

UBC Social, Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) Student Reports

**NOW! UBC Climate Action Conference 2010**

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# NOW! UBC Climate Action Conference 2010

## *A Report and Reflection*

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## Abstract

The NOW! UBC Climate Action Conference involved a great deal of organization and conference planning. With the event being the first of its kind, the following report provides information on how the conference was planned by this year's Organizing Committee, with recommendations for next year. This paper includes a reflection on how my position as co-chair has benefitted myself and has helped me grow as a student and as a person. Lastly, resources have been provided for next year's Organizing Committee.

## Introduction

The NOW! UBC (No Other World) Climate Action Conference took place on March 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at the Liu Institute for Global Issues at the UBC Vancouver campus. A first-time collaboration among several student-led organizations on campus, the Student Environment Centre, the AMS, UBC Common Energy Dialogue Group, and the UBC Sustainability Office, the conference focused on empowering students in an interdisciplinary fashion to take action on climate change through their lifestyles, careers, and political voices. This conference was completed as my directed studies and SEEDS project, under the supervision of Dr. Art Bomke from the Faculty of Land and Food Systems and Liz Ferris from the UBC Sustainability Office.

## Concept

The critical impacts and effects of climate change were brought to my attention after attending the 2009 Universitas 21 Summer School at the University of Queensland. The two-week summer school's theme was "Global Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation." As the

summer school drew to a close, the 100-plus student delegates decided that we would return to our respective universities and countries, take back what we had learned during this short time, and motivate others to take action against climate change. It is with this motivation and inspiration from my peers that I decided to organize a conference free of charge for UBC students – a conference that would welcome students from all faculties. It would be a way to bring together people studying and researching a variety of subjects, and allow them to share their ideas and thoughts on climate change. Most importantly, I wanted to organize a conference where students and other delegates would leave feeling as if they have the power to take action against this global issue that affects each and every one of us.

It seemed fitting to call it NOW! No Other World. As can be seen on our logo with the watchband, time is ticking away. Although it may not seem apparent to us at the present time, it will affect every one of us, no matter our backgrounds, no matter our attitudes towards climate change, in just a matter of years. We can either sit back and wait for the effects of climate change to become apparent, or we can take action today. With regards to the acronym, we only have one world, and so we have to preserve it to the best of our abilities.

### Organizing Committee

The Organizing Committee was formed as the result of several meetings and networking opportunities within UBC. I approached the UBC Sustainability Office with my conference/directed studies proposal in late September. Specifically, I contacted Liz Ferris, a former Global Resource Systems student and current Master's student in the Institute for Resources, Environment, and Sustainability. She was also the Climate Action Coordinator for

the UBC Sustainability Office. Upon meeting with Liz and Liska Richer (SEEDS Program Coordinator) and establishing the project, the first student group that I approached was the Student Environment Centre (SEC). I approached SEC with the idea in mind that the conference could be organized in collaboration with SEC during its annual Responsible Consumption Week in March 2010, and received positive responses following my proposal.

Shortly afterwards in October, I was approached by the UBC Common Energy Dialogue Group, a sub-group of the UBC Common Energy Group. It is another student-led organization committed to bringing UBC to a beyond climate-neutral future and had ties with the UBC Sustainability Office.

Following my meeting with Liz, Liska, Spencer Rasmussen (UBC Common Energy Director), and Joyce Shen (AMS Sustainability Coordinator), I finalized the list of organizations that would be involved with the conference planning:

The UBC Sustainability Office

The AMS (Sustainability Coordinator)

UBC Common Energy Dialogue Group

The Student Environment Centre

Joyce Shen was keen on helping organize the conference, as she had a similar conference vision in mind for the coming year. Eventually, Joyce and I co-chaired the conference together, with the remaining Organizing Committee members (Appendix A) in charge of several individual tasks.

## Volunteers

Volunteers were recruited by means of faculty and club listservs. Volunteers were asked to help with food and beverage preparation – brewing the donated coffee, making sandwiches, picking up the donated food items, and cleaning up.

In February, we sent out emails calling for volunteers through the Land and Food Systems listserv, the Global Resource Systems listserv, the Friends of the Farm listserv, the Student Environment Centre listserv, and the UBC Food Society listserv. We received only four volunteers who could offer their time. As a result, our food and beverage coordinator, Anelyse, was forced to cut down on the donations and rely more on AMS Catering to provide and prepare the lunches for conference delegates.

## Conference Planning

Once the Organizing Committee was formed, hour-long meetings were held every week at the Dr. Simon K.Y. Lee Global Lounge and Resource Centre (which Common Energy had access to). Meeting began in late October, and after a few weeks off during the Christmas holidays, started up again in January. Refer to Appendix B for further detail on the planning timeline.

## Conference Events

There were five components of the conference:

### 1. Keynote and Panel Discussions

The opening keynote speaker was Hadi Dowlatabadi, Professor from the Institute for Resources, Environment, and Sustainability. His topic was “Whose Sustainability?” with a focus on the interdisciplinary approach that must be taken when addressing climate change in developed and developing countries.

The first panel discussion, “Voices for Change,” included the following speakers:

1. David Beers, Founding Editor, *The Tyee: The Tyee: Swimming Against the Media Current*
2. Candis Callison, Professor, School of Journalism: *Translate Climate Change: Examining Meaning Making and Public Engagement* (via video)
3. Kathryn Harrison, Professor, Department of Political Science: *The Politics of Climate Policy*
4. Emmanuel Prinet, Executive Director, One Earth Initiative: *Rethinking the Good Life*

Nicholas Coop, Professor and Co-Chair of the UBC Sustainability Academic Program, moderated the discussion. Each panel speaker was given 20 minutes to present his or her topic and answer questions from the audience.

