



**Final report on the Volunteer Swap  
at the University of British Columbia (UBC), Vancouver  
from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, 2015**

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With generous support from the University Alliance for Sustainability (UAS)

As the coordinator of the initiative SUSTAIN IT!, I had the great pleasure to participate in an exploratory stay at the University of British Columbia (UBC). The goal was to learn more about student sustainability initiatives, green campus activities, living labs as well as concrete transformative teaching. During my voluntary swap from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2015, I had meetings with various representatives from student initiatives, professors, experts and administrative management staff as well as with environmental artists from civil society. Overall, it was a very fruitful stay and I was very inspired from the great variety of activities and didactic approaches I witnessed. I was particularly pleased about the openness, the mutual interest and the strong intrinsic motivation of the people who took the time to share their special interests and projects with me and show me around campus.

The focus of my visit was twofold. Firstly, I wanted to explore the variety of student initiatives taking place and to learn how participation and especially education for sustainable development is being implemented into the UBC management and curriculum. My second focus was to establish connections with UBC initiatives as well as academics and staff working on and with sustainability-related issues so that I could introduce them to our international exchange program University Alliance for Sustainability (UAS).

At the very beginning of my stay, I met six relevant key players in the fields of sustainability management, teaching and student initiatives. They familiarized me with the main actors and projects on campus:

**On the student side, I made the following two contacts:**

- ✓ Jennifer Sun, Sustainability Coordinator of the AMS Student Society
- ✓ Kshamta B. Hunter, Manager, Advising and Student Involvement, Teaching, Learning & Research, UBC Sustainability Initiative

**On the sustainability management side, I met:**

- ✓ Marko Pajalic, Manager, Communications and Engagement, UBC Sustainability Initiative
- ✓ Liska Richer, Manager of the UBC SEEDS Sustainability Program, Community Development, Campus and Community Planning

**On the teaching level, I made fruitful contact with:**

- ✓ Prof. Hartley Bannack, Department of Curriculum & Pedagogy, Faculty of Education
- ✓ Prof. Susan Gerofsky, Assistant Professor, Mathematics, Department of Curriculum & Pedagogy, Faculty of Education

➤ **Jennifer Sun, Sustainability Coordinator of the AMS Student Society**

As a coordinator, Jennifer Sun explained the structure and the goals of AMS Student Society at UBC Vancouver and gave me an excellent overview about the following sustainability projects on campus. She also provided me with the respective contacts:

- SEEDS Program
- UBC Rooftop Garden Club
- Talk Green To Me
- Pedal Powered Charging Station



*©Jennifer in front of her office in the AMS NEST Building*

➤ **Kshamta B. Hunter, Manager, Advising and Student Involvement, Teaching, Learning & Research, UBC Sustainability Initiative**

We met at the CIRS Building. Kshamta is a Student Advisor for the UBC Sustainability Initiative. She familiarized me with the *Sustainability Ambassadors Peer Program* which is an educational outreach program at the UBC Sustainability Initiative and Teaching & Learning Office. Volunteer Ambassadors work with the Sustainability Student Advisor as part of a team to deliver sustainability programs to

fellow students at UBC's Vancouver campus. They also network with student groups on campus to promote sustainability education. Kshamta was very interested in the educational format: Schools@Universities for Sustainability + Climate Protection and we both expressed our mutual interest in an ongoing exchange.



©Kshamta in her student office

➤ **Marko Pajalic, Manager, Communications and Engagement,  
UBC Sustainability Initiative**

I met the Manager of Communication and Engagement in the CIRS Building. Marko told me about his work at CIRS. He explained that the UBC approach is based on the integration of sustainability through teaching, learning and research, operations, infrastructure and the community. UBC collaborates with private, public, NGO and community partners, and they use the campus and their operational, educational and research capabilities as societal test bodies to study, teach, apply and share lessons learned, technologies created and policies developed.

