SUSTAINABLE EVENT PLANNING

CAMPUS GUIDE
A note from the writers

August 2016

Dear reader,

Dalhousie University works collaboratively with our faculty, staff, and students to practice and promote sustainability. This resource is intended to draw together information for campus departments, streamline event planning, and encourage you to infuse events with sustainability concepts. As an involved student, Dalhousie employee, or external guest, we hope that everyone planning an on-campus event can utilize this guide.

Thank you for recognizing the importance of being mindful of our choices and considering the impact that each of our decisions make.

Happy planning,

Jennifer Allott
Office of Sustainability
Planning Steps

Think Sustainability
Review the tips and resources in this guide when planning your event.

Book Space
Most on-campus spaces should be booked through Campus Bookings. Some campus meeting spaces are managed and booked by Departments. Contact Conference Services if you are an external client.

Order Catering
On campus caterers in Halifax include Dalhousie Food Services, Impressions Catering (DSU Eats), and the University Club. At the Agricultural Campus (AC), the on-campus caterer is Chartwell’s AC. Look for local, seasonal, and sustainable menus and request china.

Clean Up
Tell event attendees how to sort their waste. Disposable dishware and food scraps should be disposed of correctly by the caterer, if china is not used. If the event organizer is not cleaning the space, contact FM Client Reception at 902-494-3345 to book custodial services.

* Student Societies – Remember to submit a risk management form and check out DSU's Plan an Event page for further information.
Transportation

- Utilize video and teleconferencing tools to reduce large commutes
- Encourage guests to walk, bike, carpool, use ride share or use public transit if they will be traveling to your event
- Communicate venue accessibility to guests
- Follow Dalhousie's no-idling policy
- Contact the Office of Sustainability if you are interested in carbon offsets for your event's transportation

Below is an example of communications that can be sent to meeting participants:

_Dalhousie Halifax campuses are located in downtown Halifax with easy walking distance from a number of accommodations. In the summer, residence rooms are also available to rent. A number of bus routes such as the 01 drop off at the campus. At each building, bicycle parking is available. A pay and display lot is located on South street with electric vehicle charging access._

_At the Dalhousie Agricultural campus bicycle parking is located in front of many buildings. Sidewalks cut through the campus. Contact Security Services (902)-893-4190 to receive a visitor parking pass._
Promotion and Printing

- Promote the event online and on the ground, using videos, in-person promotion
- Use an electronic registration process
- Have reusable name tag holders; be creative and use reclaimed materials
- Transfer materials electronically and make materials available online after the conference
- Utilize dry erase boards, blackboards, overheads, and projectors (be aware of energy consumption)
- Minimize handouts
- Double side any relevant printing
- Use 100% post-consumer paper and print with vegetable- and soy-based inks
Participant Involvement

- Encourage participants to bring their own: Reusable mug/water bottle and containers; lanyards/name tag holder, laptop or notebook, reusable bag
- Communicate the sustainability goals and features of the event to participants before, during, and after the occasion
- Ensure giveaway items, door prizes and presenter gifts align with the sustainability message by gifting ethical consumables, reusable mugs or bags, or non-material gifts such as donations
Exhibitor Involvement

- Communicate your event's sustainability features and goals to all exhibitors or vendors prior to the event
- Encourage exhibitors to understand and abide by the event's sustainability plan and align any samples or giveaways with the event's green message
- Integrate sustainability into vendor contracts, by mandating reusable or compostable sample cups, for example
- If you are hiring a company that sets up booths/tables for exhibits, request that no single garbage bins be provided for each booth. Proper four bin stations should be located in the exhibition area. If none are in the space, request a set through Facilities Management.

Below is a sample of the text you could include in a message to your exhibitor or vendor. Remember to modify it for your specific usage, and include any particular items or requirements at your event.

*Sustainability in an integrated part of this event. As a vendor/exhibitor at our event, we ask that your company/business/organization join in our sustainable goals and minimize the environmental impact of your activities. We are committed to reducing water and energy consumption, making ethical and local food choices, and minimizing waste generation. Please contact _______ if you have questions about our sustainable goals and guidelines.*
Catering

**Food Choices**

To support local farmers, promote a connection with the natural environment, and reduce carbon emissions, choose:

- Local
- Seasonal
- Organic

For items such as coffee, tea, and chocolate, support fair wages and sustainable cultivation by choosing:

- Fair Trade

Providing vegetarian and vegan options accommodates food choices and lessen the environmental impact of the meal.

