Sustainable Development Policy

Approbation :   Board of Directors
(Resolution CA-2022-16)

Amendments:

Effective date: February 23, 2022

Lead: Office of the Vice Rector, External and International Affairs and Health

Legal framework: Charte de l'Université Laval, Article 3
Statuts de l'Université Laval, sections 67, paragraphs 1 and 3; 106, paragraph 6; and 147, paragraph 2

UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

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PREAMBLE

Sustainable development has been a complementary part of Université Laval's primary mission for many years. Driven by a deeply rooted culture of sustainability, the university community is more committed than ever to this path and is ready to pursue and multiply its efforts to contribute to the common good.

With that in mind, the University has developed a shared vision of sustainable development[1] that is built around three interdependent components:

– By virtue of its core teaching and research mission, the University produces leaders capable of spearheading the transformations needed to foster sustainable development at the broader community level. Through the pursuit and transfer of knowledge, the university community develops innovative ways to help tackle the major challenges facing society now and in the future.

– The Université Laval campus is a stimulating environment perfect for exploring and experimenting with innovative solutions in sustainable development. The university community is a living lab—a testing ground for society guided by the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

– The University's sustainable development efforts inspire society, provide strong community leadership and lay the groundwork for fruitful relationships and partnerships within the broader community.

This vision is meant to integrate and accelerate sustainable development at the University by strengthening its teaching and research mission, upholding its commitments to the broader community, experimenting with sustainable approaches and behaviours on campus, and establishing productive partnerships.

To ensure a positive and sustainable societal impact, the University is guided by the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[2], which serve as the basic framework shaping its governance, policies, and strategies.

Other transversal initiatives in areas like sustainable health, social engagement, partnership culture, and responsible entrepreneurship further supplement the University's sustainable development agenda. These scalable initiatives have their own governance structures, but they all contribute to sustainable development through their organizational culture and support for the adoption and achievement of SDGs.

Given the significant environmental, social, cultural, and economic challenges associated with sustainable development, the University has adopted a participatory approach to take us forward—boldly, coherently, transparently, and together.

The participatory approach to sustainable development is created with, by, and for the university community. It is a shared commitment to abide by sustainable development principles and provide space for inclusive dialogue that champions diversity and drives major initiatives. Through its actions and commitment, the university community plays a central role in making sustainable development happen, delivering bold, concrete solutions to society's greatest challenges.

This is why the University is implementing a Sustainable Development Policy (hereafter the "Policy"), with the goal of creating a sustainable, responsible, and equitable future for all.

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[1] Université Laval (2021). *A shared vision of sustainable development.*
https://www.ulaval.ca/sites/default/files/DD/ENGLISH/VisionCommuneDD-EN.pdf

[2] United Nations (August 17, 2021). *17 Goals to Transform Our Word.*
https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/

1. OBJECTIVES

Under the Policy, the University will:

1.1 Take bold action to chart ambitious, structural change and set an example through the power of engagement, inclusivity, and consensus and the development of concrete and innovative sustainable development solutions.

1.2 Make sure our actions and practices are coherent so that sustainable development becomes a collective effort with multiple impacts and benefits.

1.3 Establish a transparent and open dialogue with the university community that is attuned to the rapid evolution of innovative and forward-looking initiatives.

1.4 Encourage members of the university community and partners to endorse the values set out in the shared vision of sustainable development (audacity, coherence, transparency) and support the Policy and its objectives, paving the way for accountability, collective mobilization, social justice, and engagement through concrete action.

1.5 Call on members of the university community to get involved and find creative ways to incorporate sustainable development in their teaching, learning, research, innovation, and knowledge transfer activities as well as in community and student life, day-to-day operations, and land use initiatives.

2. DEFINITIONS

Sustainable development

According to the UN definition, sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the current population without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Sustainable development calls for joint action to build a sustainable and resilient world, for people and the planet, where everyone has a place.[3]

Sustainable development goals (SDGs)

The 17 SDGs, listed in Appendix I, are a call to action to meet humanity's basic needs and address global social and economic issues while respecting the planet's environmental limitations and finite resources. The United Nations created these goals to define the issues at play in sustainable development and meet global challenges related to poverty, health, inequality, climate, damage to environment, prosperity, peace, and justice.

