB was conceptualized and validated. In total, 18 items were identified across five dimensions: personal characteristics, uncomfortable environment, aggressive role models, reinforcement of aggressive behavior and aversive treatment. The scale demonstrated good psychometric results.

Exploring social and organizational antecedents that trigger CAB could help healthcare managers evaluate and proactively manage CAB and its implications within their organization.

This measurement scale is the first comprehensive tool, based on Bandura’s social learning theory (1973), that may identify and measure antecedents of CAB, and could be used to reduce CAB in healthcare service settings.


We extend the literature in relation to daily diary and managers’ wellbeing by unravelling how daily work and family factors influence managers’ wellbeing the following day. Four days’ diary data were collected from 131 managers. Family–work conflict from one day positively influenced job burnout in the following day, while autonomy satisfaction from one-day reduced burnout the following day. Family–work enrichment from one day positively influenced work engagement in the following day, as did needs satisfaction (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) and perceived autonomous support. Furthermore, daily burnout reduced work–life balance and this was fully mediated by daily work–family conflict. In addition, daily engagement increased work–life balance and this was partially mediated by daily work–family enrichment.


Social inequality is underpinned by exploitative labour institutions, yet the agency of employers in establishing and maintaining such institutions remains underexplored. We thus adopt the lens of institutional work in analysing South African mining employers’ purposive efforts to ensure reliable access to cheap labour from the 1860s through until the infamous Marikana Massacre in 2012. We find that while labour is scarce, employers engage in forcing: creating exploitative institutional devices through conscripting and controlling. But as labour becomes abundant (and political winds shift), employers engage in freeing: liberalizing institutional controls to give workers ‘choice’, while simultaneously outsourcing responsibilities and costs associated with the unjust employment relationship to others, including workers themselves. We thus explain how employers purposefully create and perpetuate their advantage in interaction with labour market dynamics, contributing to our understanding of inequality and the role of actors’ intentions in impacting social systems.


Five experiments show that less physical involvement in obtaining food leads to less healthy food choices. The authors find that when participants are given the choice of whether to consume snacks that they perceive as relatively unhealthy, they have a greater inclination to consume them when less (vs. more) physical involvement is required to help themselves to the food; this is not the case for snacks that they perceive as relatively healthy. Further, when participants are given the opportunity to choose their portion size, they select larger portions of unhealthy foods when less [vs. more] physical involvement is required to help themselves to the food; again, this is not the case for healthy foods. The authors suggest that this behavior occurs because being less physically involved in
serving one’s food allows participants to reject responsibility for unhealthy eating and thus to feel better about themselves after indulgent consumption. These findings add to the research on consumers’ self-serving attributions and to the growing literature on factors that nudge consumers toward healthier eating decisions.


The concept of sustainability was developed in response to stakeholder demands. One of the key mechanisms for engaging stakeholders is sustainability disclosure, often in the form of a report. Yet, how reporting is used to engage stakeholders is understudied. Using resource dependence and stakeholder theories, we investigate how companies within the same industry address different dependencies on stakeholders for economic, natural environment, and social resources and thus engage stakeholders accordingly. To achieve this objective, we conducted our research using qualitative research methods. Our findings suggest that the resource dependencies on different stakeholders lead to development of different stakeholder relationships and thus appropriate resources within the company to execute engagement strategies that are informing, responding, or involving. Our research explains why diversity exists in sustainability disclosure by studying how it is used to engage stakeholders. We find that five sustainability reporting characteristics are associated with the company’s stakeholder engagement strategy: directness of communication, clarity of stakeholder identity, deliberateness of collecting feedback, breadth of stakeholder inclusiveness, and utilization of stakeholder engagement for learning. Our study develops the literature by providing insight into companies’ choices of stakeholder engagement strategy thus explaining diversity in sustainability reporting based on the characteristics and relationships with specific stakeholders.


Understanding the influence of energy technology innovation in reducing a country’s greenhouse gas emissions requires a systematic review to characterize the existing system. A comprehensive data review of available financing mechanisms and investments by government and industry is undertaken for the case of Canada, coupled with an organized examination of existing international, federal, and regional climate policies that advance innovation. Results indicate that investments from early research and development through to capital expenditures are heavily weighted towards fossil fuels. Though federal efforts to meet international commitments have been unsuccessful, regions implementing high carbon fuel phase-out, renewable portfolio standards, and feed-in-tariffs were found to be successful in reducing emissions. Financing for clean energy projects is readily available; however, there is no complete database available for investors to discover these opportunities. To enhance clean energy innovation in Canada and enable success in emissions reductions, we suggest that investments (from research and development to capital expenditures) and regional policies should be aligned with federal commitments, along with clear communication of available financing to attract clean energy investors. Our approach to a systematic review is broadly applicable to other regions where there is interest in understanding and improving the role of innovation in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, particularly in countries with federalist political systems and large fossil fuel reserves.