After the meeting, Marco introduced me to **Tomas Refslund Poulsen**, the team leader of the Green Campus at the University of Copenhagen. He was doing an internship as a guest professor at UBC and familiarized me with his *Green Guide for universities* which includes a number of interesting case studies on how universities are advancing sustainability. Tomas is involved in the production process as part of the IARU network and in collaboration with the group that produced the guide (Sustainia).

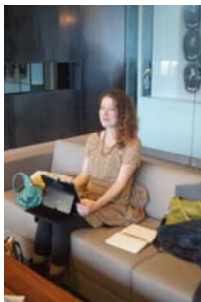


©Marco in the CIRS Building

➤ **Liska Richer, Manager of the UBC SEEDS Sustainability Program, Community Development, Campus and Community Planning.**

Liska explained to me the holistic approach of the SEEDS program and that the long-term vision of SEEDS is to embed sustainable learning pathways across all teaching programs at UBC. This ambitious goal, in which every UBC student will have access to an education in sustainability, mirrors UBC's view that sustainability applies to all students and every discipline. The main goal is that every student can equip themselves with the competencies and capacities that enable them to contribute to the co-creation of a sustainable future.

To help guide academic units to develop sustainability learning pathways, UBC has outlined four student-sustainability-attributes: Holistic Systems Thinking, Sustainability Knowledge, Awareness and Integration, and Acting for Positive Change. A sustainability learning pathway is a collection of sustainability-oriented courses and experiences which students pursue alongside their major. This provides them with a firm foundation in the four attributes. Sustainability pathways are currently under development in the Faculty of Science, the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Applied Science. Pathway seed grants are available to faculty members who would like to lead the development of a sustainability pathway within their department and/or faculty. The SEEDS program is really a role model which could be very interesting for FU Berlin. A GOOD EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW!



*©Liska in front of her office*

➤ **Prof. Hartley Bannack, Department of Curriculum & Pedagogy, Faculty of Education**

When I called Prof. Hartley Bannack, he invited me to take a stroll through Vancouver instead of having a conventional meeting in his office. He told me about his practical outdoor education activities on campus and in civil society. He further explained to me how he spreads conceptual knowledge into real world projects. He has organized the outdoor festival "Wild About Vancouver (WAV)." It is a free public outdoor educational festival offering practical ways to get children (and adults) outdoors more regularly. WAV is open to the public and aims to unite and create long-term sustainable outdoor experiential learning networks for organizations, schools, youth programs, and the broader citizenry of Vancouver: <http://www.wildaboutvancouver.com/>

➤ **Prof. Susan Gerofsky, Assistant Professor, Mathematics Education, Department of Curriculum & Pedagogy, Faculty of Education**

Susan Gerofsky is an assistant professor of Mathematics from the UBC Faculty of Education Curriculum & Pedagogy. She brings her experience in a number of fields to bear in an innovative and

interdisciplinary approach to curriculum theory, and to mathematics in particular. She is involved in interdisciplinary research and teaching involving mathematics, applied linguistics, and film.

The aim of her outdoor activities is to

- help new and experienced teachers learn to teach across the curriculum in a garden-based outdoor classroom, with the garden itself as 'co-teacher'.
- continue integration of the outdoor classroom into the UBC teacher education curriculum and other cross-campus initiatives such as garden-based enhanced practice, classes, a Saturday workshop series for teacher candidates, community seasonal celebrations, arts events and installations.
- support student and faculty research in garden-based, ecologically aware education.
- establish a long-term, sustainable infrastructure for garden-based education at UBC and the Lower Mainland via the Cultivating Learning Network in partnership with Intergenerational Landed Learning on the UBC Farm and other sister and offshoot projects.
- communicate research results and teaching resources among educators in BC, international garden-based education networks and the wider community.

