

Acadia becomes the first university in Canada to sign the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Accord

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(Wolfville, NS) -- Dr. Peter Ricketts, Acadia University President and Vice-Chancellor, signed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Accord (SDG Accord) on Wednesday, November 24, 2021, on behalf of the institution. Acadia became the first Canadian university to commit to the United Nations goals by signing the SDG Accord.

The SDG Accord is an international initiative led by the EAUC, the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education. It was launched in 2017 to demonstrate the commitment of the higher education sector to the SDGs and share best practices. It is a partnership initiative endorsed by the UN and many other global partners, with 238 institutions worldwide having signed the SDG Accord.

Individuals, student unions and support organizations can also sign the Accord, but the institutional commitment is the highest level of support for the SDG Accord. Other institutional signatories across Canada include several colleges, but Acadia is the first university.

“Acadia University has committed to the sustainable development goals as a way to collectively respond to the immense challenges the world faces around climate change, public health issues, and depletion of our natural resources,” says Dr. Ricketts. “In signing the Accord, I am fulfilling one of Acadia’s strategic plan objectives to ensure that as a university, we are doing our part to make a difference and contribute to this important global movement.”

As a signatory, Dr. Ricketts is committing Acadia University to various actions, including aligning university activities with the sustainable development goals, collaborating with other signatories, and reporting annually on progress. The Acadia Students’ Union committed to the principles of the Accord when its past president Brendan MacNeil signed on behalf of Acadia students in 2020.

The idea to participate in the Accord was presented to Acadia by environmental and sustainability studies students in 2020 as part of their course work. The fourth-year applied projects class in sustainability,

taught by Dr. Alice Cohen, explored how Acadia could implement the SDGs and suggested multiple new actions for the University, beginning with signing the Accord.



Building on this work, students in the 2021 ESST 4003 class organized SDG-themed activities throughout November. The Acadia Sustainability Office hosted the signing event with the class.

Signing the SDG Accord is consistent with the new strategic plan for the institution, Acadia 2025, that calls for the University to “align with applicable UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) as guiding principles for Acadia’s development.”

The SDG Accord is a platform for action. The University has already begun implementing its commitment by mapping current teaching, research, service, and operations activities related to the 17 goals. The next steps are to identify gaps, implement additional student recommendations, and pursue new initiatives that promote sustainable development goals and advance the University’s progress.

To see the other signatories to UN Sustainable Development Goals Accord, visit <https://www.sdgaccord.org/>

To learn more about the UN Sustainable Development Goals at Acadia, visit sustainability.acadiau.ca

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Contact

University Communications
Emmerson Hall, Suite 108
31 University Ave
Wolfville, Nova Scotia, B4P 2R6
newsroom@acadiau.ca
[902-585-1705](tel:902-585-1705)