The second panel discussion, “Sustainability Education,” included the following speakers:

1. Jean Marcus, Project Manager, Advisory Committee on Academic Programs on Sustainability: *Student Access to Sustainability Learning Opportunities at UBC.*
2. Kai Chan, Professor, Institute for Resources, Environment, and Sustainability: *Interdisciplinary Transacademic Education for Sustainability: Ecosystem Services as a Case Study*
3. Tom Green, PhD Candidate, Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program: *Introductory Economics Textbooks: Are They Failing the Earth?*
4. Alexandre Herbert, Sustainability and Energy Manager, BCIT: *Bottom Up or Top Down – Lessons Learned from Greening Curricula in Sauder School of Business*
5. Tom Sullivan, Professor, Faculty of Land and Food Systems: *Science or Ethic: Is Climate Change Movement a Friend or a Foe?*

Bill Rees, Professor from the School of Community and Regional Planning, moderated the discussion. Each panel speaker was given 20 minutes, to present his topic and answer questions from the audience.

The closing keynote speaker was Peter Victor, Professor from the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University and member of the David Suzuki Foundation Board of Directors, via videoconference. His topic, “Managing Without Growth: Slower by Design, Not By Disaster” addressed the challenges of managing the economy while taking into account biophysical limits and the environment.

Pre-event: Each speaker was asked to email us his powerpoint presentation.

## 2. Sustainability Talks

Using the ever-popular Tedx Talks as a model, we sent our invitations via campus listservs in December and January, calling for students, faculty, and other community members to speak for 10 minutes on a sustainability-related topic that they were passionate about. We received several applications, and by the end of February, had selected seven speakers for the event, ranging from UBC students to a restaurant chef, and from a retired physician to a current school teacher. Every one of the talks was related to sustainability and the environment, and covered a variety of topics. Each speaker was given 10 to present, plus 2 minutes for questions from the audience.

Pre-event: Each speaker was asked to email us his powerpoint presentation.

## 3. Hypothetical Situation

The Hypothetical, “Voting for the Climate,” involved a panel-like discussion between four professors from a range of climate research interests (social sciences, natural sciences, economics, policy, etc). They were given a hypothetical topic – this year we focused on the ideal climate platform that would motivate people to vote in the next election – and were asked to respond based on their knowledge and backgrounds. This was less of a debate and more of a presentation on how different approaches can be taken to address climate issues, and how discussion between various disciplines may help us move towards a more effective solution.

The moderator began by introducing himself, the participants, and the hypothetical topic. The first speaker presented his response to the Hypothetical, followed by the second, third, and fourth speakers. They were each given five minutes to present. Following this, the moderator invited the participants to address one another's answers and question one another. This discussion continued as students were given the opportunity to ask questions and for further discussion.

The professors included:

Andrew Weaver, Professor, School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, UVIC

Simon Donner, Professor, Department of Geography

Jim Vercaemmen, Professor, Sauder School of Business and Faculty of Land and Food Systems

David Tindall, Professor, Faculty of Forestry and Department of Sociology

Stewart Cohen, Professor from the Faculty of Forestry, moderated the Hypothetical.

Pre-event: I met with Stewart Cohen on several occasions to finalize the hypothetical topic. A briefing of the topic was organized two weeks prior to the event, where the participants and Dr. Cohen had the opportunity to meet one another and learn the details of the event. They were asked to email us their powerpoint presentations.

#### 4. Sociometry Dialogues

This event took a break from the lecture-style presentations. Instead, students and other delegates were asked to stand up (chairs stacked and set against the walls) in the open room. A statement regarding climate change was read, and those who agreed would move to one side, and those who disagreed moved to the other sides. After the two groups formed, a 5-10 minute discussion on the topic began. For example, the first statement was, “There should be a mandatory first-year sustainability course at UBC” and those who chose the “yes” or “no” side were asked to explain their beliefs.

#### 5. Cultivating a Community for Change – Tangible Solutions

In this open-space workshop, students and participants were asked to provide topics for discussion that they were interested in (i.e. “Is climate action a local or national issue?”). Next, students dispersed into allocated part of the room where each topic was to be discussed. The rule of thumb in Tangible Solution is that the students may leave the discussion at any time if they feel that they are no longer contributing or learning, and join another group for a different topic of discussion. At the end, everyone congregated and discussed how each individual topic could connect with the other.

As this was the last event for the conference, the entire group of delegates was invited to continue discussion and to wrap up the conference at Koerner’s Pub on campus.

Pre-event: Koerner’s space was booked.

## Funding

Initially, the Student Environment Centre offered up to \$1500, and Joyce (AMS Sustainability Coordinator) up to \$5000. During the Christmas holidays, I completed two funding applications: the AMS Student Initiatives Fund and the Walter H. Gage Memorial Fund. I submitted these when I returned to school in January. My funding application was not accepted by the AMS, the reason being that I already had sufficient funding through Joyce (AMS Sustainability Coordinator). The Walter H. Gage Memorial Committee provided \$1000. In February, through Liz, the UBC Sustainability Office agreed to provide \$1500.