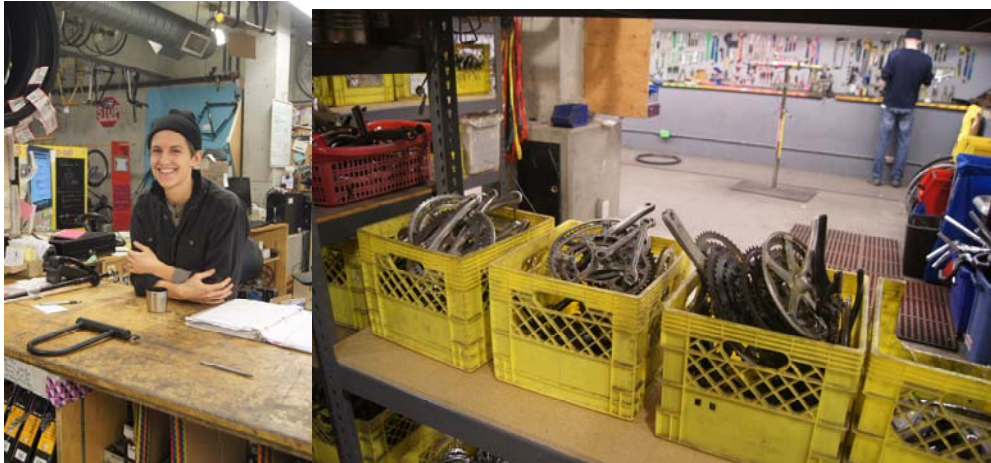
Prof. Susan Gerofskiy familiarized me with different urban gardening projects on campus like The UBC Rooftop Garden Club, the UBC farm and the Orchard garden. I share a lot of experience in the field of learning by "head, heart & hands" with Susan. She is an excellent partner for further UAS collaborations!

In the following section, I will present the student initiatives and green projects which I explored during my stay:

➤ **BIKE kitchen:**

I met Emily from the BIKE Kitchen (<http://thebikekitchen.com/>) who familiarized me with her non-profit, full-service community bike shop. It used to be a student driven initiative. Because of its long-term success, it has become a project from the AMS Bike Co-op with the support of the Alma Mater Society and the Transportation Planning Office. All profits raised by the Bike Kitchen are used to fund the Bike's Co-op program and cycling advocacy outreach programs on campus and in the community. Former students are now employees at the bike kitchen. The shop's mission is to:

- Fix your bike with our tools
- Learn how to fix your bike
- Have us fix your bike if you're too busy
- Build a bike from scratch with new and used bikes
- Purchase a fully refurbished used bike
- Donate your old bike and we'll find it a good home



*@Emily in her BIKE kitchen*

➤ **'Roots on the Roof'-gardening project**

Prof. Susan Gerofsky introduced me to the student team at the 'Roots on the Roof' gardening project located on the rooftop of the student union building AMS NEST. It is run by students from various departments. The students took me on a tour through the garden and explained the mission and goals of their project to me. Roots on the Roof has a gardening space of 192m<sup>2</sup>. Founded in 2014, the garden is focused on creating community-minded experiences and opportunities for personal empowerment that also incorporate concepts of food justice and food security. They facilitate student and community capacities regarding food by producing food as sustainably as possible, and by hosting events and workshops that encourage interactions about food, culture, health, and sustainability.

After the tour, the students invited me to take part in the following meeting with all the students who organized a workshop festival. I presented our UniGardening activities at FU Berlin and they were very interested to learn more about our activities.

<https://blogs.ubc.ca/rootsontheroof/about/history/>



*@student team on the AMS NEST*



➤ **UBC Farm**

I visited the UBC Farm which is located on the south of the campus. It is a unique research centre that aims to gain understanding and fundamentally transform local and global food systems towards a more sustainable, food-secure future. The farm is a living laboratory, committed to finding solutions to both the local and global challenges facing food systems sustainability and translating solutions to improve personal, community, and environmental health. The UBC Farm is a 24-hr teaching and learning space, and integrated production farm. The farm is situated within a 90-year old coastal hemlock forest that comprises a mosaic of cultivated annual crop fields, perennial hedgerows and orchards, pasture, teaching gardens, and forest stands. The UBC Farm is [certified organic](#), and grows over 200 varieties of fruits, vegetables, and herbs. The farm also features honey beehives and egg-laying, open-pasture hens. The farm is used by staff and faculty from diverse departments to do research e.g. on sustainable agriculture. For instance, Stacy Friedman from the Faculty of Education is using the farm as a green learning space.



