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**Sustainable UCL Communications, Engagement and Strategy Action Plan- 2023-2024**

**September 2023**

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**Sustainable UCL: Engagement Strategy and Action Plan 2023-24**

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Where are we now

During the 2022-23 academic year, we witnessed significant engagement across various events and initiatives. This academic journey commenced with the Sustainability and Welcome Fairs, concluding with the UCL Sustainability Awards Ceremony, celebrating the remarkable contributions of staff and students to sustainability and climate change.

In the past year (academic year 2022-2023):

* We engaged with over 600 new students at both the Welcome Fair and Sustainability Fair, introducing them to UCL's sustainability initiatives and opportunities for involvement.
* Over 100 students applied to become Student Sustainability Ambassadors, with more than 60 assuming roles across the Students’ Union, Food@UCL, and as Departmental Sustainability Ambassadors.
* Approximately 50 students received training as Ambassadors and Student Council members, gaining insights into UCL's sustainability efforts and their role in supporting Green Impact Teams, the Students’ Union, and on-campus catering.
* Green Impact and LEAF (Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework) initiatives saw substantial participation, involving over 300 staff in Green Impact and 530 in LEAF. At the 2023 Sustainability Awards Ceremony, we celebrated 48 Green Impact awards and 77 LEAF awards, with a record 67 teams achieving Gold Awards.
* Around 110 Green Champions participated in two Green Impact workshops focused on Positive Climate and The Loop Campaign.
* Our Clothes Swap Shops engaged approximately 1,300 staff and students, resulting in 2,294 clothing items swapped for 1,748 items.
* Due to challenges like industrial action, the Bike Bonanza event was held only once in October 2022, but we aim to enhance its attendance in future editions.
* A Repair Café in February attracted over 240 participants, with hopes of even greater turnout in the upcoming November event.
* The Education for Sustainable Development network launch welcomed 60 UCL colleagues, promoting sustainable education.
* The Sustainability Awards Ceremony gathered over 100 UCL members for in-person networking and over 200 for the hybrid awards ceremony.
* Despite some external barriers, engagement numbers have remained positive, with increased Swap Shop attendance, strong Green Impact workshop participation, and growing sustainability efforts by UCL staff and students.
* We plan to boost engagement further through face-to-face interactions, secure funding for Bike Bonanza events, and encourage Green Impact adoption in Residences with the new Green Impact workbook.
* Strong social media engagement, particularly on Twitter, has consistently reached over 10,000 impressions per month and over 2,000 per month on Instagram. Although we could build out our social offering more, with more regular posting and involvement of students to boost engagement.

Learnings

* Collaborations with other UCL teams, including Campus Experience, Commercial Services, and Accommodation, continue to aim to expand engagement.
* The 2019-2024 Sustainability Strategy's conclusion and strategic review, to line up with UCL’s 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, will influence communications and engagement throughout 2023/2024.
* Collaboration with the Students' Union has increased, particularly in-person events like Student Sustainability Councils and Events, with potential for further linkage.
* Regular engagement and alignment on sustainability communications with other teams, such as Gather & Gather, Accommodation, and Waste/Recycling, will continue to be built out, potentially leading to the creation of term references/SLAs.
* An Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) working group and network have been established to engage staff and students in ESD.
* While there is growing interest in sustainability, more coordination and upskilling are needed to ensure impactful efforts.
* Student engagement faced challenges due to university strikes and the hybrid nature of events with larger online audiences.
* Improvements are needed in the student council format for 2023/2024, with reduced activity in term 3 during exams and assignments.
* Sharing bite-sized, personalised stories and involving academics in faculty meetings and working groups enhance education and engagement.
* UCL's research can strategically communicate its operational success and generate interest.
* Green Impact workshops linked to Positive Climate and The Loop were popular, highlighting the need for similar events for Green Champions throughout the year.
* Regular Green Impact events or meetings can address frequently asked questions with clarity.
* In-person events were held on-site during days of industrial action in line with UCL Students’ Union guidelines.

## Objectives for next year

Main aims for our communications and engagement in 2023-2024:

* The first goal is to increase awareness of sustainability initiatives at UCL. This involves ensuring that the UCL community and stakeholders are well-informed about the university's sustainability efforts, its Sustainability Strategy, and the #ChangePossible brand.
* The second goal is to inform people about how they can make a difference in sustainability and drive behaviour change. This includes providing clear and practical guidance on sustainable actions, offering resources, and promoting sustainable practices that individuals can incorporate into their daily lives.
* The third goal is to effectively communicate UCL's actions and achievements in sustainability, this includes raising awareness of UCL’s Sustainability Strategy coming to an end in 2024 and the development of a Sustainability Plan, to lead us up to 2027, in line with UCL’s Strategic Plan 2022-2027.

**Objective 1 – Increase awareness.** Raise awareness among students, staff, and the wider community about the importance of sustainability, UCL’s sustainability efforts and the updated university sustainability strategy and plan.