We ended up having sufficient funding for the conference, and we were left with a large sum of money for next year's conference (contact the AMS Sustainability Coordinator for the leftover funding).

Our costs were kept relatively low. Peter Dauvergne, Director for the Liu Institute for Global Issues, who was supposed to be our keynote speaker, informed us in January that he was no longer able to participate; nevertheless, he kindly offered to partner NOW! UBC with the Liu Institute. In being a partner with the Liu Institute, we were able to book the conference facility free of charge (excluding the videoconferencing fee). Initially, we were booked at the Aquatic Ecosystems Research Laboratory (AERL), but it had restricted hours for the use of its theatre and seminar room, whereas the Liu Institute could be booked for all day and was much more flexible.

## Honorariums

For Peter Victor, we mailed him a \$500 cheque, and for Andrew Weaver, we mailed him a \$100 cheque (to cover transportation costs to and from Victoria). For the remaining speakers, we thanked them with a bottle of local wine and a hand-made card (by Rebekah Parker).

## Food and Drink

What did end up costing the bulk of the expenses, to our surprise, were the food and beverages provided for the delegates. Although Anelyse had managed to secure many food donations (quiches and pies from Aphrodite's Bakeshop and Café, Terra Breads, Muffin Break, Ethical Bean, Safeway), we were unable to secure enough volunteers to make sandwiches and prepare other foods. As a result, we only kept the donations from Aphrodite's, Muffin Break, and Ethical Bean, and the Safeway gift cards, and relied on the AMS Catering for the of the food.

The food for March 11<sup>th</sup> was as follows (for 120 people):

First coffee break: AMS Catering coffee and tea, assorted muffins and scones, and dishes/cutlery/mugs

Lunch: AMS Catering Lunches To Go Wraps

Second coffee break: AMS Catering coffee and tea, loaves, and assorted squares.

The food for March 12<sup>th</sup> was as follows (for 120 people, Anelyse and her volunteers present this day):

First coffee break: Ethical Bean donated coffee (brewed by Anelyse), organic apples from Safeway, Muffin Break muffins, AMS Catering provided dishes/cutlery/mugs

Lunch: Ethical Bean donated coffee, AMS Catering Lunches To Go Wraps, Aphrodite's quiches/pies

Second coffee break: Ethical Bean donated coffee, Aphrodite's pies, Muffin Break muffins, organic apples from Safeway

### Advertising Campaign

The AMS Design Services designed our poster for the conference in late January. By the end of February, we had seventy 13 by 9 posters printed (through Copyright Centre in the basement of the SUB) and posted around UBC. Our advertising coordinator, Rosalind, also printed out stickers with the NOW! logo and distributed them across campus during the week before the conference. On the day of, we chalked the campus.

Rosalind and Joyce sent out emails to many listservs at UBC, providing a brief description of the conference and attaching the pdf of the poster and the conference schedule to each email. The listservs included the Faculty of Land and Food Systems, Global Resource Systems, Environmental Sciences, Forestry, Geography, Sauder School of Business, and some local high schools.

We also posted information on the conference on some key websites, including those of the Liu Institute, the IRES, and UBC Events.

## Registration

Registration was more of a formality – we encouraged delegates to register so that we could approximate how much food to order and prepare for each day. On the day of the conference, people who had not registered were admitted entry as we had plenty of room for them.

Registration was conducted via the free online site, Eventbrite. Delegates were given the option of registering for March 11<sup>th</sup> or March 12<sup>th</sup>, with the understanding that they were not required to attend throughout the entire day in order to register (most delegates were expected to be students, who often have classes intermittently all day). Thus, if someone wished to register for both days, he would have to register twice (for each day). Eventbrite was helpful in that it was simple to set up and navigate through for both the Organizing Committee and delegates. Tickets were listed as “free,” and delegates were asked to provide the first and last name, email address, department (program/faculty).

Because the seating capacity at the Liu Institute is 106 people, and we took into account registrants who would not actually attend, we set the ticket limit at 130 for each day. Anyone who wanted to register past the 130<sup>th</sup> ticket would be placed on an automatic “waitlist.” We sent a message to those on the waitlist encouraging them to drop by the Liu, in the event that there were seats available.

Registration opened in late February and remained open until the 130 ticket capacity was reached.

## Contact

In November, Rebekah opened up a gmail account as our contact address, [now.ubc@gmail.com](mailto:now.ubc@gmail.com).

## Blog and Facebook

Rebekah set up a blog during the Christmas break, [www.nowubc.wordpress.com](http://www.nowubc.wordpress.com). It was designed simply, and simply updated by myself and Rebekah throughout the planning stages. We also established a Facebook Fan Page and Event Page for the conference. On the Fan Page, we linked the blog to it so that Facebook would automatically post the latest blog postings. We used Facebook as our principal media in spreading the word, etc. The Fan Page was important in that we kept updating it at least once a week until the start of the conference, so that the updates would keep the conference in the back of everybody's minds (new updates show up on the "News Feed.")

