International Conference on Higher Education for Sustainable Development

High-level Panel 1:
Whole-institution Approach

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The Rise of Sustainability Science

- Importance of **Sustainability Science** is now widely recognized internationally in the 21st Century.
- Increasing **challenges of global issues** such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and poverty in developing countries.
- Need for an overarching perspective and **comprehensive approach** – these issues are difficult to tackle with individual subdivided academic disciplines.
- Aim to derive long term, global solutions with focus on **regional and intergenerational equality**.
- **Capacity development** through education is essential to solve the global issues through Sustainability Science.

Increasing Number of Academic Papers on Sustainability Science (Kajikawa et al., 2014)
What is Global Leadership in Sustainability Science Education?

- A clear view of the complexity and severity of global issues, while having a positive outlook for the future.
- A comprehensive perspective on the complex relationships between humans and nature as a social and ecological systems.
- The ability to integrate the findings of specialized research to formulate solutions for complex problems.
- The ability to coordinate and integrate the opinions of different stakeholders.
- Strong leadership in prompting transformation towards a sustainable society in the international community.
Enhancing Education in Sustainability Science

- Sustainability science provides the scientific foundation for recognizing the need for societal transformation towards sustainability, and a framework for teaching about sustainability issues.

- At all levels of education, and particularly in developing countries, new methods for teaching science are needed in order to promote critical thinking and to develop problem-solving skills.

- The education agenda must incorporate the humanities and the study of ethics in the ESD curriculum, with a focus on equity, justice, cultural freedom and other human rights.

- The role of the research universities in promoting the application of sustainability science is crucial. We could recognize the positive increase in such programs.

- To overcome the fragmentation of traditional disciplines some universities are also introducing teaching modules that address complex problems such as climate change.

(UNU/IR3S/UNESCO Symposium on Sustainability Science held on 19 Sept. 2013)
Rio +20 Commitment to Sustainable Practices of Higher Education Institutions

Higher education institution signatories commit to:

1) **Teach sustainable development concepts**, ensuring that they form a part of the core curriculum across all disciplines.

2) **Encourage research** on sustainable development issues, to improve scientific understanding through exchanges of scientific and technological knowledge.

3) **Green their campuses** by: i) reducing the environmental footprint; ii) adopting sustainable procurement practices; iii) providing sustainable mobility options for students and faculty; iv) adopting effective programmes for waste minimization, recycling and reuse, and v) encouraging more sustainable lifestyles.

4) **Support sustainability efforts** in the communities in which they reside.
UNU’s Role and Commitment Beyond 2014

- Commitments to SDGs, Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD, and other international sustainability frameworks and processes through:
  - Promotion of **sustainability science**
  - **Policy-relevant research**
  - **Capacity development** through leadership programs
  - **Networking** of higher education institutions and multi-stakeholders