3. SCOPE

The Policy applies to all members of the University as defined in Book II of the Université Laval statutes. The University will also take steps to raise awareness of and enforce the Policy among users of university services, unions, student associations, related entities, and organizations with a presence on campus.

The University will apply the Policy within the limits of its scope and in compliance with current laws and regulations.

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[3] United Nations (August 17, 2021). *The Sustainable Development Agenda.*
https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4.1 The University's commitment

University governance will ensure that sustainable development principles are taken into account, particularly in planning and the determination of strategic objectives, so as to ensure the viability of the institution, the development of its members, the visibility of its culture, and the fulfilment of its mission.

4.2 A deeply rooted culture of sustainable development

Sustainable development is part of the University's culture and a value held by the university community. In order to embrace sustainable development, strengthen our shared culture, and take action to implement integrated solutions, all members of the university community need to understand the issues at hand.

The shared culture of sustainable development rests partly on the University's human, scientific, cultural, historical, natural, and built heritage.

4.3 Deployment based on the SDGs

The SDGs are a source of inspiration for our sustainable development actions. They can also foster collaboration between transversal initiatives, areas of focus, units, and the community.

4.4 Interdisciplinarity, equity, and inclusion

The University's sustainable development approach connects different fields of knowledge and activity across disciplines, sectors, and academic levels, in an equitable, inclusive, and collaborative way. The approach also recognizes the diversity of points of view, experiences, competences, talents, and skills as a valuable source of creativity, and innovation.

4.5 Engagement and participatory approach

A participatory approach ensures the academic community is actively engaged in conversations about sustainable development at the University and in delivering bold, concrete solutions to society's greatest challenges. To put the Policy into practice, it is important to engage, consult, and motivate members of the university community and get them involved in sustainable development initiatives.

4.6 Acquisition and transfer of sustainable development knowledge

Through its teaching and research mission, the University seeks to develop and acquire sustainable development knowledge, share it with the university community, partners, and society, and ensure it is transferred to the community through public education and awareness activities. In doing so, it encourages people to become agents of change in sustainable development.

4.7 Equal access to quality education and success

To ensure equal access to quality education, the University is mindful of inequalities and inequities that can hinder academic progress and strives to create an environment conducive to student success. Equal access to academic programs and equal opportunities for success are part of the University's justice in education philosophy. It sees that students receive the guidance they need and provides support programs to help with physical, psychological, financial, and socioeconomic issues as well as learning, adaptation, and integration difficulties.

4.8 Sustainable health and quality of life for people and communities

Sustainable health is a key factor for physical, mental, and social well-being. It helps people achieve their full potential and live an enjoyable life. A sustainable health approach is about giving everyone equitable access to environments and services that can help them adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle. As individual health is closely linked to the quality of ecosystems, sustainable health also means acting to preserve and improve the natural environment in order to sustainably improve human health.[4]

4.9 Responsible use of resources

The University must act ethically and responsibly in using existing resources and acquiring, producing, and disposing of the resources it needs to operate successfully, taking into account the lifecycle of resources, their climate and environmental footprint, the working conditions of the people who produce them, and their adverse impact on the environment. Resources must be used as efficiently as possible.

4.10 Continuous improvement and knowledge sharing

The University regularly evaluates its sustainable development performance and strives for continuous improvement through creativity and innovation. These evaluations teach valuable lessons that benefit the university community, our partners, and society as a whole.

5. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION

Putting sustainable development into action brings the University closer to achieving the SDGs. The core elements are as follows:

5.1 Sustainable development in University governance

5.1.1 Take sustainable development principles into account when developing and implementing strategic guidelines so as to make them an intrinsic value of the university community.

5.1.2 Create a participatory and consultative framework for the purpose of adopting strategic guidelines and managing risks and opportunities in accordance with recognized sustainable development principles.