Caloric overconsumption, rather than lack of exercise, is the primary driver of overweight and obesity. We review people’s beliefs about the causes of obesity, the origins and consequences of these beliefs, and suggest possible mechanisms for corrective action.

In multiple samples across the world, approximately half of the population mistakenly believes that lack of exercise is the primary cause of obesity. These misbeliefs have consequences: people who underestimate the importance of one’s diet are more likely to be overweight or obese than people who correctly believe that diet is the primary cause of obesity. Next, we discuss the systematic misrepresentation of these factors—which we call “leanwashing”—by the food and beverage industry. Corporate messaging and actions are likely contributing factors to these mistaken beliefs being so widespread, and thus corrective actions are required. These include regulation and taxation.

People’s beliefs have important medical consequences, and the origins of these beliefs and misbeliefs need to be monitored and regulated.


We define work–life flexibility as employment-scheduling practices that are designed to give employees greater control over when, where, how much, or how continuously work is done. Research has underexamined how work–life flexibility is stratified across occupations. We review how occupational status and flexibility experiences vary and shape work–life inequality, which we identify as a form of job inequality. We investigate the range of definitions, measurement approaches, and theorizing regarding work–life flexibility. We find that employees across occupational groups experience different work–life flexibility outcomes from different flexibility types. Providing employee control over scheduling variation (flextime) may benefit lower level workers the most, yet many are unable to access this flexibility form. Part-time work permitting control over work volume/workload hurts lower level employees the most (because of involuntary income and benefits loss). Yet, these same part-time practices enhance recruitment and retention for upper level jobs but harm promotion and pay. Work continuity control (leaves) benefits upper- and middle-level employees but is largely unavailable to lower level workers. Flexibility to control work location is rarely available for lower level jobs; but benefits middle- and upper level employees, provided that individuals are able to control separation from work when desired and self-regulate complexity. We offer implications for research and practice.


In this study, we present arguments and evidence for a constraining influence of socio-cultural adaptability of immigrants on their careers. We draw on embeddedness theory to contend that the socio-cultural adaptability may reduce the rate of career growth for skilled migrants, as socio-culturally adaptive immigrants may become more embedded in the native social network, making them prone to compromising their economic gains for social gains. Using panel data and hazard rate modelling on career histories of 102 skilled Indian immigrants, we show that socio-cultural adaptability has a negative effect on the rate of immigrant career growth. Further, our analysis of interactions shows that actions, which promote embedded ties, strengthen the negative influence of socio-cultural adaptability, and actions that shift focus away from embeddedness weaken it.

In recent years, society and many organizations have been paying increasing attention to the social responsibilities of organizations towards various stakeholder groups. To ensure the fulfillment of social responsibilities of organizations towards society, corporate social responsibility should be embedded in day-to-day operations and managerial decision-making. Total quality management is also a commonly used managerial tool that takes into considerations the interests of various stakeholder groups. This paper investigates how the relationship between corporate social responsibility and total quality management affect the organizational performance measured by the Balanced Scorecard (BSC). The results of the analysis, using structural equation modeling on 933 completed questionnaires sent to the pharmaceutical companies in Iran, suggest that social responsibility is significantly associated with the integration of this responsibility into quality management programs. Quality management, in turn, has a significant and positive effect on organizational performance. The results provide contribution to the earlier studies that have found inconsistent results on the direct association between social responsibility and organizational performance by demonstrating that quality management mediates the relationship between social responsibility and organizational performance. In practice, Managers can strengthen their relationships with stakeholders and, ultimately, improve organizational performance if social responsibility towards stakeholders is embedded in operational routines and processes.


Wearable computing devices promise to deliver countless benefits to users. Moreover, they are among the most personal and unique computing devices of all, more so than laptops and tablets and even more so than smartphones. However, this uniqueness also brings with it a risk of security issues not encountered previously in information systems: the potential to not only compromise data, but also to physically harm the wearer. This article considers wearable device security from three perspectives: whether the threat is to the device and/or the individual, the role that the wearable device plays, and how holistic wearable device security strategies can be developed and monitored.


In this paper, we propose a new mathematical model for designing a reliable hazardous material [HAZMAT] transportation network [RHTND] on the basis of hub location topology under uncertainties, in which hub nodes may be disrupted by external events, as well as HAZMATs incidents. Hub locations and HAZMAT transportation routes using different transportation modes are simultaneously optimized to obtain minimum risk of incidents. A mixed integer nonlinear programing model is developed. To cope with the uncertainties in the model, we provide a solution framework based on an integration of the well-known chance-constrained programing with a possibilistic programing approach. Small size problems are solved to optimality. In order to solve large size instances, a meta-heuristic algorithm was applied and its performance is evaluated in comparison with a new lower bound approach through analysis of a real case-study of a HAZMAT transportation network.