## Results

Approximately 250 people registered for the conference. Of those registered, just under 200 actually attended the event, in addition to several drop-ins. As we had hoped, there were delegates (undergraduate, graduate, PhD students, professors, staff, and community members) from a range of faculties, programs, and backgrounds, including:

- Italian Studies, Faculty of Arts
- School of Community and Regional Planning
- Computer Science

- Dietetics, Faculty of Land and Food Systems
- Environmental Sciences, Faculty of Science
- Sauder School of Business
- Library
- Biology, Faculty of Science
- Chemical and Biological Engineering, Faculty of Engineering
- Wood Science, Faculty of Forestry
- Geography, Faculty of Arts
- Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy
- Political Science, Faculty of Arts
- Global Resource Systems, Faculty of Land and Food Systems

The feedback from the delegates was generally very positive. As one student said, “The NOW! conference was informative, inspiring and awakening to the problems surrounding the environment and climate change.” The variety of topics of discussion was praised, and the speakers who participated in the conference appealed to the majority of the audience. There is, however, room for improvement in terms of coordinating the various components. Since they were so diverse, they may have seemed disconnected at times. One student said, “The conference ended in sociometry dialogues and an open space sessions for tangible solutions. Even though it was fun, this part of the conference seemed out of place with the rest of the

events as it seemed to mostly include only students. It may have been appropriate to end with another keynote speaker instead.”

One aspect in particular that should be considered for next year is that the conference attempt to completely fulfill the original concept. To elaborate, the original concept was to focus on an interdisciplinary approach to climate action, and also empower students to take actions against climate change. We touched upon the interdisciplinary approach that we wanted in the conference, but I feel that at the end of the day, it was difficult for myself, as a student, to feel empowered and that I still lack the knowledge on how I can take action against climate change on a greater level from turning off the lights and reducing my water usage.

## Recommendations

### **Conference Planning**

A slight modification from this year’s timeline would be to recruit the webmaster early on in Term 1 and have him/her to develop the website before the start of Term 2. Also, the advertising campaign should begin earlier; emails should be sent out near the end of Term 1, with reminder emails (with more detail) sent throughout Term 2. A portion of the posters should be up in mid-February, and the rest up in the last two weeks before the conference. There should be an overall larger focus on the advertising campaign through media, as few students (relative to the UBC population) were aware of the conference. Finally, funding should be obtained as early as possible; at the very latest, applications should be completed upon the start of Term 2.

## Conference Events

1. Keynote and Panel Discussions. Keynote speakers, if possible, should be confirmed earlier in the year.
2. Sustainability Talks: The event seemed a little bit too long for the audience to watch, so either having a break to divide the talks into two halves, or reduce the number of talks to five.
3. The Hypothetical: Each speaker should be allotted more time to speak. Instead of the 5-minute limit, it should be at least 10 minutes long. Also, more time in general should be allotted, as many questions that the audience had for the speakers were not answered. The entire event should be about 2 hours long. The speakers should also be more diverse (try to get a political science or law professor, an engineering prof, etc) in backgrounds and research.
4. Student Sociometry: a clearer outline of how the event is run should be provided on the website and advertising campaign so that it piques interest in the audience. There were many people who did not know what a sociometry is, and this may have been one reason why there was a decrease in number of participants.
5. Cultivating a Community for Change – Tangible Solutions: like the Student Sociometry, a clearer outline of how the event is run should be provided. In addition, the Sustainability Pledge can be incorporated into the event by making it available for delegates to sign at the conference.

## **The Organizing Committee**

The Organizing Committee worked well in that the members appreciated the collaboration between the various sustainability-related organizations on campus (the majority of sustainability events throughout the year are organized individually by the groups and rarely together). However, it should be noted that there was a certain lack of cohesiveness within the group. This may be attributed to the fact that the group was large, and each person was focused on organizing a very specific task or event, and so there was not as much communication among committee members than had been expected. Next year's NOW! co-chairs may have to consider downsizing the committee or organizing it in such a way that there is more interaction among students and more of a "team" atmosphere.

In addition, inviting the CUS to assist in the funding and advertising campaign may improve these aspects, as many Sauder School students have experience in marketing.

## **Volunteers**

It would be wise to reach a wider audience and earlier. In doing so, volunteers will not be the limiting factor in terms of food preparation as it was for us this year.

## **Advertising Campaign**

I recommend having the poster finished and printed early enough to start posting them up a bit earlier, in early February – it might be good to have 1/3 of the posters up and around campus to give students enough notice and a heads up for the conference. We would also email high schools in much more advance (early January) so that teachers can book class time

off if the students wish to attend the conference. The blog served a great tool and received many hits, especially in the last week before the conference.

Overall, the advertising campaign was successful to a certain degree. The Olympic break left a gap that made it difficult to get the word out during that time (February 14-28) as few students were on campus. In the future, I would get the word out to faculties and organizations as early as January, just so that students are aware of the conference and have it in the back of their minds, and then the aggressive advertising campaign can start in February.

### **Food and Drink**

If costs need to be cut down, volunteers should be recruited in early January and reach out as many listservs as possible. We could have done a better job in notifying more students, and believe that enough volunteers should be available to help if the word is spread better and more quickly.

As well, on March 12<sup>th</sup>, one of the Sustainability Talks speakers expected coffee to be served right from the start (we planned on brewing for the first coffee break) of the event and thus we had to run to Tim Horton's to purchase some coffee. Next year's Committee may want to consider have coffee/tea ready for the start of the day instead of waiting until the first coffee break.

Refer to Appendix D for a complete summary by Anelyse on the food and beverage planning process, in addition to recommendations for the future.

## **Blog and Facebook**

Next year's co-chairs should hire or recruit a webmaster early in the planning stages; this person must have the time and knowledge to design an actual website or a visually-appealing blog. This year's blog was too simplistic and almost appeared unprofessional. More time and effort should be spent on the appearance of the website.

