

Partnerships and Projects

Interview with the University of Alberta Facilities and Operations

The University of Alberta (UAlberta) is committed to sustainability and has taken an integrated approach that incorporates teaching and learning, research, outreach, and the operations that support them. In the short term, UAlberta has a set target of 50% waste diversion by 2015, a 13% improvement over their current diversion rate.

To achieve this goal, the **Energy Management and Sustainable Operations (EMSO)** and **Buildings and Grounds Services (BGS)** units within UAlberta Facilities and Operations, have been collaborating with the **Edmonton Waste Management Centre of Excellence (EWMCE)** to determine and implement innovative solutions. This collaboration incorporated EWMCE's **Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) Waste Model**, a model that engages clients in selecting viable and feasible waste diversion technologies and strategies. The ICI Waste Model has led to multiple projects for the UAlberta, including:

- Partnership with the City of Edmonton and industry leaders;
- Presenting at conferences;
- Co-hosting public workshops to the ICI sector; and
- Integrating hands-on experiences into a student learning environment.

The following is an interview with EMSO and BGS to discuss their experience with the ICI model.

EWMCE: Briefly introduce yourself – department, name, title, and role.

UAlberta:

Energy Management and Sustainable Operations (EMSO)

Len Sereda - Director

Shannon Leblanc – Sustainability Coordinator

EMSO is responsible for overseeing the university's multi-million dollar energy management program, *Envision*, which implements energy efficiency and conservation measures across campus. In addition, EMSO collaborates with other units within Facilities and Operations to encourage, support, and advance sustainability across the university's operations.

Buildings and Grounds Services (BGS)

Ray Dumouchel – Associate Director

Jessie Kwasny – Waste Diversion/Recycling Coordinator

BGS has many facets of responsibility including the delivery of sustainable operations and maintenance in areas such as waste diversion, cleaning, and grounds services. BGS is essential to the advancement of the waste diversion program and is committed to reducing the amount of waste produced on campus as well as reaching our waste diversion goal.



University of Alberta Energy Management and Sustainable Operations and Buildings and Grounds Services Staff

(left to right: Shannon Leblanc, Len Sereda, Jessie Kwasny, and Ray Dumouchel)

EWMCE: Please describe UAlberta’s sustainability goal?

UAlberta: The university is committed to a continuous effort to instill sustainability into the many aspects of university life, and takes an integrated approach that incorporates teaching and learning, research, outreach, and the operations that support them. The university is committed to constant improvement, and one area of focus is waste reduction and diversion. The university’s Sustainability Plan (2012-2016) identifies that the university will **expand waste reduction initiatives across all campuses and increase the amount of waste diverted from North Campus to 50% by 2015**. We are currently diverting approximately 37% of our waste which means a 13% increase over the next two years is required in order to reach our goal.

EWMCE: How does your department achieve this goal?

UAlberta: Our partnership with the EWMCE has enabled us to conduct waste audits to characterize our waste composition and establish baseline data. These audits informed our current short and long term strategies, which include a strong focus on organics diversion. From the waste audits, we have learned that organics make up approximately 60% of our current landfill-bound stream and thus are an essential target in reaching our 50% diversion goal and beyond. Additional recommendations from the waste audit will be reviewed, prioritized and put forward.

Another key component to our success will be through the continued work of Jessie, who works directly with Campus Food Services, Buildings and Grounds staff, and cleaning staff to deliver training and education, and ensure that the facilities and infrastructure meet the needs of the campus community and facilitate waste diversion.

Finally, we will continue to explore new and innovative technologies and work with our newly formed Waste Diversion Working Group to establish a campus wide waste diversion action plan.

EWMCE: How has the EWMCE ICI Waste Model helped you (UAlberta)?

UAlberta: Working with the EWMCE has brought focus and expertise to our group, and a more strategic view to our waste diversion efforts. We now have a much better understanding of some of the higher level needs when it comes to a comprehensive waste diversion strategy, a clearer picture of where we fit within the ICI sector, as well as some very practical skills such as the ability to carry out waste audits.

Additionally, through our work with the EWMCE, we have begun to clearly outline waste audit methodologies specific to a university setting; we have had the opportunity to explore various industry technologies through a technical seminar that the EWMCE helped us host at the university; and we have a suite of recommendations from our waste audit work that can be brought forward and implemented.

EWMCE: Anything else?

UAlberta: The university strives to engage students, faculty and staff in sustainability projects. Through our connection with Daryl McCartney and his colleagues at both the EWMCE and UAlberta Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, we have been able to help develop an exciting opportunity of using our campus facilities as a living laboratory. For three years running, Environmental Engineering students in the Solid Waste Management class at the UAlberta took part in a waste sort as part of the university’s waste audit. Data from current and past waste sorts were also included in student coursework as part of a larger class project. We believe that these opportunities are essential to fully integrating and instilling sustainability across the entire institution.

Special acknowledgement to author: Kentson Yan, Research Intern

At the EWMCE, we are proud of the collaboration and successes with the University of Alberta. Our ICI Waste Model has provided unique opportunities to the UAlberta as well as other sectors such as municipalities and industry leaders. We are always excited to share our ICI Waste Model to organizations and to find innovative solutions.

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