We analyse the relationship between the complexity of corporate social responsibility (CSR) disclosure and actual CSR performance,
and postulate a positive association between actual CSR performance and readability and the size of CSR disclosure documents. Using several readability and disclosure size measures from computational linguistics, we test our hypotheses using a cross-sectional sample of stand-alone CSR reports issued by large U.S. companies. We find that increased CSR disclosure and more readable CSR reports are associated with better CSR performance. Our findings suggest that extending CSR disclosure increases transparency regarding firms’ social and environmental performance, while using less-readable language in CSR reports increases obfuscation. This study contributes to the disclosure literature by documenting that the complexity indices that have been used as measures of obfuscation in prior finance and accounting research can help shareholders, financial analysts, and investors determine the credibility of CSR disclosure.


National governments frequently pull strings to get their citizens appointed to senior positions in international institutions. We examine, over a 60-year period, the nationalities of the most senior positions in the United Nations Secretariat, ostensibly the world’s most representative international institution. The results indicate which states are successful in this zero-sum game, and what national characteristics correlate with power in international institutions. The most overrepresented countries are small, rich democracies like the Nordic countries. Democracy, investment in diplomacy, foreign aid, and economic/military power are predictors of senior positions—even after controlling for the U.N. staffing mandate of competence and integrity. National control over the United Nations is remarkably sticky; however the influence of the United States has diminished as U.S. ideology has shifted away from its early allies. In spite of the decline in U.S. influence, the Secretariat remains pro-American relative to the world at large.


Researchers have increasingly emphasized the need to better understand how context affects the value of experiential learning. We address this gap by investigating when corporate level experience can be leveraged across borders and when experience needs to be country-specific to be valuable. We test our hypotheses using a unique multi-source panel dataset of 379 large MNCs from 29 home countries and their subsidiaries in 117 host countries over a 10-year period, 1999–2008. In contrast to prior research, we find that the ability of a firm to leverage its experience with political risk across borders is limited by the type of risk involved. Experience with nonstate violent conflicts may be transferrable, but only country-specific experience appears to yield measureable benefits for conflicts involving the host country government.


In 2000, the UN launched the Millennium Development Goals. This article addresses national-level factors associated with achieving the fourth goal, lower under-five mortality, among 69 low-income countries from early in the new millennium to the early years of the present decade. The factors fall in three categories: measures of health sector inputs, public health programs and social determinants. They range from the relatively simple, increasing child immunization, to the complex, improving access to safe water and sanitation. A government effectiveness measure is also included. In the level regressions, female literacy, total fertility,
percentage living on below $1.25/day and child immunization are statistically significant in all regression specifications. In the decade change regressions, increased immunization, increased use of mosquito nets, increased percentage living on above $1.25/day and level of national governance are all significant. Realizing mortality below 40/1000 live births (achieved by the top quarter) requires good performance on the complex factors, not only the simple ones.


The primary school completion rate in Bangladesh has increased dramatically since 2008, but average learning levels in the final grade (grade five) are very low. In an attempt to explain this emphasis on “quantity” over “quality”, we analyze institutional problems in the national primary school system, using a principal-two levels of agent (PA) model. As precondition for realizing major improvements in school quality, the national government needs to address these PA problems. If it does so, the two essential components of reform are effective decentralization of authority, and implementation of well publicized core competency school assessments. If the government is unwilling to address PA problems, domestic philanthropists and social entrepreneurs, owners of “low fee” private schools, individuals and groups interested in madrassas, NGOs and foreign donors can attempt to “work around” the government by expanding non-government school options. There are other means to promote student and school performance. For example, these non-government actors can undertake regular large-scale in-home surveys of children’s capacity to read and do basic mathematics. Use of Pratham’s instrument [used in conduct of annual surveys in rural India] would enable cross-country school quality comparisons.


Innovation has been widely acknowledged as a key mechanism for addressing sustainable development concerns. However, less attention has focused on downstream commercialization challenges such as achieving increasingly complex and stringent regulatory approval. Such challenges may hinder the development of more sustainable technologies, especially those coming from smaller or publically funded institutes. As well, they may obstruct the development of applications that could provide societal benefits, but may only have limited commercial viability due to small market niches or applicability to customers with limited financial means. We explore this apparent paradox using the concept of the Eroom effect (Moore’s Law backwards), i.e. where improved price performance due to technological advances are outweighed by increasing costs of regulatory approval and other commercialization costs. We illustrate this phenomenon with two cases of publically funded institutes, one developing transgenic cotton, and the other lignin transformation technology that can replace petroleum-based feedstocks in a number of industrial applications. We discuss the unintended consequences of the Eroom effect and conclude with implications for industry, policy and NGOs.


