



The Tertiary Education Collaboration for Sustainability

“Aiming Higher: Unlocking the Potential for Tertiary Education to Accelerate Sustainable Development”

Universities and colleges have much influence and reach, with strong efforts to integrate sustainable development into our curricula, research and operations. Sustainability requires the recognition and development of relevant competencies, values, skill sets, and approaches to problem-solving. Education has the platform to deliver the necessary tools for sustainability through professional and vocational training, inter-disciplinary instruction, and life-long learning, thereby empowering students to become engaged workers and citizens in our sustainable future. The role of tertiary education, however, has been under-recognized and under-represented. We encourage delegates to reflect on how universities and colleges provide relevant, critical and creative education to our future government, business, industry, education, organizational, and community leaders, thus helping foster sustainable development within healthy green economies, ecosystems, and communities. ***We ask delegates to support the strongest possible actions in supporting higher education as a driver of sustainable development.***

As critical homes for teaching, learning, training, research and new ideas, tertiary education serves as a source for:

- Innovation and industry partnerships
- Strong relationships and facilitated engagement with communities
- Consciousness-raising and cultural paradigm shifts
- Cross-fertilization of knowledge and cultural diversity through international student exchange programs
- Sustainable best practices, as modeled in our curricula and operations

From sustainability outcomes, courses, programs, and degrees to Living Labs and administrative support for Climate Action plans, universities and colleges are perfectly situated to help advance sustainability around the world, at the global and local levels. We contend that universal and equal access to quality education beyond the primary level is essential for sustainability, poverty eradication, gender equality, human development, and literate global citizens.

We believe tertiary education should lead efforts towards sustainable development, as established in the People’s Sustainability Treaty on Higher Education towards Sustainable Development and the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative.

The treaty and initiative have received international endorsements, but they require significantly more recognition, funding, support, teacher training, new curriculum development and collaboration with governments, industry, organizations, and communities. Join us in supporting tertiary education institutions to reach their full potential in paving the pathways needed for nurturing our students in sustainable knowledge, practices, leadership, and development and take this message with you into your discussions about the future, in order to reach the goals and objectives stated through Rio+20 and beyond.

Organizing Partners: Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (USA, Canada), Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability, Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (UK), Copernicus Alliance (Europe), Fondaterra – Fondation Européenne pour des Territoires Durables (France), Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI, international), Korean Association for Green Campus Initiative (KAGCI), Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research network (ProSPER.Net Asia), China Green University Network, United Nations Environment Programme – Environmental Education and Training Unit (international), Global Responsibility Leadership Initiative (GRLI), Conference des Grandes Ecoles (France), and Conference des Présidents d’Université (France)