## **Reflection**

Considering this was the first ever conference put together by the listed organizations, I believe it was truly a success. Although there is certainly room for improvement, the outcome of the conference was fantastic, and the number of people who attended from various backgrounds was phenomenal. I do not regret taking the initiative in organizing this event, because the people whom I met along the way, the new friends that I have made, the conference turnout, and the skills and confidence that I have gained really made this worthwhile. I now feel that I have a great deal of experience from the past six months that will be useful in the future.

When I initially came up with the idea of organizing a conference, I was slightly surprised at the responses from my peers. I was warned several times that organizing a conference is a "huge thing" and "a lot more work than you might think." Regardless, I could not stop imagining the outcome, the end result, which drove me to carry out my idea.

The biggest challenge for me was stepping up to the task and taking on a lead role in the conference planning. I am all too familiar with being in a leadership position (I was a Squad

Leader for UBC Orientations, the Vice-President for the UBC Food Society, etc), but I have never been in the position of highest authority, where the responsibility rests entirely on my shoulders. The idea of being completely in charge made me somewhat nervous, but excited me at the same time. Being in my fourth year, I felt up for the challenge.

Writing up meeting minutes, running the meetings, and keeping up to date with what every committee member was doing were all new to me. However, I learned valuable information that may be useful for a new conference chair:

- **Use Doodle.** This works very well in determining the meeting dates and times. Set this up immediately after forming the organizing committee. Meetings were no longer than an hour and a half each week.
- **Print out extra copies of the meeting minutes.** Do not assume that the minutes will be read even if you send them out prior to the meeting. Bring a couple extra copies of the minutes for people to refer to.
- **Find out who will not be attending the meeting every week.** Ask those who cannot come to the meeting to email you their update that can be shared at the meeting.
- **Set realistic deadlines.** Make sure you give sufficient time for things to be done (i.e. contact professors, come up with event proposals, design poster...) but make sure the deadline is before you actually want them to be finished so there is time to make changes if necessary.

- **Provide a contact list of the organizing committee members.** This is something that I did not do, and regretted it on the day of the conference when I was scrambling through my emails to find out certain people's phone numbers.
- **Smaller is sometimes better.** As mentioned already, the organizing committee should not be so large that it is easy to lose track of which people are in charge of certain components of the conference. A smaller number of dependable, committed students is better than many people who cannot take as much responsibility.
- **Be firm, and do not cut any slack.** It sounds harsh, but the reality is that if a team member is obviously not pulling his or her weight early into the conference planning, that will be trouble later on. This did happen for us, although I did not have to do anything as the committee member simply stopped coming to meetings and replying to emails. Luckily, this happened in November, so this did not affect us. This goes back to the idea that smaller is better. Be sure that the students are aware of the commitment required for their roles.
- **Be inclusive.** It is important, especially as the leader of a group, when brainstorming ideas and planning the conference, to give the committee members an opportunity to speak out their thoughts. Giving them a chance to provide their thoughts and feelings before sharing your opinion will reduce the likelihood that they will automatically agree with you, just because they do not want to hurt your feelings or oppose the leader of the group. I found it easier to get suggestions by sitting back and letting them speak first, and then saying what I thought before coming up with a final consensus.

- **Be efficient.** Time is precious, especially when the organizing committee is made up of students who have little time to meet every week. So, take the time to get feedback from them, but the meeting minutes should include an approximate time allotment for each topic of discussion so as to not go overtime.
- **Be prepared for small group meetings.** Apart from the weekly meetings, I would meet on an individual basis with the committee members, to discuss in detail the conference components that they were responsible for. I met with Aelyse, the food/beverage beverage a number of times to finalize details, and also met with Joyce to finalize the list of speakers and also finalize the conference schedule. The weekly meetings were more useful in terms of keeping everyone up to date on what the others were doing, and give everyone the opportunity to provide feedback. The small group meetings were more useful in terms of finalizing the details for the different events.
- **Keep the energy!** If committee member see that their own co-chairs are not enthusiastic about the conference, chances are, they will lack energy and motivation to work hard throughout the planning process. It was difficult at times, especially during the lull over the exams and holidays (November-January), to keep the positive spirit and the conference in the back of their minds. However, updates helped remind them about the conference and that it was approaching in just a matter of months.
- **Organize a couple of socials.** In order to get the organizing committee acquainted with one another, organize a couple of fun socials, one in term 1 and one in term 2 (when everyone returns, re-energized, from the holidays), such as potlucks or pub nights.

Many people have pointed out that the conference was unique in the variety and diversity of conference events; the wide variety of topics and types of events were a result of the multi-stakeholder collaboration that took place in the planning process; the various organizations involved, such as SEC and UBC Common Energy, came with fresh ideas and their own take on the conference components. I feel that this diversity in organizations involved in the planning process was critical to the success of the conference, and this is what made it unique and memorable for delegates and participants. If the members of the organizing committee are diverse, the conference, too, will be diverse.

I have learned so much from this conference, and the skills that I have developed over the course of the past six months will certainly become useful in the future. I now have confidence in my ability to organize large-scale events and be responsible for coordination all of these events together into one conference.

## Conclusion

In summary, the first ever NOW! UBC Climate Action Conference provided an opportunity for hundreds of students, faculty, and community members to learn how they could take action against climate change; it also provide an opportunity for me to challenge myself, step outside of my comfort zone, and end my university career with a gain in confidence that I am able to take a leadership role with confidence and turn something into success.