Although career proactivity has positive consequences for an individual’s career success, studies mostly examine objective measures of success within single countries. This raises
important questions about whether proactivity is equally beneficial for different aspects of subjective career success, and the extent to which these benefits extend across cultures. Drawing on Social Information Processing theory, we examined the relationship between proactive career behaviors and two aspects of subjective career success—financial success and work-life balance—and the moderating role of national culture. We tested our hypotheses using multilevel analyses on a large-scale sample of 11,892 employees from 22 countries covering nine of GLOBE’s 10 cultural clusters. Although we found that proactive career behaviors were positively related to subjective financial success, this relationship was not significant for work-life balance. Furthermore, career proactivity was relatively more important for subjective financial success in cultures with high in-group collectivism, high power distance, and low uncertainty avoidance. For work-life balance, career proactivity was relatively more important in cultures characterized by high in-group collectivism and humane orientation. Our findings underline the need to treat subjective career success as a multidimensional construct and highlight the complex role of national culture in shaping the outcomes of career proactivity.


This study investigated whether two sides of working to excess, namely working long hours and a compulsive work mentality (workaholism), are detrimental for employee health by using biomarkers of metabolic syndrome, a direct precursor of cardiovascular diseases. In addition, we examined if working to excess has the same health outcomes for employees who enjoy their work versus employees who do not. Despite the common sense belief that working long hours is bad for health, we did not find a relationship between work hours and risk factors of metabolic syndrome (RMS; e.g. high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol levels) in a study among 763 employees. Instead, we found that workaholism was positively related to RMS, but only when work engagement was low. Surprisingly, we found that workaholism was negatively related to RMS in the highly engaged group. When further exploring mediation mechanisms, we found that workaholism, but not work hours, was related to reduced subjective well-being (e.g. depressive feelings, sleep problems), which in turn elicited a physical health impairment process. We also found that, compared with nonengaged workaholics, engaged workaholics had more resources, which they may use to halt the health impairment process. Our findings underscore that not long hours per se, but rather a compulsive work mentality is associated with severe health risks, and only for employees who are not engaged at work. Work engagement may actually protect workaholics from severe health risks.


After three-and-a-half decades of breakneck growth, the Chinese economy has finally slowed down to just below 7 percent in the third quarter of 2015. Chinese President Xi Jinping has coined the term “new normal” to refer to this new situation. This commentary will examine the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead of China’s “new normal” and their implications for foreign multinational firms investing in China. Some opportunities include regional economic integration; sizeable foreign reserves to finance development at home and abroad; and upgrading in the science and technology skills of its people. However, there are also challenges. These are: aging of China’s population; institutional weakness, corruption/weak corporate governance and growing income inequality; and China’s newfound confidence on the world stage.


Indigenous economic development in Canada: Confronting principal-agent and principal–principal problems to reduce resource rent dissipation.
In Canada, indigenous communities have strengthened de jure and de facto rights over the last generation, thereby enabling them to realize substantial resource rents and other economic development income. Canadian First Nations (the preferred name for most indigenous communities) have in recent years established over 200 economic development corporations, many of them hybrid organizations partnering with non-Aboriginal resource corporations. We analyze the challenges of institutional design of such hybrids, employing the concept of fractionalized ownership. We discuss principal-agent problems at two levels: First Nation members relative to their leaders, and leaders relative to managers of economic development corporations. We also analyze principal-to-principal problems that arise with multiple owners. Using a sample of Ontario First Nation communities, the empirical section analyzes the impact of own-source revenue (much of it derived from resource projects) on a socio-economic index. The main conclusion is that incremental own-source revenue improves community socio-economic conditions, but only modestly.


From the seclusion of monastic life to the noise of Silicon Valley, the ancient practice of mindfulness has ‘come out of the cloister.’ As an antidote to mindless cognition and behavior, the practice of mindfulness—with its principle of grounding attention in the present moment—has been shown to have powerful and positive effects at both the individual and the collective level and in fields as wide-ranging as medicine, schooling, prison programs, law and negotiation, business, and even the army. This installment of Marketing & Technology introduces mindfulness to managers and explores its potential for enhancing the service encounter. We begin by reviewing the two main conceptualizations of mindfulness: the cognitive and the contemplative. We then explore the service encounter from the perspective of emotional labor and show how mindfulness can change surface acting into deep acting, thereby significantly improving the service encounter for both the consumer and provider. We also explore the other benefits of mindfulness and their application to the service encounter: adaptability, flexibility, and creativity. We conclude by sharing resources for managers interested in implementing mindfulness training.


Firms can save considerable money if consumers conserve resources [e.g., if hotel patrons turn off the lights when leaving the room, if restaurant patrons use fewer paper napkins, if airline passengers clean up after themselves]. In two studies conducted in real-world hotels, the authors show that consumers’ conservation behavior is affected by the extent to which consumers perceive the firm as being green. Furthermore, consumer perceptions of firms’ greenness and consumer conservation behavior depend on [1] whether the firm asks consumers to conserve resources, [2] the firm’s own commitment to the environment, and [3] the firm’s price image. In addition, firm requests to consumers to save resources can create consumer reactance and can backfire when firms themselves do not engage in visible costly environmental efforts. Such reactance is more likely for firms with a high-price image. Finally, the authors show that by spending a little money to signal environmental commitment, firms can save even more money through consumers’ conservation of resources, resulting in wins for the firm, the consumer, and the environment.