©entrance of the UBC farm

➤ **Stacy Friedmann, Landed Learning School Year Program, Faculty of Education**

I met Stacy Friedmann who offers the program “Intergenerational Landed Learning” for school classes. She is a certified teacher and facilitator and she works with children, university students, seniors and other community members to care for the land, grow, harvest, cook, and eat together at the UBC Farm. She believes food connects us all and helps us understand our responsibilities to ourselves, each other, and to the Earth. She is fascinated by botany and the diversity of the plant world, loves involving communities in learning and acting together, and finds fulfilment in preparing and sharing food with others.



*© Stacy Friedman in her office/ the UBC Farm*

The Landed Learning School Year Program operates between September and June each year at the UBC Farm and the Okanagan Science Centre (Vernon, BC). School classes in grades 3 – 7 partner with farm-friendly volunteers to sow, grow, and harvest food crops using sustainable agricultural practices. Each class spends up to 12 school days in the garden. During these visits children gain hands-on experience with the growing cycle, food systems, soil science, and farm and forest ecosystems using a cooperative, multi-generational, small-group learning approach. Food growing activities are accompanied by lessons in nutrition and food preparation in the kitchen. Teachers work with project staff to integrate and extend the experiential component of the program with classroom lessons across the curriculum. A good example to follow!

<http://landedlearning.educ.ubc.ca/landed-learning-school-year-program/landed-learning-elementary-school-project/>

➤ **Orchard Garden**

The Orchard Garden is a student-run teaching and production garden used by the Faculty of Land and Food Systems and the Faculty of Education. It had been located beside the H. R. MacMillan Building for close to a decade. However, it had been operating on a temporary permit on land slated for development by UBC, and was scheduled for removal once construction began. As a result, UBC offered the Orchard Garden space at Totem Field, and the AMS offered them one of the roofs at the newly constructed AMS Student Nest. In 2014, the Orchard Garden was successfully moved to Totem Field, but the remaining space atop the Nest was still in need of someone to manage it. Orchard Garden is dedicated to helping understand sustainability and environmental education holistically, and that is also used for teaching mathematics vividly. <http://cfe.educ.ubc.ca/ubc-orchard-garden/>  
A GOOD EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW!





©Indeed, you can learn math in the garden with Susan Gerofsky

➤ **Lindsay Fenwick, Seedlings Operations Manager, Sprouts**

Sprouts is a 100% volunteer and student-run organization at the UBC. They endeavour to make healthy, affordable, and sustainably produced food accessible to everyone on campus. In 2008, Sprouts was renovated and re-opened as a volunteer-run café, store, and community space serving hot lunches, coffee, and baked goods and selling organic, locally-grown produce and minimally-packaged staple and snack items. Sprouts also runs a bulk buying club, a Sprouts box delivery program, and hosts Community Eats, a by-donation lunch on Fridays.

As a non-profit and volunteer-run business, the profitable endeavours – Sprouts cafe and grocery store, and The Sprouts Box – are able to support educational and outreach programs – Community Eats and Sprouts Workshops. A GOOD EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW!



