ABSTRACT
It’s not always easy planning a sustainable event. This guide will help lead you in the right direction, with details from before the event all the way through to after the event. The overall message is to reduce waste and energy consumption, to promote reuse of items like cutlery and ceramic mugs, and to properly manage waste made.
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BEFORE THE EVENT

• Gather the members of your planning committee together, and commit to creating a sustainable event
• Share this document with the committee, preferably electronically
• Ensure that everyone on the committee is on board
• Select one or more members to verify that sustainable event practices are being integrated before, during, and after the event
• Collectively set measurable, and specific goals to achieve. Record these goals, and continually refer to them
• Use the tips, and tools below to design a strategy, which best suits your needs

BEFORE YOU HOST AN EVENT ON CAMPUS

• Sign the Sustainability Pledge here: www.uoguelph.ca/sustainability/get-involved#Pledge
• Consult the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) University of Guelph Student Chapter at www.facebook.com/PCMAGuelph

DATE & TIME SELECTION

• Hold the event in a dry, warm season, which will:
  o Eliminate the need for heating or cooling if the event is held outdoors
  o Make it more likely attendees will bike or walk to the venue
• Hold the event during the daytime, which will:
  o Employ the use of natural light instead of artificial light
  o Make it easier for attendees to use public transit options which are often provided at a higher frequency during the daytime
Venue Selection

- Choose a site that:
  - Is easily accessible by public transit, cycling, and foot
  - Uses Energy Star appliances
  - Uses renewable energy or purchases renewable energy credits
  - Uses energy efficient LED bulbs
  - Uses conservation methods in the washrooms such as post-consumer recycled paper products as well as non-toxic, environmentally friendly soaps, and cleaners

- Ask the facility manager or event coordinator if, and how they are able to help with your sustainability goals

- Learn about the Green Key Eco-Rating Program for hotels, meetings, and find global hotel ratings here: www.greenkey.global/

Guelph Venue Options

- Rozanski Hall or the MacKinnon Building, which use a stack heat recovery system
- OVC’s Primary Healthcare Centre, the institution’s first building targeting LEED Silver accreditation or the Pathobiology/Animal Health Laboratory building, which follows an equivalent standard
- Alexander Hall, which has new, highly energy-efficient systems
- The Bullring, which purchases renewable energy credits from bullfrog power
- Hotels rated best by the Green Key Eco-Rating Program are the Best Western, Royal Brock Hotel & Conference Centre, and the Delta Guelph Hotel & Conference Centre, both in close proximity to school
WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Try to make sure that everything you are providing is reusable, or easily recyclable or compostable at your venue.
- Ensure your participants know where and how to sort their waste.
- Make sure all the waste sorting stations in the venue have easily understood signage and the bins for every waste stream are present at every waste sorting station.

WASTE REDUCTION ON CAMPUS

- Contact hospitality for their services such as ceramic mugs & plates and metal cutlery
- Contact the University of Guelph Composting Co-ordinator to have composting supported at your event compost@pr.uoguelph.ca

TRANSPORTATION

- Offer participants the option to attend the event via videoconferencing
- Provide scheduling information, and maps for public transit options
- Create incentives such as discounts for using public transit, cycling or arriving by foot
- Encourage carpooling by connecting interested attendees to each other via the event website
- Offer shuttle services

GUELPH TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

- Post a classified on TheCannon.ca to facilitate the coordination of ride shares, advertise this option
- Collaborate with Go Bike Guelph, a cycling advocacy group working to increase trips by bike gobikeguelph@gmail.com
- Collaborate with Sustainable, Healthy, Integrated Forms of Transportation (SHIFT), a local environmental group 519 - 767 - 2289
- Refer participants to Backpeddling, which rents bicycles with a helmet, lock, and map included in the fee or to Speed River Bicycle, which rents hybrid bicycles
- Remind participants who previously cycled that they may repair their bikes for free at the CSA Bike Centre, a volunteer-run shop operated by the University of Guelph Central Student Association (CSA)
ADMINISTRATION & MARKETING

• Use recycled, post-consumer, low-bleaching paper and organic or vegetable-based ink
• Print double-sided
• Market your sustainable efforts to attendees, donors, sponsors, presenters, volunteers, local media, etc. in all outreach materials, through all distribution channels
• Create a web page to inform parties of key information, including how they may help increase your sustainable efforts, allow a section for comments, and suggestions
• Use electronic media for registration, donation collection, and communication to minimize paper use. Eventbrite is a great tool for online registration. Vertical Response and Constant Contact are great for invitations
• Request that participants provide contact information for distribution of further related handouts, including a post-event sustainability report, which will aid in keeping your team accountable
• Request that participants bring a personal notebook, and writing implement
• If conference packages are absolutely necessary, order green promotional merchandise from companies such as Fairware