The Slow Food Movement (SFM) has been characterized as a reminder of the centrality of the kitchen in the “good old days”. It has also been referred to as a poor use of science posing as a rallying point for the beleaguered middle
class trying to reclaim psychological territory lost to the fast-paced commercialization of what was once private or leisure time. This paper argues that both these criticisms contain more than a kernel of truth. However, each misses the mark when it comes to explaining the relative successes of SFM. In this paper, we explore SFM’s basic ideological premises. It is neither a simple return to a traditional society nor a poorly formulated anti-consumerist position. Rather, from an ideological framing, SFM employs a “big tent” strategy drawing upon the positions of other lifestyle movements such as voluntary simplicity, localism, green consumption and communitarian social capital movements. This “big tent” of overlapping ideological positions is helpful in creating a credible set of alliances and a mass following. Moreover, SFM insists that a small but basic lifestyle change, namely, investing more quality time in the acquisition, preparation and sharing of fresh food - can ripple outwards and offer benefits to individuals, but also via selective consumption, put pressure on transnational firms, agri-business and banks to heed the demands of those in the “movement”. This paper concludes with a discussion of both the costs and complications of the “big tent” ideology and how SFM has attempted to keep each of these within its reach.


Four types of banking institutions responded differently to the drive to centralize Chinese rural banking operations. In 2009 city commercial and market-oriented banks had a higher density of outlets in economically developed than in less developed counties, as expected, while rural banking institutions had an unexpectedly higher density in non-agricultural than in agriculture-based counties. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the wholly state-owned and policy-oriented Agricultural Development Bank of China has invested in business-oriented activities in non-agricultural counties. These banking sector developments could have long-term policy implications for rural development in China.
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.

Net Impact presented an industry panel and networking discussion about responsible investing and the integration of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria in portfolio management held on June 26, 2018.
Sustainability network aims to advance globally with $2.45 million SSHRC Partnership Grant

Sep 26, 2017

The Embedding Project, a global sustainability initiative founded by Stephanie Bertels, an SFU Beedie School of Business professor, has received a $2.45-million, seven-year Partnership Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

The project will use the funding to further its work in developing a new global forum for knowledge-sharing and dialogue on sustainability. The goal: to become a globally recognized knowledge resource for organizations seeking to advance their sustainability performance.

The Embedding Project brings together academic researchers from six institutions (SFU’s Beedie School of Business, Cambridge University’s Judge School, MIT’s Sloan School of Management, Rotterdam School of Business, HEC Montreal and University of Cape Town’s Graduate School of Business). It also partners with dozens of global companies, including local sustainability leaders Teck Resources, the Port of Vancouver, and QuadReal, to help companies integrate social and environmental factors into their core decision-making.

“This grant brings the resources we need to continue to advance our work to a global scale,” says Bertels, who is director of the Beedie School’s Centre for Corporate Governance and Sustainability.

“We look forward to supporting companies and their executive teams and boards as they embed sustainability into the core of their businesses. Students, researchers, and companies will all benefit from the opportunity to work together to advance corporate sustainability.”

The knowledge and resources developed by the Embedding Project are shared through two primary methods of engagement: regional peer-to-peer networks, where companies assess and compare their efforts and engage in structured peer coaching; and global communities of practice. These communities convene on significant topics, with leading companies sharing and developing best practices and co-creating tools and resources. Each is facilitated by expert researchers.

The SSHRC grant will help the project achieve its goals while moving towards financial self-sufficiency as it delivers value to its members and partners.

SFU Beedie-founded sustainability initiative wins two major awards

Sep 27, 2018

The Embedding Project, a global sustainability initiative founded and led by SFU Beedie Associate Professor Stephanie Bertels, has won recognition with two major global awards.

In August, the project was presented with the inaugural ‘International Impactful Collaboration Award’ by the Academy of Management at its Annual General Meeting in Chicago, Illinois, USA. The Embedding Project was presented this award for their practical and scholarly impact embedding sustainability into the operations and decision-making of global companies.

This month, the Embedding Project also received the Clean50 Project award, which annually offers recognition to projects based on their innovation, and on their ability to inform and inspire other Canadians. The Embedding Project was named among its list of 20 Top Projects for the year. This year’s Clean50 award is the second time the Embedding Project has been honoured by the organization, having previously been named as a Top Project in 2016.
Beedie and Canadian College of Health Leaders host opioid overdose crisis event

Feb 28, 2017

The Beedie School of Business partnered with the Canadian College of Health Leaders to bring together leading experts for a panel discussion on the opioid overdose crisis on February 22, 2017. Moderated by Beedie Adjunct Professor Kate Dilworth, the event – entitled Leadership in the Context of an Adaptive Challenge: The Opioid Overdose Crisis in BC – welcomed leaders with diverse, personal and professional experiences of the challenges faced in tackling the current health crisis.