©Sprouts Café

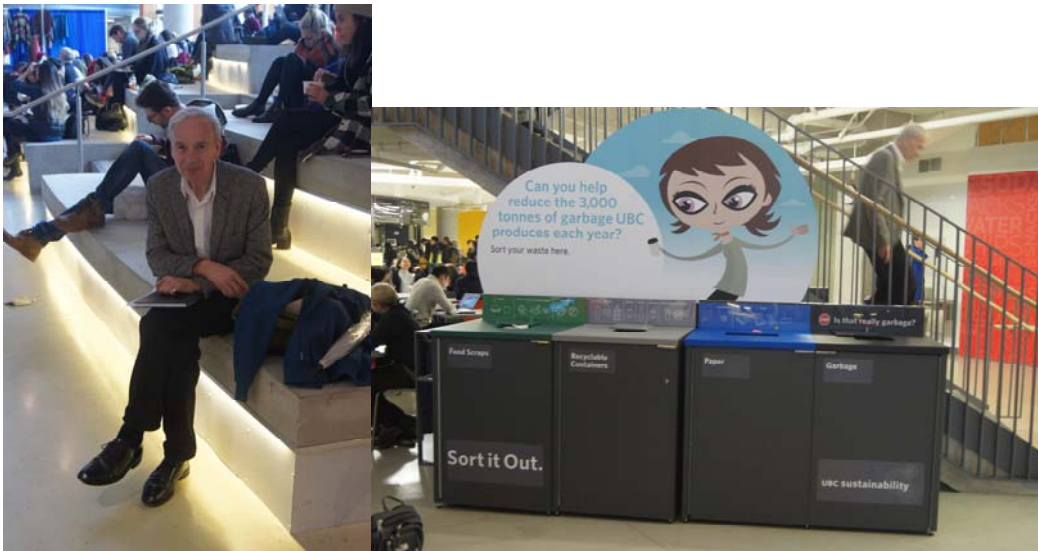


*@good sprout food*

## Other interesting people I met coincidentally at the UBC

### ➤ **Michael Kingsmill, Architect and Designer of the AMS NEST building**

During a visit of the AMS NEST, I met the architect and designer behind this marvellous and innovative building by accident: Michael Kingsmill. He watched me taking photographs and asked me about my special interests in the building. He spontaneously offered me a tour through the building and I was really honoured to get his personal insights and explanations. Great experience!



*@Michael Kingmill in the NEST in front of a new waste campaign which he developed and designed with students*

- **Tyler Kinnear**, Graduate Student, [Musicology](#), UBC

Tyler's current research focuses on conceptions of nature in contemporary music. His teaching and research interests include ecomusicology, sound ethnography, and histories and theories of listening. Tyler serves on the editorial board for the *Ecomusicology Review* and is an active member of the Ecocriticism Study Group of the American Musicological Society. I met Tyler at the bus stop station at the UBC campus. He told me about how sound, culture, and the environment intersect. An elusive and inspiring talk!

<http://ubc.academia.edu/TylerKinnear>

### Meetings with an environmental artist from Vancouver

- **Trillium Park North, Sarah Kelly**

Trillium North Park is on the south edge of Strathcona neighbourhood. This new park's perennial plantings were chosen for their significance in traditional hand technology by First Nations People from across the province of British Columbia. Purpose-designed areas assist in processing plant materials including: covered harvest table and work area, shipping containers for indoor work, fenced outdoor storage and an open-air performance space.

<https://trilliumnorthpark.com/>



© Trillium Park, Vancouver

I met Sharon Kallis in the park. She is an environmental artist who collaborates strongly together with Prof. Susan Gerofski from the UBC. Her mission statement is explained in the following paragraph: Working in several parallel areas; indoor-studio based, outdoor-site specific as well as in a community engaged installation practice, my focus shifts to what is seasonally at hand. In community and outdoor work, my creative process begins with a harvest principal that embraces communal stewardship of the land; weeding, invasive species removal, coppicing, gleaning and gathering. The tradition of sharing knowledge occurs; my own experience with plants and their uses are exchanged with those familiar to



a place through close investigation of the surroundings, walking, sharing stories about the landscape and the observed shifts in eco-systems. Installation ideas spring forth through conversation, idea sharing, identifying what materials are suitable for harvest and the consideration of the inherent physical properties of both place and material used.



©Susan Gerofsky and Sharon Kallis sitting in front of the Art Lab; on the right: me and Sharon

© Trillium Park, Vancouver