5.1.3 Foster the adoption and integration of sustainable development goals in unit, faculty, and institutional plans and strategies.

5.1.4 Promote the University as a living lab for its partners in order to support sustainable development and speed up the transition through innovation and experimentation.

5.1.5 Educate members of the university community about sustainable development issues and encourage them to promote sustainable development, carry out projects, and take individual and collective action.

5.2 Teaching, research and innovation in sustainable development

5.2.1 Create mechanisms to accelerate the integration of sustainable development into the University's teaching, research and innovation activities.

5.2.2 Foster and promote synergy between teaching, research, innovation, operations, and communities by developing meaningful experiential approaches for students and teaching staff that contribute to the well-being of society.

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[4] Félix Desrosiers © Pulsar-Université Laval, 2018

5.2.3 Encourage sustainable development education in the University's teaching, research, and innovation activities in various fields of knowledge to promote innovative ideas and applications tied to sustainable development issues.

5.2.4 Promote the dissemination and transmission of knowledge within the university community, among partners, and in the local community to help educate the public about sustainable development.

5.2.5 Provide training to University employees to enhance their understanding of sustainable development and how they can play a meaningful role.

5.3 The campus, a hub for creativity and experimentation in sustainable development

5.3.1 Highlight the many ways in which sustainable development research and education have a positive and direct impact on the University's activities and operations and recognize how these initiatives contribute to the learning experience.

5.3.2 Implement innovative practices that use campus organization and design initiatives and areas of focus to drive a shift to responsible behaviour.

5.3.3 Share lessons learned from experimenting with different practices with the university community, partners, and societal actors.

5.3.4 Ensure that steps taken to transform the campus environment support the following areas of focus:

a) Climate action: Maintain a carbon-neutral campus, first by continuously reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and second by emphasizing offset, adaptation, and other programs to inspire, educate, and raise awareness among societal actors.

b) Sustainable food choices: Help seek out and implement practical solutions for developing sustainable and accessible food choices that meet the needs of the community and provide effective solutions to environmental and societal challenges associated with food security, sustainable farming, health, purchasing, and consumption.

c) Natural and built environment: Incorporate sustainable development criteria into the University's processes for construction and renovation, building and equipment maintenance, and land use planning by protecting biodiversity on campus, wooded areas of interest, and so on.

d) Procurement: Prioritize local, responsible, and ethical procurement and the optimization of resources at all stages of the lifecycle, based on circular principles.

e) Culture: Promote the arts, science, and heritage in a way that highlights cultural diversity and peaceful coexistence on campus and showcases the expertise of the university community.

f) Water: Manage the University's water consumption responsibly.

g) Energy: Properly manage the University's energy consumption by promoting energy efficiency, energy savings, and energy sources with low emissions of harmful gases and pollutants.

h) Responsible investing: Adopt responsible and sustainable investment practices that help reduce the portfolio's carbon footprint and take environmental, social, and governance factors into account in investment decisions.

i) Personal well-being: Enhance the experience of members of the university community by supporting practices and behaviours that foster personal growth, health, and well-being; recognize individual and collective efforts; and help create an appealing, diverse, equitable, inclusive, and respectful campus environment.

j) Sustainable mobility: Promote and encourage sustainable means of travel among members of the university community.

k) Waste reduction: Support a change of culture and behaviours with the aim of achieving zero waste by prioritizing, in order, measurement and reduction of waste at source (including single-use plastics and hazardous materials), re-use, recycling, and repurposing.

5.3.5 Set guidelines for collaboration between the various areas of focus to enhance their reach and consistency.

5.3.6 Hold events that incorporate eco-friendly principles.

5.4 Sustainable development leadership and partnerships

5.4.1 Promote and disseminate sustainable development knowledge and innovations in the community with a view to sharing knowledge and making scientific research and data available to all levels of society.

5.4.2 Consolidate the University's sustainable development leadership by setting an example, calling for action, and promoting the experiments and initiatives led by the university community.