I hope that NOW! UBC will continue next year, and that this will become an annual event. Climate change is such a critical threat to the world, and it is conferences like NOW! that bring people together and help initiate action.

## Acknowledgements

Without the help of countless members of the UBC community, this conference would not have been possible. The amount of feedback, recommendations, and encouragement helped me in so many ways. First and foremost, I would like to thank Joyce Shen, my partner in crime, whose effort and experience made this conference a success. Next, I would like to thank all of the members of the Organizing Committee for taking on the tasks set forth and the hours they spent organizing the events.

I would like to thank Liz Ferris and Art Bomke for supervising this SEEDS project and providing tremendous support and valuable advice during the planning process. Finally, I would like to thank Liska Richer and the UBC Sustainability Office for taking interest in my initial proposal, and turning it into a SEEDS/directed studies project.

## Appendices

### *Appendix A: Organizing Committee*

#### **Co-Chair**

Katina Tam

#### **Co-Chair**

Joyce Shen

#### **Food and Beverage Director**

Anelyse Weiler

#### **Marketing and Promotions Director**

Rosalind Sadowski

#### **Finance Director**

Kristen Hemminger

#### **Online Content/Webmaster**

Rebekah Parker

#### **Events Coordinators**

Katina Tam – *Hypothetical Situation, Inter-University Videoconference*

Joyce Shen – *Keynote Speakers and Cross Faculty Sessions*

Liz Ferris – *Open Space Tangible Solutions*

Brendan Guy – *Open Space Tangible Solutions*

Jessica Dorzinsky – *Open Space Tangible Solutions*

Michael Rust-Smith – *Sociometry*

Rebecca Beaton – *Sociometry*

Khushi Chachcha – *Sociometry*

Rebeka Ryvola – *Sustainability Talks*

#### **NOW! Week Co-ordinators**

Chelsea Enslow

Rebecca Seifert

Jeff Sung

## *Appendix B: Conference Timeline*

### Early October

- start contacting potential speakers
- look into conference venue

### Late October

- finalize Organizing Committee
- proposals for conference components

### November

- finalize conference components (details)
- confirm speakers, finish contacting all speakers
- confirm conference venue
- create blog/website

### December

- complete funding applications
- update blog
- create facebook group
- contact food donators and sponsors

### January

- submit funding applications
- work on conference schedule
- confirm speakers
- design poster and advertising campaign

### Early February

- finalize conference speakers and schedule
- open registration
- start advertising campaign
- update blog

## *Appendix C: Conference Schedule*

### **March 11<sup>th</sup> Agenda**

**9:00 – 9:30 a.m.** Registration

**9:30 – 9:40 a.m.** Welcome

**9:40 – 9:50 a.m.** Mission and Goals

**9:50 – 10:30 a.m.** Opening Speech

Hadi Dowlatabadi, Professor, Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability (IRES)

*Whose Sustainability?*

**10:30 – 10:45 a.m.** Coffee Break

**10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.** Voices for Change Panel

- David Beers, Founding Editor, *The Tyee*  
*The Tyee: Swim Against the Media Current*
- Candis Callison, Professor, School of Journalism  
*Translating Climate Change: Examining Meaning Making and Public Engagement*
- Kathryn Harrison, Professor, Department of Political Science  
*The Politics of Climate Policy*
- Emmanuel Prinet, Executive Director, One Earth Initiative  
*Rethinking the Good Life*
- Bill Rees, Professor, School of Community and Regional Planning (Moderator)

**12:15 – 12:45 p.m.** Lunch Break

**12:45 – 2:15 p.m.** Sustainability Education Panel

- Jean Marcus, Project Manager, Advisory Committee on Academic Programs on Sustainability  
*Student Access to Sustainability Learning Opportunities at UBC*
- Kai Chan, Professor, Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability (IRES)  
*Interdisciplinary Transacademic Education for Sustainability: Ecosystem Services as a Case Study*
- Alexandre Hebert, Sustainability and Energy Manager, British Columbia Institute of Technology

*Bottom Up or Top Down—Lessons Learned from Greening Curricula in Sauder School of Business*

- Tom Sullivan, Professor, Faculty of Land and Food Systems  
*Science and Ethic: Is Climate Change Movement a Friend or a Foe?*
- Nicholas Coop, Professor & Co-chair, UBC Sustainability Academic Program (Moderator)

**2:15 – 2:30 p.m.** Coffee Break

**2:30 – 4:00 p.m.** Closing Keynote

Peter Victor, Professor, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University; Board of Directors, David Suzuki Foundation  
*Managing without Growth: Slower by Design, Not Disaster*

**March 12<sup>th</sup> Agenda**

**10:00 – 10:30 p.m.** Registration

**10:30 – 12:00 p.m.** Student Sustainability Talks

**12:00 – 12:30 p.m.** Lunch Break

**12:30 – 2:00 p.m.** Hypothetical Situation: Voting for the Climate

- Andrew Weaver, Professor, School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, UVic
- Simon Donner, Professor, Department of Geography
- James Vercaemmen, Professor, Faculty of Land and Food Systems
- David Tindall, Professor, Faculty of Forestry and Department of Sociology
- Stewart Cohen, Professor, Faculty of Forestry (Moderator)

**2:00 – 2:15 p.m.** Coffee Break

**2:15 – 3:15 p.m.** Sociometry Dialogues

**3:15 – 3:30 p.m.** Coffee Break

**3:30 – 4:30 p.m.** Cultivating a Community for Change – Tangible Solutions

*Appendix D: Food and Beverage Summary by Anelyse Weiler, 2010 Food and Beverage Coordinator*