* + **Development of UCL Sustainability Plan:** Inform audiences about achievements and challenges with the Change Possible Sustainability Strategy 2019-2024 and how we must bring it in line with UCL’s Strategic Plan 2022-2027.
	+ **Communicate new sustainability plan:** Communicate a consultation programme to develop the new updated Sustainability plan and Carbon Reduction Framework. Share the programme for developing the Plan, emphasising the opportunity to link with the Grand Challenge Programme thus the potential for greater, more robust action moving forward.

**Objective 2 – Educate and inform.** Provide accurate and up-to-date information about sustainability strategies, initiatives, programmes, and resources to empower individuals to make sustainable choices and become sustainability leaders in their own communities.

* **Promote behaviour change:** Encourage sustainable behaviours and lifestyles among the UCL community by highlighting the benefits of sustainability, such as energy and cost savings, improved health and well-being, and positive environmental impact. All communications should have a clear call to action and link to what people can do in their own lives to make a difference.
* **Empower sustainability leaders:** Identify and support sustainability champions within the UCL community, providing them with resources, training, and platforms to drive sustainability initiatives, inspire others, and share their knowledge and experiences. Providing sustainability training and regular meetings for sustainability leads across faculties and departments, including Professional Services and academic faculties. Promote Sustainability Ambassadors and Green Impact Sustainability Champions.

**Objective 3 - Engage and involve diverse stakeholders:** Actively engage students, staff, alumni, and the local community in sustainability initiatives through events, workshops, campaigns, and volunteer opportunities, fostering a sense of ownership and collective responsibility.

* **Work closely with the Students Union:** Work with the SU to have a centralised page for students to connect and have termly meetings for green societies to come together. Turn the council into a forum and determine who runs it. Work with the SU to take a more active role in managing the sustainability officer - involvement in COP28 and the Climate Hub.
* **Foster other partnerships across UCL:** Continue to champion Business Partner programme with sustainability contacts for all faculties. Work closely with Gather & Gather, Accommodation, and Waste/Recycling.
* **Enhance Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Put in place strategies to bring this into our communications and engagement even further. Look at how we engage and connect with our diverse communities.

**Objective 4: Streamline and simplify.** Ensure our communications is streamlined, simple and targeted- ensuring that staff, students and external audiences have a clear message about what the university is doing and what they can do in terms of sustainability.

* **Finalise the review of the Sustainable UCL website:** Finalise streamlining of the UCL website. This includes changing structure of the website and new navigation to make it easier for people to understand sustainability at UCL.
* **Create processes for how teams work with us:** Ensuring our work aligns to key objectives.

## Principles

Alongside the objectives we want to keep in mind that we want to:

* Improve staff and student wellbeing
* Support the student experience
* Drive cost efficiency
* Minimise pressure on staff
* Maintain engagement in our existing communications and engagement programme
* Make all our activities accessible and inclusive

## Target Audiences

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Audience** | **Channels** |
| Leadership | * Leadership team meetings briefings from senior management
* Weekly leadership briefing from Internal Communications
 |
| Professional Staff | * Professional service staff channels, including team meetings for Finance, HR, Faculty meetings, the planning team
* Teams' networks, including BCMG, Climate Groups
* Provost Office email to all employees
* Publication on Sustainable UCL and UCL News pages
* Shared via newsletters, including The Week and The Climate Hub mailing list
* Green Champions network and newsletter
* CE&I email to all employees and other team-wide mailing lists
* Events including Awards Ceremony
 |
| Students | * Events including Awards Ceremony, Welcome Fair, Discovery Week, COP28 Events on Campus
* Green Champions network and newsletter
* Publication of the Annual Sustainability Report & key messages and shared across:
* Social media: Sustainable UCL social media, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, as well as amplified across other social media channels, including UCL main channels
* Newsletters including My UCL, Accommodation, SU Newsletter
 |
| Academic Community | * Teams' networks, including Education for Sustainable Development, Climate Hub
* Sustainable UCL / UCL Website
* Social media: Sustainable UCL social media, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, as well as amplified across other social media channels, including UCL main channels
* Climate Hub newsletter
* Green Champion network and newsletter
* Education for Sustainable Development mailing list
 |
| Sustainability Champions | * Events including Awards Ceremony, Welcome Fair, Discovery Week, COP28 Events on Campus
* UCL Green Champions Teams Network / Email Alias
* UCL Green Champions Newsletter
 |
| External Audience | * Sustainable UCL / UCL Website
* UCL Media Team
* Social media: Sustainable UCL social media, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, as well as amplified across other social media channels, including UCL main channels
* Partnerships with key academics internally to spread the message and externally on their channels
* Climate Hub newsletter
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## Budget and resources allocated

The UCL Sustainability team have an allocated budget for the academic year 2023/24, of £85,000 to the UCL sustainability engagement and communications programme.

## Staff or teams responsible

The UCL Sustainability Team is in charge of the sustainability engagement and communications programme, situated under Ian Dancy, Executive Director of Operations. The Sustainability Communications Officer leads the engagement and communications programme.

