

## **Universitas 21 Statement on Sustainability**

### **Preamble:**

The quest to realise a more sustainable way of life on Earth is increasingly becoming a race, not against one another, but against time.

The challenges of the decline of biodiversity, of energy, food and water security, of climate change, of economic sustainability and of human health have been recognised as being among the greatest faced by the human race and the planet and we believe that the urgency of these requires unity of purpose and of leadership.

We recognise that universities have important roles in researching solutions to such problems so as to bequeath a sustainable world to future generations and in educating future generations about this awareness and research. We recognise that member institutions are committed to engaging with issues of global significance and that by working together collaboratively and cooperatively we can achieve more than is possible by working alone. We acknowledge the role that universities play in creating a new future for the dynamic world in which we live. Through research, teaching, community partnerships and demonstrable actions, universities can help advance timely solutions to ecological, societal and economic problems. Through our engagement with civil society, industry and government, we can accelerate these solutions beyond the campus itself.

In response to this challenge and for the purposes of this declaration, we Presidents of member universities of the *Universitas 21* Network for International Higher Education, jointly affirm our recognition of the following commitments concerning the leadership of universities in progressing global sustainable development.

Many members have already established programmes to assess and reduce the overall adverse environmental impact of their activities: others are in the process of developing such programmes or monitor their activities in other ways, appropriate to their circumstances. Each member university will develop, publish and monitor targets: these targets will reflect institutional differences, such as the maturity of respective University campus sustainability programmes, as well as regional issues, such as climate conditions, energy sources and projected growth. On a regular basis, members will share these targets and their progress towards achieving them with one another with the aim of developing and sharing best practices and learning lessons from one another which can be applied on campuses around the globe.

Commitments:

### **1. Research towards a sustainable future**

Our member universities are among the world's leaders across a multiplicity of research topics, many of which contribute to our better understanding of the world in which we live. Each member university will continue to develop strong interdisciplinary research activities both within and between universities to facilitate integrated problem solving among research disciplines. These activities will also reach beyond the academic community and will look to industry and the wider community as active partners and participants in problem solving with the university.

We recognise that research in support of sustainability takes many forms, including the development of new scientific knowledge, restructured to reverse past tendencies toward stratification and fragmentation. We will endeavour to support such research, but also to ensure that it is applied to real world issues and is disseminated widely to better inform policy development as well as personal, organisational and national actions.

We will encourage and develop collaborative research opportunities which contribute to a sustainable future and we will seek opportunities to share and showcase our research applicable to sustainability more widely within the network and so seek to further the community of scholars working in this area collaboratively.

## **2. Education for Sustainability**

Members of the network have approaching a million students in all levels of study, as well as numerous alumni and staff. The influence they have on current and future civil society is immense. Recognising that universities have a critical role to play in educating future leaders and civil society more generally, each member university will seek to identify opportunities appropriate to its own circumstances to deepen society's intellectual capacity for sustainability and raise the 'sustainability consciousness' of students in all facets of their student life. Appreciation for and general knowledge of sustainability must be actively promoted if we are to meet the challenges of the future as a society. We recognise that many members already have degree courses or programmes in which 'sustainability' is an integral or key component of study: we will seek opportunities to increase both the range of experiences open to students in this area as well as to students studying in other disciplines.

## **3. Leading by Example: Establish the University Campus as a Living Laboratory for a Sustainable Future**

Universities are not just the producers of research and the educators of students, they also represent a microcosm of our towns and cities more widely as we provide places to live, to work, to eat, to play for thousands of people. We recognise that we can use our campuses to demonstrate sustainable design and practical models for our communities and that by serving as a 'test bed' for society at large, we will foster intellectual capacity in all of the university community and in business and civil society leaders off-campus.

We recognise also that our responsibilities as researchers, educators, managers and providers extend beyond the environmental dimensions of sustainability and will encourage an holistic approach to our campuses to be taken, to consider the financial and societal sustainability in our actions in relation to buildings, housing, transportation, catering and all the myriad of other activities which a large, research-intensive university carries out in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. We seek to ensure the sustainability of the university and its activities so that future generations may also enjoy the privilege of education that we have enjoyed.

## **4. Emphasise Citizenship & Engagement**

In recognition that universities are creators and storehouses for innovation and ideas – two essential ingredients to the transition to a sustainable future – each member university will work to move these ideas into action. To do this the university will place increased value on (and as appropriate, provide enhanced support for) student, staff and faculty engagement with local, national and international communities. This participation will strengthen the culture of sustainability within the university and provide real, tangible assistance to people and organisations external to the university. Each university will use the most appropriate means for its own communities to publicise and showcase examples of wider engagement by its staff, students and faculty and on a regular basis, the network will report on such examples more widely by publishing them in either *The Newsletter* or such other appropriate publication.