Before introducing the panel, Dilworth opened the session drawing parallels between the nature of the challenges presented by the crisis and the theories developed by business schools. For Dilworth, there is a valuable place for these skills. “In healthcare we are very comfortable talking about and often focus on the clinical perspectives of an issue”, says Dilworth. “But the opioid overdose crisis is a very complex challenge and we knew it was important to create the opportunity for leaders to reflect on and share what they are learning about leadership and innovation as they respond in real time to a crisis.”

Dr. Christy Sutherland, Addictions expert and Medical Director for PHS Community Services Society, was the first panel member to present, describing the pioneering work that she is leading in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. When they began to recognize the scale of the problem, her organization scaled up their provision of Naloxone training for drug users and has now provided over 2,500 Naloxone kits since August 2016.

They then started to set up outdoor clinics in alleyways to provide more accessible treatment to patients, and embedded a clinic in the Downtown Eastside Market. As the crisis worsened, they opened two overdose response rooms, staffed by drug users and medical staff, to provide safe consumption sites – “We were a bit nervous about this, but if you look at the history of supervised consumption worldwide, since it’s been studied, nobody has died,” says Sutherland.

Sutherland’s greatest risk as a leader, however, was to put forward a patient for injectable suboxone therapy – the first time this had been done in Canada. The treatment led to a positive outcome and validated her willingness to seek innovative alternative solutions in the face of an unprecedented health crisis. PHS conducted 1,400 overdose interventions in their hotels during 2016.

The second presenter, Catharine Hume, Co-Executive Director RainCity Housing and Support Society, has faced many of the same challenges as Sutherland. She describes the “bumpy journey” of a leadership role in a housing not-for-profit during this challenging time, “working in a complex, grey area without clarity.”

For Hume, the challenges to addressing the crisis are “discrimination and silence [and] criminalization; people are marginalized.” Within RainCity, they have adapted by increasing staffing at sites impacted by high levels of overdoses, and providing training around Naloxone use and counselling. However, they face the challenge of the organization’s employees keeping up this response over the longer term, and maintaining a sense of optimism in an environment of trauma – while providing care that goes beyond their regular job description. “This is dramatically different work than people signed up for,” says Hume.

Active drug users are the group most severely affected by the crisis, and yet their voices are often lost in the wider debate. Laura Shaver, President, VANDU and President, BC Association of People on Methadone, provided a powerful insight into the lived experience of addiction and the dangers that the community is facing. As well as saving lives in the Downtown Eastside, Shaver is an active advocate for policy change and recently met with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to share her experiences and ideas for change.

VANDU runs an overdose prevention site, which has served over 1,700 people since December
2016, with no deaths. Shaver highlighted the importance of lived experience in responding to the crisis, summed up as “Nothing about us without us.” Shaver called for action and a multifaceted approach to the crisis: “One thing is not going to make a difference. It is many things.”

Two leaders from BC Emergency Health Services spoke about the emergency response to the crisis: Dr. William Dick, Vice President, Medical Programs; and Rob Graham, District Manager, Patient Care Delivery, Fraser South. Dick, a Beedie Physician Leadership program alumnus, described the process that led to a mobile medical unit, first used in the 2010 Olympics, being brought into action in the Downtown Eastside, after being in storage for several years, noting that “When a crisis allows barriers to be broken down, good things can happen.”

Graham, a Beedie MBA alumnus, talked about the leadership theory behind the response to a crisis where no one agency has the authority to respond, and collaboration and innovative thinking are required. “The response requires rapid and often uncomfortable decisions,” he says. “The healthcare industry has a very low risk tolerance, but crises like this force you to re-evaluate how you view risk. You have to be comfortable with discomfort.” Ultimately, though, inaction was not an option: “The cost / benefit analysis of not dealing with harm reduction – it’s a no brainer.”

To conclude the event, the panel were asked about what gives them optimism for the future. Graham responded, “This, that’s the simple answer. You have stakeholders from different places, different experiences, coming together to have a conversation about something that is significantly disruptive to society. Having the opportunity to have this conversation is the most optimistic thing and it is really hopeful.”
THe Co-Laboratorio AQP consults with local stakeholders.
Beedie partnership in Peru promotes community engagement for social change and globally responsible leadership

Jan 09, 2018

Students participate in the new Co-Laboratorio AQP program run by Beedie in partnership with Universidad Catolica San Pablo in Arequipa Peru

Beedie faculty June Francis and Kristina Henriksson have launched the new Co-Laboratorio AQP program in partnership with Universidad Catolica San Pablo in Arequipa Peru (UCSP), sharing Beedie’s philosophy of experiential learning and promoting socially responsible business on a global platform.

The first class of 36 students, drawn from across UCSP, recently completed the 20-week, innovative design “lab course” embedded in UCSP’s undergraduate curriculum. Through the program, students worked closely with community stakeholders to develop sustainable solutions to some of the complex socio-economic challenges facing the local region.

“We are helping our partner UCSP to implement a systems-centered design approach in the CoLab AQP course,” says Henriksson.