**Waste Reduction**

Dalhousie is working to remove single garbage bins and drive waste to centralized four bin sorting stations for Paper, Recycling, Organics, and Garbage. If there is not a sorting station in your event space, you cannot move in bins. Waste must be still be sorted at the nearest station.

The meeting organizer should inform participants about how to sort their waste from the event and where the nearest bin station is. Ask your caterer about including graphic sorting signage if you have disposable dishware.
Catering

Dishware Choices

1) Ordering catering with china and silverware is the most sustainable way to hold an event. Very low levels of waste are produced (mostly organics in the form of paper napkins and leftover food) and clean up is minimal as the catering group collects and cleans the dishes.

2) If china is not feasible due to the nature of the event, the next best option is to request compostable plates and hot cups and recyclable plastic cold cups. It is important to identify the nearest sorting station and tell guests what is compostable/recyclable.

Inform guests of the dishware selected to celebrate waste reduction with china or allow attendees to choose to bring their own container and cutlery.

Leftover Food

Try to make sure that all catered food is eaten, understanding that Food Safety and Quality Assurance measures limit the time food can safely remain at room temperature. Compost unwanted leftovers.
Waste Management

The Office of Sustainability created an Indoor/Outdoor Waste Bin Standard that is updated regularly, with the aim of increasing diversion and reducing contamination. The standard focuses on source separation and driving material to four bin Paper, Recycling, Organics, and Garbage (PROG) stations.

Meeting spaces that aren't catered will have a Pack It Up, Pack It Out sign and no bins, indicating that users must take their items out and sort directly in hallway bins.

Commonly catered meeting spaces that have been updated to the standard will have a small PROG set. If there is not a proper bin set or the bins are the wrong size, please contact Facilities Management.

Hazardous (Chemical, Biological) and Universal Waste (Bulbs, Batteries, Paint etc.) must be disposed of safely. Please reference the Dalhousie Waste Sorting Guide for classification and disposal contacts.
Waste Education

PROG sets are labelled with eye-level signage and stickers to direct users as to how to sort their waste. For a more detailed guide, please reference the Dalhousie Guide to Waste Management on Campus.

To ensure proper waste sorting, it is important as an event organizer to be familiar with waste sorting guidelines. Communicate these with your guests throughout the event, referencing particular items at the engagement. At the start of your event, you may say:

*Thank you for coming to our event. A couple of logistical items include bathrooms and fire exits (identify where they are located) and waste management. The University has four-bin sorting stations. Items like napkins, food waste, paper plates go in the organics bin; recyclables material like beverage containers go in the recyclable container, paper in the paper, and items like plastic cutlery in the garbage.*

For large events such as conferences, it is beneficial to hire or arrange for volunteers to provide education at core waste stations, directing participants where to place each item of waste.

Energy and Water Reduction

- Turn off lights and equipment (computers, projectors) when not in use
- Ensure room temperatures are comfortable but not too hot or cold
- Provide water jugs and glasses, a better economic and environmental choice compared to bottled water. Jugs and glasses are available though catering.

ReThink signage by the Office of Sustainability-order for free!
When making purchases for your event, consider:

**Necessity**  
Is this purchase absolutely necessary to our event? Can we do without it?

**Durability**  
Is it built to last? Does it need lots of maintenance? What is the overall cost of ownership?

**Efficiency**  
Does the product help us to save money on energy or fuel?

**Locality**  
Can this product be purchased from a reliable local source? Does it require less fuel or energy to bring this to our workplace?

**Responsibility**  
Does the manufacturer provide proof of responsible environmental and social practices? Is the manufacturer paying workers standard wages and benefits?

**Reusability**  
Can the product be used several times for the same or multiple purposes? Can we borrow it, rent or get it used?

**Impact**  
Is the source material easily renewable? What are the negative environment impacts in the harvest, production, transportation, use or disposal of this good? Is it recyclable?

**Size**  
Can it be smaller, lighter or made with less material?
Final Thoughts

Thank you for taking the time to incorporate sustainability into your event. By considering the environmental impacts of your actions and educating others, you are helping foster sustainability culture at Dalhousie. Please share your experiences with us by emailing rethink@dal.ca.

Below are a list of resources and key contacts at Dalhousie that can assist you in your sustainable event planning:

- Dalhousie Office of Sustainability
- Dalhousie Student Union Office of Sustainability (DSUSO)
- Facilities Management, Custodial Services
- Campus Bookings
- Conference Services
- Dalhousie Student Union: Plan an Event
- Dalhousie Food Services – Halifax
- Dalhousie Food Services – Truro
- DSU Eats/Impressions Catering