

Uniting As One For Sustainability

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Ashley Spigelman is a student in the Honours Bachelor of Commerce - Human Resources Management program. In this blog entry, she reflects on her experience learning about sustainability at Seneca Business.

If you're like most people, you probably think that sustainability means not engaging in littering and/or recycling products, right? Well, guess what? While that is a part of sustainability, it doesn't even begin to cover the magnitude of what sustainability is.



Fig. 1. "What Sustainability Is and Is Not." *King's Sustainability*, 10 November 2016, <https://blogs.kcl.ac.uk/sustainability/2016/11/sustainability/>.

In the summer semester of 2022, I enrolled in a course called "BMT780 -Contemporary Issues in Management Sustainability" and it changed my whole perception and awareness of my choices and my role of being sustainable.

In this course, we learned about topics such as systems thinking, sustainability and sustainable development, environmental impacts, and life cycle thinking to just name a few,

and how all elements are interconnected. Each topic brought forth new material, which was built upon the previous topics so that by the end of the course we had a full understanding of all that sustainability entails.

I enjoyed many aspects of this course, as I found them all engaging, enriching, and informative. My absolute favourite topics included sustainability and sustainable development, life cycle thinking, greenwashing, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Additionally, I was delighted to take part in a course project that enabled us to be innovative and hands-on and showcase what we learned over the entirety of the semester.

One specific aspect that I enjoyed learning about was sustainability and sustainable development. So, what does this mean? Simply put, sustainable development is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Sachs 5) considering all three elements of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

With the idea of sustainable development in mind, world leaders came together to implement a way to achieve this concept. The United Nations launched the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on September 25th 2015 which are being adopted globally. The SDGs were agreed upon by the 193 nations states of the UN General Assembly. There are 169 comprehensive objectives that encompass the three pillars of sustainable development. (Sachs 485)



Fig. 2. “Sustainable Development Goals.” *United Nations*, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/>. Accessed 26 October 2022.

Moving on to the course two-part assignment that I enjoyed:

We started off by choosing a company and doing research about it. We created a stakeholder map and assessment matrix of the stakeholders of our company to be able to identify the priority of stakeholders. We were required to complete a materiality assessment for our company. Researching this company and the industry, we were able to identify the company's key issues, and the relevant SDGs related to each key issue, and to complete a materiality assessment matrix of the relevant SDGs. Lastly, we took our top priority SDGs and described the SDGs impacts on the company, the company's impacts on the SDGs, and identified the most concerned stakeholders and explained why.

With the first part of the assignment completed, we moved to part two. **This was the fun and creative part**, as we were required to come up with a sustainability project proposal designed to help our chosen company reduce or eradicate the prioritized SDGs identified in part one. Essentially, it was about creating a new idea or expanding on a previously identified concept. It was so much fun choosing the company to work on and creating an idea to help reduce the organization's CO2 emissions. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas that causes a lot of environmental damage and contributes to global warming and climate change.

All I can say is that I highly encourage you to check out the class and enroll in it. It's an engaging, informative, hands-on course that provides students with the understanding and knowledge about what we are faced with in today's global environment. And remember, sustainability isn't just for us, it's for the Earth and the future generations to come!

Ashley Spigelman

Honours Bachelor of Commerce - Human Resources Management

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