“This is based on the belief that any problem, even the most difficult ones – such as poverty, gender equality, or clean water for all – can only be solved by paying close attention to the systemic underlying causes.”

One team of students tackled the issue of pollution and contamination in the agricultural land around Arequipa, caused by the false belief among farmers that burning organic waste after harvesting would benefit future crops. The team aims to create a social venture to buy organic waste from farmers, from which they will produce organic fertilizer, which can later be sold.

The team consulted with farmers to gain a greater understanding of their situation and how they could be incentivized to change their practices.

“One of my greatest lessons from CoLab was understanding the perspective of the farmers,” says team leader Marinés Mattos.

“I think that young people and everyone in general can make a change, even if it is very small, and we can all collaborate to make a better world.”

Another team targeted the lack of earthquake preparedness in the region, which is at a high risk of seismic activity. The team proposes working with local emergency services and private donors to train residents in preventative measures in case of earthquakes, so consequences could be reduced.

“There are many problems we face as a society, in this city,” says team member Diego Loayza.

“I think the CoLab is a good opportunity to grapple with these problems with stakeholders, bringing our different perspectives and working together.”

CoLab AQP forms part of the larger Co-Laboratorio Peru project at SFU, led by Francis and Henriksson and funded by Global Affairs Canada (through CIRDI). CoLab Peru conducts applied research on inclusive sustainable development from natural resources through advancing cross-sector collaborative learning, planning, governance and practices—for more resilient solutions.
PRINCIPLE 6: DIALOGUE

We will facilitate and support dialogue and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

Dr. Kanika Bhal [pictured on the right] is the 2017 Hari and Madhu Varshney Visiting Scholar in Indian Studies.
Belief Systems and Business: Indian Cultural Values and Their Interpretation in the Contemporary Business Context

Nov 27, 2017

SFU hosted a lecture and reception with the Hari and Madhu Varshney Visiting Scholar in Indian Studies, and Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Visiting Scholar Dr. Kanika Bhal, at the Jack Austin Centre for Asia Pacific Business Studies.

Dr. Bhal’s topic — Belief Systems and Business: Indian Cultural Values and Their Interpretation in the Contemporary Business Context — addresses the role that culture plays and how it is interpreted in business. Cultures provide a frame of reference for all human interactions — interpersonal, social and economic.

Dr. Kanika Bhal is the 2017 Hari and Madhu Varshney Visiting Scholar in Indian Studies. She currently serves as the Modi Foundation Chair, Professor and Head at the Department of Management at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT Delhi) and is the first Varshney Visiting Scholar at the Beedie School of Business.

SFU Beedie hosts Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus

Feb 07, 2018

Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus addressed an audience of more than 300 people at Simon Fraser University’s Beedie School of Business at a special event on February 5, 2018. Professor Yunus, who founded microfinance organization Grameen Bank, is the winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, among many other international honours and awards, for his pioneering work in developing microfinance to help people lift themselves from poverty.

SFU Beedie hosted the event at the Segal Graduate School in Vancouver as part of a promotional tour for Yunus’s most recent book, A World of Three Zeros: the new economics of zero poverty, zero unemployment, and zero carbon emissions. Speaking with moderator Sudheer Gupta, a professor at SFU Beedie and Director of the Jack Austin Centre for Asia Pacific Business Studies, Yunus described his modest ambitions when he began experimenting with providing micro-loans to women in rural Bangladesh in 1976.

“At the beginning when I was studying it in one village, next to the university campus, I had no expectations that it would have anything to do with the next village. I had no ambition and I didn’t have any plan,” he says. However, as the concept gained traction and word spread about his ground-breaking work, the micro-finance model has been replicated around the world. Grameen Bank is now active across Bangladesh, and has itself expanded internationally, operating 20 branches in 12 cities across the United States.

The driving principle behind Yunus’s work is a core belief that traditional economic systems fail the most vulnerable members of our society. “The financial system has been designed the wrong way,” he says. “The basic principle is that the more you have, the more you can get.”

The result of this traditional system is that the world’s wealth is increasingly owned by a tiny proportion of people: eight individuals own more wealth than the bottom 50% of the world’s population, according to Yunus. Yunus’s response to this was to create Grameen Bank, which rejects accepted notions of commercial success: it exists to help people. “The whole idea is to help people get out of poverty, not an instrument to make money for yourself,” he says. “It is a non-dividend company to solve human problems.”
Beedie hosts panel event on role of investors in addressing inequality

Mar 03, 2017

The widening gap between rich and poor is a global phenomenon affecting both developed and developing economies, and has been identified by the World Economic Forum as the single most important risk facing the world over the next decade in its annual Global Risks Report. But how can we reverse this trend, and to what extent can – or should – investors be responsible for instigating that change?

Shared Prosperity: The Role of Investors in Addressing Inequality, an event hosted by the Beedie School of Business on February 23, 2017 was organized by the SFU Centre for Corporate Governance and Sustainability, SHARE (Shareholders Association for Research & Education), and the United Nations-supported Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI), brought together an international panel of experts to examine inequality and our response to it.