5.4.3 Help equip the community, organizations, and businesses to recognize and address sustainable development issues and share their experiences in order to learn from each other and develop effective, innovative, and equitable solutions that contribute to the common good.

5.4.4 Support the transversal sustainable development initiatives the University has put in place to:

a) Highlight and promote the benefits of adopting and maintaining a healthy lifestyle for members of the university community and help create environments that foster health and well-being.

b) Encourage and support the involvement of the university community in social and humanitarian causes on campus and in the local community.

c) Encourage a culture of responsible entrepreneurship in the local community as a tangible means of addressing issues facing our society, including environmental challenges, community development, and the fight against poverty and inequality.

d) Establish productive, long-term alliances with local, national, and international partners and First Nations and Inuit as a way to contribute to our collective well-being and the University's teaching and research mission, while setting the stage for promising sustainable development projects on campus.

5.4.5 Promote actions designed to help members of the university community develop a global outlook, access cross-border experiences, and come in contact with sustainable development approaches and practices from outside Québec.

5.5 The participatory approach to sustainable development

5.5.1 Determine, with and for the university community, the approaches and initiatives that will individually and collectively contribute to sustainable development conversations and projects at the University and, more generally, help build a better society.

5.5.2 Foster interdisciplinary projects and partnerships aimed at developing concrete, high-potential solutions in sustainable development.

5.5.3 Introduce spaces for sharing, discovery, and learning, where members of the university community can discuss their concerns and participate in sustainable development in a variety of ways (gathering information, sharing opinions and information, deliberating, codeveloping).

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBLITIES

6.1 The Office of the Vice Rector, External and International Affairs and Health, is responsible for enforcing the Policy. The other vice rector's offices, the Secretary General's Office, and all staff with a management role will oversee enforcement per their respective responsibilities.

6.2 The office of the vice rector in charge will create a Sustainable Development Issue Table and issue tables for the other transversal initiatives (hereafter the Tables), tasked with fostering cooperation and consultation with the university community and partners for the purpose of implementing the Policy.

The Tables will be composed of representatives of the university community and the broader community.

The Tables will be chaired by the office of the vice rector in charge, which may set up any other method of coordination, cooperation, or consultation for the purpose of implementing the Policy.

6.3 In cooperation with the Tables and the units concerned, the office of the vice rector in charge will propose a sustainable development strategy aligned with the goals, guiding principles, and priorities set out in the Policy. The multi-year strategy must include priority actions, targets, and indicators for measuring performance. It must also take into account the risks associated with sustainable development. The office of the vice rector in charge will advise the units on how to implement the Sustainable Development Policy and strategy.

6.4 The Board of Directors and the University Council will approve the strategy.

6.5 The office of the vice rector will create and periodically update a dashboard for monitoring the strategy and present an annual progress report to the Board of Directors and the University Council.

6.6 The Integrated Risk Management Committee will assess and mitigate sustainable development risks and report to the office of the vice rector in charge.

6.7 The Secretary General's Office will see that the Policy is taken into account when regulatory documents are drafted and revised.

6.8 The Office of the Executive Vice Rector will see that the Policy is incorporated into the University's strategic planning and make sure that the human, material, and financial resources are appropriate and consistent with a prompt rollout of the Policy.

6.9 With a view to continuous improvement and monitoring of best practices in sustainable development, the office of the vice rector in charge will implement oversight mechanisms that could be based on internationally recognized certifications or benchmarks.

6.10 Everyone subject to the Policy is invited to play an active part in implementation and compliance.

7. REVISION

The Policy will be revised as needed, but at least every three years.

