

SUSTAINABLE & INCLUSIVE INTERNATIONALIZATION VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Reimagining Approaches in Higher Education in an Era of Global Uncertainties

20 - 22 JANUARY 2021



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2021 Toronto Declaration on the Future of Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization in Higher Education (final version)

York University, represented by York International and the UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability, with their conference partners, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the International Association of Universities and Okayama University with the UNESCO Chair in Research and Education for Sustainable Development (Japan) hosted the *Virtual Conference on Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization* on 20-22 January 2021.

The participants of the *2021 Conference on Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization* comprised of students, youth, lecturers, researchers, policy makers, practitioners and other officials from higher education and, where appropriate, also supported by participants from government and non-government institutions, private sector, international organizations and global networks:

- **Welcome** the opportunity to come together in an open and global forum to share perspectives and experiences, to learn with peers and other stakeholders and to jointly build a better understanding of the evolving status of student and scholar engagement with internationalization initiatives in a context of addressing global challenges for societies and systems and identifying opportunities in a commencing post-COVID-19 world through the lens of sustainable development,
- **Acknowledge** that 2020 has been a year like no other for limiting internationalization programs in higher education due to a global pandemic,
- **Appreciate** the discussions to critically reflect on the current status and constraints of internationalization with a focus on mobility to collectively explore future visions of international engagement and outreach strategies and practices for higher education in Canada, and globally,
- **Acknowledge** that higher education is at a crucial moment of opportunity to shape new forms of (digital) access for an increasing number of students and scholars of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to participate in exchange and international collaboration.
- **Reaffirm** the commitment to internationalization efforts, taking leadership and acting in a whole-institution approach, enabling students coming from school or other paths of life to become compassionate and responsible leaders and global citizens to achieve the transformation of our world, as stated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
- **State** the importance and need to further increase participation in international education and the need for fact-based knowledge exchange and innovation, especially in an era of climate change, misinformation, global geopolitical unrest, economic uncertainty, and systemic racism while facing a global pandemic of yet unknown consequence,
- **Recognize and continuously reflect on** the importance of international education, including student and scholar mobility, and its interconnectedness within the overall responsibility of higher education as trusted knowledge holders to address universal concerns, such as globalization, multilateralism, inclusivity, sustainability, the well-being of all life and other aspects of the 2030 Agenda to achieve a quality education as a key enabler of all of the SDGs,
- **Commit** to enhance international education in higher education settings by developing and promoting accessible sharing of innovative and inclusive global learning models and pedagogies, addressing education for sustainable development and global citizenship education, as called for in SDG 4.7, or by supporting such practice in higher education or related institutions,

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- **Affirm** sustainable practices in approaches for international student and scholar mobility as well as the academic content are crucial elements of higher education's contribution to the pursuit of a better future for all,
- **Pledge** to position future internationalization and global engagement strategies to elevate actions towards the SDGs, or support such pledges by the higher education community,
- **Call** for the joint development of innovative frameworks and new models of practice in the education programs in partnership with schools, research and community service of higher education institutions to connect students, scholars, practitioners, and to embed different worldviews in teaching and learning when designing and carrying out research and/or as a way of connecting the local community to the global community within the framework of the SDGs,
- **Support** the six themes of the *2021 Conference on Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization* for the upcoming conference publication and as potential thematic priorities when building such new frameworks and models of practice:
 1. International mobility in practice: institutional, national, and regional responses,
 2. Greening student and scholar exchange: Concrete ideas and practices,
 3. Leveraging technology and digital learning: Can we experience "abroad online"?,
 4. Mobility programs beyond academics: global and community engagement,
 5. Inclusive student exchanges and experiences,
 6. Assessment of intercultural development in mobility programs, and
- **Commit** to support implementing the elements of the *2021 Toronto Declaration* in a sustainable manner, making overall internationalization handprints larger than their footprints.

Background

The *2021 Virtual Conference on Sustainable and Inclusive Internationalization* is an element of the *Sustainable On The Go* Initiative for York University to continuously address student and scholar mobility in a responsible manner within York University's global engagement. The Conference was organized in partnership with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the International Association of Universities and Okayama University with the UNESCO Chair in Research and Education for Sustainable Development (Japan). In striving for a sustainable future, York University, engaged in global networks for learning, teaching and exchange, focuses on educating future global leaders and active citizens and providing opportunity for faculty and students to contribute to global impact through research, education and service.

York University is a leading international teaching and research university in Canada, and a driving force for positive change. In 2020, York University launched a new [University Academic Plan \(UAP\) 2020-2025](#) referencing the SDGs as a grand challenge and aspiring to develop pathways for all students, staff and the community to engage in an approach throughout the whole institution, using experiential education opportunities and collaboration through enhanced concepts of both internationalization and global citizenship.