Stephanie Bertels, Director of Beedie’s Centre for Corporate Governance and Sustainability, moderated the event.

The first speaker, Katherine Ng, Head of Academic Research at Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI), presented data quantifying the increasing disparity of wealth and income between rich and poor globally. She also showed that high levels of economic inequality inhibit growth, providing a motivation for investors to address the problem – while noting that it is not an issue that can be fixed by investors alone.

Shannon Rohan, Director of Responsible Investment with Shareholder Association for Research and Education [SHARE], explained how her organization is working with investors to help them hold companies in which they invest accountable and encourage better employment practices. According to Rohan, actions shareholders can take include seeking better disclosure on workplace practices, demanding improvements, and including workplace practice metrics in investment decisions.

The lack of data and disclosure around employment practices was also identified as a significant barrier to progress by Lisa Nathan, Campaigns Manager with the UK’s Shareaction organization. One of Shareaction’s programs is trying to tackle this issue by campaigning for publicly traded businesses on the London Stock Exchange’s FTSE100 index of its largest companies to sign up to a voluntary standard on living wages and, with over 30 companies now accredited, the movement is now entering the mainstream. Nathan also stressed the common interest that investors share with society at large in tackling inequality, which limits overall growth and leaves all but a very few worse off.

Providing an investor’s perspective on the issue was Jason Milne, Vice President, Corporate Governance & Responsible Investment with RBC Global Asset Management. For Milne, employee practices only become part of an investment decision when they affect share prices or highlight wider failures of company management – and inequality is simply not a material issue for most investments. While recognizing the importance of the problem, Milne sees government action through regulation as the most effective way to address inequality.

The final panel member, Damon A. Silvers, Director of Policy and Special Counsel with AFL-CIO, drew on his experience as a pension fund trustee and a senior advisor to US governmental committees in the aftermath of corporate failures of Executive Life, Enron and WorldCom, and the global financial crisis of 2008. These experiences taught him that “workers are the losers when anything goes,” and he shared fascinating insights and examples of the damage that inequality causes, not only to those at the bottom, but in destroying value and limiting growth for all.

10 Reasons to Share

1. Promoting transparency and accountability.
2. Encouraging ethical and sustainable business practices.
4. Enhancing investor confidence and trust.
5. Mitigating risks associated with inequality.
6. Fostering a culture of responsibility and fairness.
7. Contributing to long-term economic stability.
8. Advancing social cohesion and community well-being.
9. Aligning business interests with societal needs.
10. Advancing the global agenda on inclusive growth.
The Embedding Project brings leading sustainability professionals to Vancouver

Jan 30, 2017

Earlier this month, leading sustainability professionals from across North America met in Vancouver to share their successes, challenges and insights at the Embedding Project’s North American Peer-to-Peer Network event. Over the two-day session, members engaged in facilitated peer-coaching sessions, reflected on their past year as Change Agents and piloted new research and new resources. Highlights included research insights on workplace sustainability-oriented initiatives by Beedie PhD student, Simon Pek, and new research coming out of the Embedding Project’s Community of Practice on contextualized strategy-making.

The Embedding Project is a public-benefit research project founded and led by Dr. Stephanie Bertels, Associate Professor at SFU’s Beedie School of Business and Director of the Centre for Corporate Governance and Sustainability. Bertels developed a framework for embedding sustainability that helps companies inventory, prioritize and focus their efforts to embed sustainability across the organization. Bertels and her team work with companies to apply the framework, facilitate safe peer-learning opportunities for companies, and develop useful tools and resources tailored for sustainability practitioners supported by a rigorous research process.

Their growing community of members includes companies from across industries and around the world, including local companies Teck Resources and Port of Vancouver and international companies Biogen and Nedbank, as well as research institutions such as MIT Sloan School of Management, Cambridge Judge School of Business and the Graduate School of Business at the University of Cape Town. The project has benefitted from funding from over two-dozen companies, CPA Canada and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Longtime member, Jamie Gray-Donald, now Vice President of Sustainability at QuadReal Property Group, describes the value of getting involved: “The combination of academic rigour in the content produced by the Embedding Project and the opportunity to collaborate with participating companies is a powerful mix. Sustainability is still in its infancy as a science and the Embedding Project is one of the very few places that is systematizing the fuzzy and complex parts that are likely the most influential to the long-term success of sustainability programs.”

The Peer-to-Peer meetings are also a time for the Embedding Project team to learn more about what the sustainability community at large needs. “It helps us understand what Corporate Sustainability Change Agents are grappling with and that helps us plan for and focus our ongoing research efforts,” says Bertels. “It’s also an opportunity to see that the research we do has value.”

The Embedding Project currently has two Regional Peer-to-Peer Networks, one in North America and one in South Africa. To learn more about the Embedding Project and the work that they do, please visit their website: www.embeddingproject.org.