8. EFFECTIVE DATE

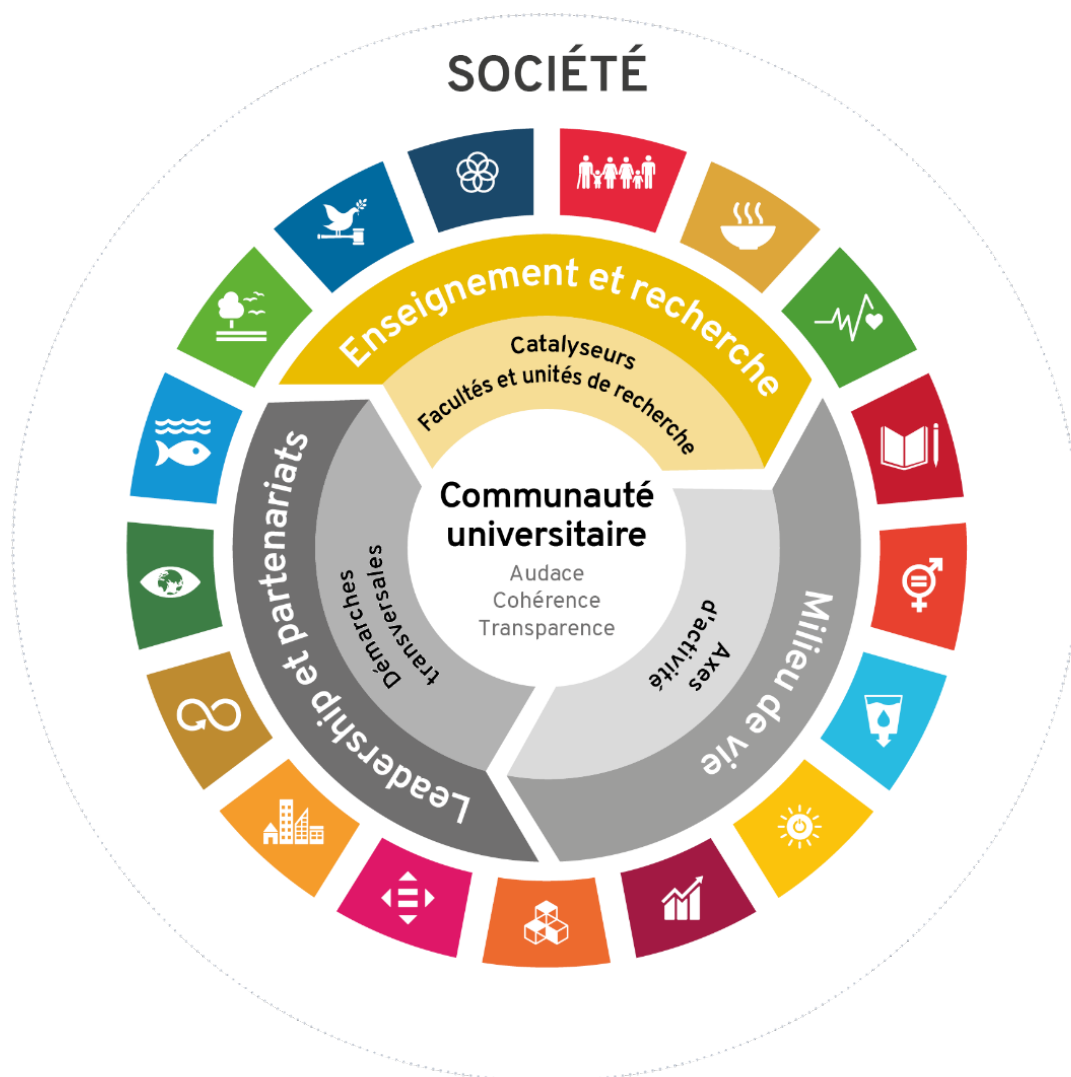This Policy takes effect upon adoption by the University's Board of Directors.

APPENDIX I – LIST OF UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)[5]

SGD 1:   End poverty in all its forms everywhere

SGD 2:   End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

SGD 3:   Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

SGD 4:   Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SGD 5:   Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

SGD 6:   Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

SGD 7:   Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

SGD 8:   Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

SGD 9:   Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

SGD 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

SGD 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

SGD 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

SGD 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

SGD 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

SGD 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

SGD 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

SGD 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

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5 United Nations (August 17, 2021). *17 Goals to Transform Our World*.