GUELPH ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

• Paint The Cannon
• Make class announcements
• Make a video, and share it using the other tools listed here
• Ask to advertise on relevant schools’ websites
• Take advantage of Mailing Lists
• Speak to our University Media Contacts, and refer to the Media Guide:
  ◦ Lori Bona Hunt 519-824-4120 x53338 l.hunt@exec.uoguelph.ca
  ◦ Shiona Mackenzie 519-824-4120 x56982 shiona@uoguelph.ca
• Advertise on CFRU 93.3 FM for a very low cost
  ◦ Kelly outreach@cfru.ca
• Contact Heather Dunbar at The Guelph Mercury Tribune:
  ◦ Phone: 519-763-3333 ext. 240 Email: hdunbar@guelphmercurytribune.com
• Contact Editor-in-Chief at The Ontarion,
  ◦ Mirali Almuala, 519-824-412 ext. 58250 oneditor@uoguelph.ca
FOOD & BEVERAGE

• Use pitchers instead of bottles for water, juices, milk, and pop
  
  o provide dry erase markers for attendees to identify their glasses, mugs for easy re-use

• All plates, cups, and glasses should be china or glass (non-disposable)

• Implement a no-straws-in-drinks policy or serve drinks with a straw only upon request

• Refrain from using any styrofoam

• Serve fair trade certified, and organic certified coffee, tea, and other items
  
  o Consult Transfair or the World Fair Trade Organization

• Serve condiments in bulk containers, not individual servings

• Provide no or few menus, instead post them on the event website

• Feature multiple vegetarian options and/or the choice to reduce meat proteins

• Serve locally sourced food, attempt for within a 200 km radius

• Select food that is in season

• If selecting seafood, ensure that purchases are from sustainable fisheries
  
  o Consult Oceanwise or Sea Choice

• Donate leftover food to a local food bank or charitable organization

• Use cloth napkins, runners, and tablecloths

• Request that participants bring a personal reusable water bottle and/or cup/mug

GUELPH FOOD & BEVERAGE OPTIONS

• Look into the many options that Hospitality Services Catering & Coffee Service provides

• Learn about the University of Guelph Sustainable Restaurant Project

• Contact Katrina Lindsay, General Manager of the Bullring to inquire about catering services 519 - 824 - 4120 x 58115 therin@uoguelph.ca

• Consider Appetizingly Yours, a local business that maintains its own organic gardens, and also uses seasonal, and organic ingredients from local growers, and farmers wherever possible
DECORATIONS, AWARDS & SIGNAGE

• Ensure signage is not date or location specific so it may be reused

• Use empty glass picture frames or whiteboards with dry erase markers instead of paper charts

• Offer environmentally responsible auction items only

• Award gifts, and prizes that are:
  o locally made
  o ethically made, and sweat shop free
  o consumable or edible
  o experiential
  o have local significance
  o local charity donations in the winner’s name

• Consider ordering items from Fairware

• Display reusable or previously used centerpieces, decorations, and display materials
  o use potted, native plants as centerpieces, and as prizes for those who travelled responsibly
  o ask friends, the venue, and other organizations to borrow or use items
  o cut florals may be donated to a local seniors’ home or hospital
  o other local organizations may have use for what you no longer need, remember to ask

BORROWING RESOURCES AND AWARD OPTIONS IN GUELPH

• Communicate with Campus Organizations to share decorations, and find potential award ideas
  o Start with My World, My Choice!

• Purchase food based awards from the Guelph Farmers’ Market, note the vendor

• Donate whatever possible to
  o The University of Guelph’s Garden2Table Program
  o Guelph Goodwill Donation Centre
  o Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis
  o The University of Guelph’s Food Bank
GENERAL TIPS & STRATEGIES

• Build your team
  ◦ Evaluate the strengths of each individual to find the right person for each job
  ◦ Ensure that each person on your team wants to help, and that they also have enough time to help
  ◦ Have a keen partner or a second-in-command who shadows you during the process

• Appreciate your team
  ◦ Be respectful
  ◦ Reward good work
  ◦ Show your thanks with both words, and actions
  ◦ Always be willing to help
  ◦ Equip them for success. Search online, and in the library for tools, and aids

• Annual events are great because they are often executed better each year, and gain a loyal base of supporters

• Set aside time to simply think, and visualize your event
  ◦ Imagine the flow of people, and how it interacts with your event schedule
  ◦ Imagine different scenarios, and figure out the one that is best
  ◦ Present possible scenarios to team members for their input

• Talk about your plans and obstacles
  ◦ Those around you might show interest in helping and/or have suggestions
  ◦ This is also a great way to raise awareness about your event
  ◦ Ask experienced people, faculty, staff, and other students included, for their comments, and criticism
  ◦ It is not a sign of weakness to talk about problems you're having. the bigger goal is the event’s success
  ◦ Keep asking new, and different people for their input as fresh minds are sometimes necessary to catch overlooked items
• Be organized
  o Use a planner, to-do lists, a calendar, Learning Services in the university library can help you find the methods that suit you best
  o Always allocate more time than you think you will need to complete a task
• Take breaks often
  o Stroll in a park, the Arboretum is a great place to stroll on campus
  o Listen to music

RESOURCES
• The David Suzuki Foundation
• Sustainability Communities Network - How to Plan a Sustainable Event
• UBC Sustainable Purchasing Guide

THANK YOU FOR MAKING AN IMPACT WITHOUT IMPACT.

ALL THE BEST WITH YOUR EVENT!