Overall, I was dissatisfied with my performance as Food and Beverage Director for the NOW! Conference, but I hope my experiences can be useful for students in future years. I took on the position fairly late in the stage of organizing the conference (i.e. late December/January), which contributed to the organizational challenges that arose. The majority of my work before the conference consisted of soliciting donations from the organizations below and corresponding with them to organize logistics such as amounts of food donations and pick-up arrangements. We initially intended to provide a free, very light lunch or snacks on each of the 3 days for attendees using as much donated food as possible, and the conference funds would cover additional costs. My plan was to use the donations to offer light open-faced sandwiches and coffee to conference delegates and speakers, to purchase any items that were not donated (e.g. sandwich spreads), and to provide the quiche, salad and pie donations for conference speakers only. It was challenging to know how much food would be needed because we did not know how many people would be attending the conference until one week before it took place. In order to avoid the use of disposable plates, I had arranged to borrow plates and cutlery from the Agricultural Undergraduates Society, and we had also planned to request that delegates bring their own mugs and Tupperware containers. At one point, we also planned to purchase pizza from Pie-R-Squared on the UBC campus to offer a slice of pizza for each conference attendee because this was a fairly low-cost option that would complement food donations for lunches.

Unfortunately, some of the donations had to be cancelled because I did not have enough volunteers to assist me with picking up the food, preparing the food and coffee, serving and cleaning up, or washing dishes. Shortly prior to this, the conference had been reduced to 2 days. Although I had prepared detailed outlines of the specific volunteer tasks for which I needed help, the response to my volunteer requests was very low. Volunteer requests were sent to members of the NOW! organizing committee, Sprouts volunteers, Friends of the Farm volunteers, the Student Environment Centre, the UBC Food Society, and community service-learning students from the Faculty of Land and Food Systems. I realize that I should have invested more time in soliciting volunteers and done so at an earlier stage of the organizing process.

In the end, there were sufficient funds to offer a full lunch for conference delegates. Joyce Shen, AMS Sustainability Coordinator, ordered wraps from AMS Catering for both days of the conference and coffee for one of the days, although coffee arrived on both days. We also ordered plates and mugs for these days. For the last day of the conference, we used some of

the donated items (e.g. pies, quiches, and salads) to complement the wraps, and we provided coffee from Ethical Bean and donated baked goods. The reason that we had not offered these donated items on both days was because I had a mandatory field trip on the first day of the conference, and no one was available to coordinate serving the donated food in my absence. Volunteers and conference attendees went home with some leftover food on the last day of the conference, but delegates had been surprisingly hungry, and little food was wasted. Feedback from conference attendees regarding the food on the last day was very positive.

Donated food was stored in the refrigerator of the AMS kitchen until the last conference day, and the AMS kitchen also loaned me the use of a trolley for transporting food from the SUB to the Liu Institute. Volunteers had assisted with picking up these donations. On the day of the conference, they also helped with preparing the food and coffee as well as refreshing the lunch/snack buffet table when food was depleted. Because I had cancelled the donation of plates from the Agricultural Undergraduate Society, Joyce Shen had to order additional plates from AMS Catering at the last minute. I also purchased paper napkins for the baked goods that were not conducive to being eaten by hand (i.e. the fruit pies). I am eternally grateful to the volunteers, business donors, Joyce Shen and Katina Tam for their patience and flexibility throughout the whole process, and I regret not having coordinated the conference snacks and meals in a more organized fashion. If conference organizers in future years have any questions, I would be very happy to respond: [anelyse.m.weiler@gmail.com](mailto:anelyse.m.weiler@gmail.com)

General recommendations to future conference organizers:

- Assign the responsibility of organizing food for the conference early (i.e. if the event takes place in March again, begin organizing food details before December).
- Solicit the help of volunteers much earlier. Don't try to take on everything by yourself, and don't be afraid to ask for help.
  - o Use the detailed outlines of volunteer tasks/positions when soliciting volunteers
- Approach the Agricultural Undergraduates Society for the loan of their cutlery and plates.
  - o Ask conference delegates to bring their own mugs and Tupperware containers to minimize waste from disposable plates and to reduce the need for volunteer labour to wash dishes. Use the online conference registration form as well as promotional materials to advertise this request.
- If conference funds, available volunteers and food donations are low, consider offering only a light lunch or snacks instead of a full lunch.
- Keep track of businesses that you have contacted for food donations using a table similar to the one below.

**Table of food donations for the NOW! Climate Change Conference**

<b>Business or organization</b>	<b>Contact info</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Pick-up date</b>
AGRO Cafe	Katina contacted <a href="http://www.agrocafe.org/">http://www.agrocafe.org/</a>	No response?	
Aphrodite's Cafe	Peggy Vogler: [REDACTED]	Donating organic quiche, salad and pies	Pick up March 10.
Capers Whole Foods	Katina requested a donation application form. <a href="http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/stores/kitsilano/community-giving.php">http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/stores/kitsilano/community-giving.php</a> . Anelyse didn't submit a donation request because Capers only donates to registered non-profit organizations.	n/a	
Choices Markets	Submitted donation application to [REDACTED] (See criteria at <a href="http://www.choicesmarket.com/community.htm">http://www.choicesmarket.com/community.htm</a> )	No response.	
East is East	Phoned and then followed up with letterhead donation request.	No response.	
Ethical Bean	Phoned Emily Sproule and left message. Also emailed [REDACTED]	Yes! Will also be donating a brewer, sugar, stir sticks, milk and cream dispensers, and cups.	Pick up March 10.
European Breads Bakery	Phoned and then sent an email to Vera: [REDACTED]	Will donate beautiful loaves of bread that will last 3-4 days.	We cancelled bread donation due to lack of volunteers for prep.
Gorilla Foods	Katina emailed Gorilla Foods, and Anelyse phoned (Aaron, manager, will follow up with me).	Aaron did not respond.	
Grounds for Coffee	Spoke to manager and emailed manager with letterhead donation request.	Sounded positive on	