## Review process

This overall strategy will be subject to annual review from a diverse range of staff and student stakeholders. Progress on communications and engagement will be reported through the Sustainability Team’s [Annual Report](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/sustainable/ucls-sustainability-annual-report-our-progress), which is signed off by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and through UCL’s [Environmental Sustainability Steering Group](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/sustainable/sustainability-steering-group-ssg).

# Planning for 2023-2024

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sustainable UCL** | **CAM** | **Faculties and Student initiatives** |
| Change PossibleThe LoopPositive ClimateWild BloomsburyGreen ImpactLEAFEaster Switch OffChristmas Switch OffSustainability AmbassadorsSustainability CouncilPowered by PlantsReduce the JuiceClub ZeroProject Period  | Generation One | Environment DomainClimate Action UnitThe AnthropoceneThe SDG InitiativeSDSN NetworkBartlett Net Zero targetUCL Grand ChallengesUCL Institute for Climate EducationPALS No Fly Zone The Lancet CountdownEpilepsy and Climate ChangeReimagining Museums for Climate Action |

## Engagement and Communications Activities 2023-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Messages**  | **Recurring/Cross-campaign** | **All audiences**  | **Students** | **PS Staff** | **Academics** | **Business partners** |
| **Sept** | 1) Raise Awareness of Sustainable UCL and What we are doing 2) How Staff and Students can get involved |  |  | Welcome Week & Sustainability Day Advertise Sustainability Ambassador Programme   | Green Impact Launch & New Website Green Impact Workbook launch  | Green Impact Launch & New WebsiteFaculty Inductions | Re-engaging with BPs |
| **October** | 1) Raise Awareness of Sustainable UCL and What we are doing2) How Staff and Students can get involved | Swap ShopBike Events | Launch 2021-22 Annual Report & drawing a line under the strategy | Moving in weekend Recruit Sustainability Forum MembersContinue to recruit Sustainability Ambassadors D | Promote a Sustainable Welcome Promote Green Impact programme  | Promote a Sustainable Welcome Promote Green Impact programme | Share to BPs  |
| **November** | 1) Raise Awareness of the Importance of action on climate change and sustainability2) We are the generation who needs to act. There's no time to waste. | Swap ShopBike Events |  | Youth COPConsultation for the new strategy - committees launchSu at COP28 Repair CaféFirst Student Sustainability Forum | COP28Consultation for the new strategy - committees launchClimate campaignRepair Cafe | COP28Consultation for the new strategy - committees launchClimate campaign | COP28  |
| **December** | 1) Raise Awareness of the Importance of action on climate change and sustainability2) We are the generation who needs to act. There's no time to waste. | Swap Shops |  | COP28 Continues Christmas Switch Off & climate campaignSustainability plan committees continue  | COP28 Continues Christmas Switch Off & climate campaignSustainability Training Review First Green Impact workshop & Green Impact recruitment continues Sustainability plan committees continue | COP28 Continues Christmas Switch Off & climate campaignSustainability plan committees continue |  |
| **January** | 1) Raise Awareness of the Importance of action on climate change and sustainability2) We are the generation who needs to act. There's no time to waste. | Swap Shop |  | Veganuary International WelcomeStudent sustainability forum – strategy Review all staff and student assets | CE&I forum –sustainability slot Review all staff and student assets  | Grand Challenge Lead-Climate Crisis launches and ramps up Review all staff and student assets |  |
| **February** | 1) Raise Awareness of the Importance of action on climate change and sustainability2) We are the generation who needs to act. There's no time to waste. | Swap Shop |  | Fairtrade FortnightSDG Conference 28 days of sustainability  | Sustainability Plan Funding Promote Green Impact Audits  | Sustainability Plan FundingPromote Green Impact AuditsPost COP28 event at Logan Hall  |  |
| **March** | 1) Raise Awareness of the Importance of action on climate change and sustainability2) We are the generation who needs to act. There's no time to waste. | Swap ShopBike Event |  | SU Elections  | Bond Impact Report  | Bond Impact ReportFestival of Early-Stage Researchers  |  |
| **April** | 1. Launch UCL’s 2022-2023 Annual Sustainability Report and new Sustainability plan leading us to 2027
2. Raise awareness of new commitments
 | Swap ShopBike Event |  | Education ConferenceAmbassadors CareersEaster Switch Off Sustainability Leadership Training  | Launch 2022-2023 Annual Report Easter Switch Off | Easter Switch Off |  |
| **May** | 1. Launch UCL’s 2022-2023 Annual Sustainability Report and new Sustainability plan leading us to 2027
2. Raise awareness of new commitments
 | Swap ShopBike EventAnnual Report |  |  | Green Impact Submission Audits  |  |  |
| **June** | 1. Launch UCL’s 2022-2023 Annual Sustainability Report and new Sustainability plan leading us to 2027
2. Raise awareness of new commitments
 | Green League |  | Green Gown Awards People & Planet Moving out weekend ESMS Audits  | Green Gown Awards People & PlanetESMS Audits | Green Gown Awards People & PlanetESMS Audits |  |
| **July** | Celebration of the year’s work | Awards |  | Awards  | Awards | Awards |  |
| **August** | Planning | Review Period | Review Period | Review Period | Review Period | Review Period |  |