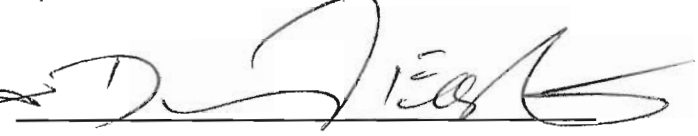
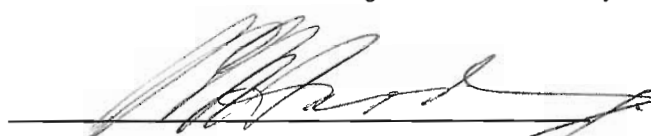
On a regular basis, members will share the good practices they are developing in this area with one another with the view to learning from other like-minded universities around the globe and, where appropriate, seeking to transplant innovative solutions. In doing so, we recognise the unique opportunities provided by a globally diverse network like *Universitas 21* and the wealth of experiences that this opens up for staff, students and faculty.

**5. Build Capacity through cross-network collaboration and work**

The *raison d'être* of *Universitas 21* is to collaborate and co-operate, sharing good practice and enabling members to achieve more together than they could separately. The network will facilitate collaboration and information-sharing about sustainability practices and performance in higher education by publishing a regular special edition of *The Newsletter* devoted to issues of sustainability. In addition, we will provide forums in which to exchange and discuss successful or innovative practices to further sustainability and to develop a 'sustainability consciousness' among staff, students and faculty. We will ensure that the issue of improving sustainability is formally discussed at meetings of Presidents, Managers and senior staff who have the ability to influence and guide university practices.

As an indication of the importance that sustainability has to the *Universitas 21* members, we have designated this year as a **Year of Sustainability** and will be seeking to raise the importance of the topic with colleagues in member universities. To this end, we make this Declaration at the annual meeting of Presidents held at Korea University and agree that we will collectively review our achievements no later than at our annual meeting of Presidents in three years time (AGM 2012) and will seek to ensure that a wide-ranging and diverse set of conversations and analyses of sustainability initiatives takes place in appropriate settings in the network during that period.

Endorsed at the annual meeting of *Universitas 21* by the representatives of the member universities



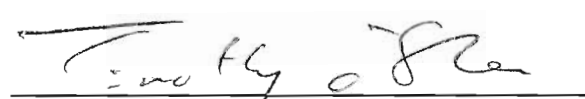
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The University of Birmingham



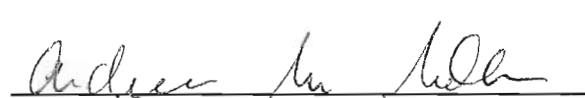
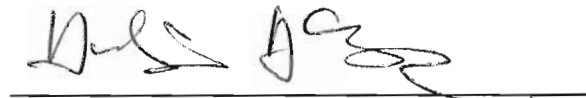
The University of British Columbia

The University of Delhi




University College Dublin

The University of Edinburgh



Fudan University

The University of Glasgow



The University of Hong Kong

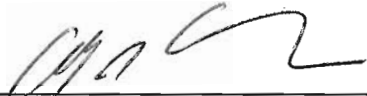
Korea University

Marianne Granstedt

Lund University

Jan Jørgensen

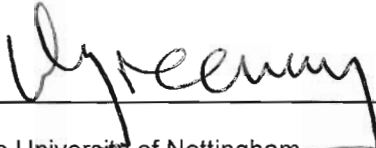
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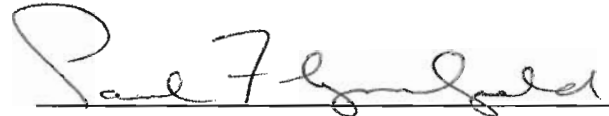
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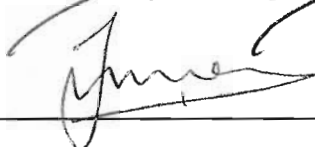
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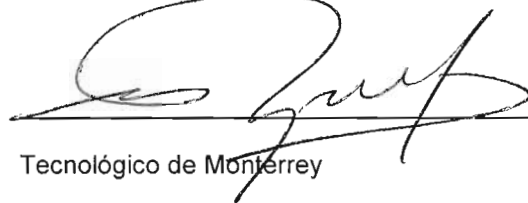
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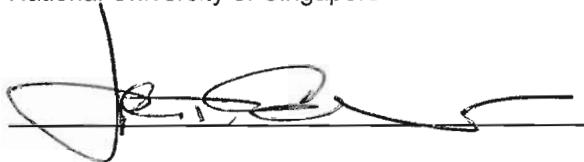
The University of Queensland




National University of Singapore



Tecnológico de Monterrey



The University of Virginia



Waseda University