		phone, but I think the manager forgot about the email.	
Happy Planet	Emailed Randal Lus [REDACTED] Also phoned Annie, from Happy Planet accounting, and left message. Also emailed [REDACTED]	No, Happy planet has already made its decisions on donations for the first quarter.	
Individual donation	In fulfillment of some of her community service-learning hours for a course in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems, Lizzy Foulkes from Sprouts baked two batches of delicious vegan cookies for the conference.	Ginger cookies and chocolate-coconut cookies.	Pick up from Sprouts office on March 12.
Muffin Break (West 4 & Alma)	Dropped off donation request letter at front desk.	Received a donation of a box of roughly 10 muffins	Pick up March 10.
The Naam Restaurant	Phoned office [REDACTED] and left a message	No response.	
Save-On Foods (UBC Wesbrook Village)	Yes, dropped off donation request letter at Customer Service Desk.	No response.	
Safeway (West 10 <sup>th</sup> )	Dropped off a donation request letter at the Customer Service Desk.	Yes, \$20 gift certificate.	One of our volunteers bought a box of ~100 organic apples with the gift certificates + cash.
Safeway (West 4 <sup>th</sup> )	Dropped off a donation request letter at the Customer Service Desk	Yes, \$40 gift certificate.	
Safeway (2733 West Broadway)	Dropped off a donation request letter at the Customer Service Desk	No response.	

Sprouts/Community Eats	Sprouts President: <a href="mailto:Sprouts.president@gmail.com">Sprouts.president@gmail.com</a> . In future, suggest contacting: [REDACTED]	Sprouts/Community Eats is helping with food for Hungry4Change, which is occurring during the evening of one of the NOW! Days.	
Terra Breads	Emailed [REDACTED] correspondence with Julie Lamarche: [REDACTED]	Yes, donating leftover loaves. Other charities receive some of these, so not certain what will be available.	Cancelled due to lack of food prep volunteers, but would have picked up from two locations (Granville Island & West 5 <sup>th</sup> @Manitoba ).

## *Appendix E: Resources*

### **People**

Katina Tam, Co-Chair (NOW! UBC 2010)

[katina.m.tam@gmail.com](mailto:katina.m.tam@gmail.com)

Joyce Shen, Co-Chair (NOW! UBC 2010)

[juecui@gmail.com](mailto:juecui@gmail.com)

Anelyse Weiler, Food and Beverage Coordinator (NOW! UBC 2010)

[anelyse.m.weiler@gmail.com](mailto:anelyse.m.weiler@gmail.com)

UBC Common Energy Dialogue Group

<http://ubc.commonenergy.org/wiki/Dialogue>

UBC Student Environment Centre

[enviro@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:enviro@ams.ubc.ca)

UBC Sustainability Office

Liska Richer, SEEDS Program Coordinator

604-822-3270

[liska.richer@ubc.ca](mailto:liska.richer@ubc.ca)

<http://www.sustain.ubc.ca/>

### **On-Campus Venues**

Aquatic Ecosystems and Research Laboratory

Janice Doyle, Director's and Graduate Secretary

604-822-2731

[j.doyle@fisheries.ubc.ca](mailto:j.doyle@fisheries.ubc.ca)

<http://www.fisheries.ubc.ca>

Liu Institute for Global Issues

Patty Gallivan, Liu Institute Events Coordinator

604-822-1558

[patty.gallivan@ubc.ca](mailto:patty.gallivan@ubc.ca)

[http://www.ligi.ubc.ca/room\\_bookings.htm](http://www.ligi.ubc.ca/room_bookings.htm)

UBC Classroom Bookings

<http://www.students.ubc.ca/facultystaff/bookings.cfm?go=rooms>

## **Funding**

AMS Funding

[http://www2.ams.ubc.ca/index.php/student\\_government/subpage/category/ams\\_funding](http://www2.ams.ubc.ca/index.php/student_government/subpage/category/ams_funding)

Walter H. Gage Memorial Fund

<http://www.vpstudents.ubc.ca/memorial.cfm>

UBC Sustainability Office

Kathy Manson, UBC Campus Sustainability Office Administrative Secretary

604-827-5641

[kathy.mason@ubc.ca](mailto:kathy.mason@ubc.ca)

<http://www.sustain.ubc.ca>

## **Food and Beverage Donations**

Aphrodite's Café and Pie Shop

Peggy Vogler, Owner

██████████

██████████████████

<http://www.organiccafe.ca/>

## **AMS Catering**

<http://www.amscatering.com/catering/index.html>

## **Logistics and Administration**

Doodle

<http://www.doodle.com/>

Eventbrite

<http://www.eventbrite.com/home>

NOW! UBC Blog

<http://nowubc.wordpress.com>