

Ad Hoc Committee on Climatic Emergency

Report on 2020-21 Activities

This committee was created following a motion from the floor at the 2019 FPSE AGM - a reflection of members' deep concern about the climate emergency, and desire to play our part in addressing it as educators and community leaders. Sustainability can be defined as "The integration of environmental, social and economic considerations to ensure that the use, development and protection of the environment enables people to meet current needs, while ensuring that future generations can also meet their needs" (*Environment and Sustainability Statutes Amendment Act, 2001*). As educational institutions, we have a responsibility to our students and future generations. This committee seeks to assist locals in pursuing initiatives to address the climate emergency, which is intricately entwined with occupational health and safety, with international solidarity and human rights, and with decolonization, reconciliation, and Indigenization practices, and of course with protection of ecosystems.

Representatives from most locals have come together to explore the question of how FPSE can undertake and foster concrete climate action. Our inaugural face to face meeting in February 2020 was very energized and well attended, generating a wealth of connections and ideas, and laying the foundation for a climate action plan for FPSE. At three virtual meetings this past year, that plan was developed and refined. Areas the plan considers include: divestment from fossil fuels and investment in renewables; reduction of the FPSE carbon footprint through enhanced tele-conferencing; PD and workshops on climate topics; the inclusion of transit passes as an option for faculty and staff, as well as other climate-friendly initiatives in future bargaining rounds; the support for low-carbon forms of transportation; a green procurement policy that embraces social enterprise and Indigenous businesses. The draft Action Plan went before Presidents' Council in February 2021, and we hope to see this living document endorsed by AGM put into motion by FPSE.

In addition to our work on the Action Plan, we put forward a motion to Presidents' Council to declare a Climate Emergency; this motion was approved by President's Council, and this Committee looks forward to working with FPSE leadership on the declaration's wording and release in the near future. We also asked FPSE to sign the Climate Emergency Letter at sdgaccord.org; this has been done. We discussed the importance of becoming a standing committee which would meet virtually, as part of our commitment to maintain and model a low carbon footprint by reducing face to face meetings; this means we would not require a travel budget. We have put forward an AGM motion for the membership to consider our status. We have also used this network to share information on climate action initiatives and educational opportunities.

Other topics we have considered in depth include: development of a FPSE platform for compiling climate resources, identifying best practices, and recording our carbon footprints for transparency and accountability; facilitating locals to do carbon accounting of our respective unions; creation of a position to support climate action pedagogies; and linking with other climate action organizations.

We are pleased that this committee will continue to exist and work next year. We see opportunities for synergy with other FPSE committees, as the climate problem is inextricably linked with so many other areas of common concern such as Indigenization, human rights, health, and education policy.

DRAFT FPSE CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN: A LIVING DOCUMENT

16 May 2020

This document, produced by the Ad Hoc Committee on Climatic Emergency, provides an outline of specific means by which FPSE can undertake and foster climate action both internally and at member locals. As work progresses and the climate situation changes, the plan will need to adapt.

FPSE POLICY

Declaration:

- FPSE will declare a climate emergency.

Carbon Neutral:

- FPSE will be carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon zero by 2050.

Investments:

- FPSE will not invest in fossil fuel industries/investments going forward, and will seek to fully divest from fossil fuel investments.

FPSE INTERNAL PRACTICES

Climate Emergency Committee:

- Establish a standing committee to create and implement policies and practices to reduce FPSE's carbon footprint and to assist locals in responding to the climate emergency.

Information / Education:

- Offer ongoing workshops addressing climate change, sustainability, ecopedagogy.
- Establish a website/portal listing goals and best practices (discussion re website and interest in more two directional communication hub).
- Facilitate dialogue between locals.
- Sustainability scholarship/award for students.
- Make photos on FPSE website more diverse and representative.
- News – constantly changing (every week).
- Would like media plan; send press release after signing climate declaration.
- Would like twitter stream on website.

Climate Consideration:

- FPSE will consider climate impact in all future decisions (use sustainability as a lens).

Transportation:

- Encourage cycling, walking, car sharing/pooling, and transit use for all FPSE operations and events, and discourage use of single-occupant vehicles.
- Revise travel policy to encourage low carbon travel.
- Reduce need for transportation by expanding and improving its teleconferencing abilities.

Procurement:

- Develop procurement policy for operations, meetings, and events. Policy will include items such as: prioritizing recycled products, avoiding unnecessary furniture and electronic equipment replacement, reducing the use of single use containers/utensils.

Energy efficiency and waste:

- Encourage purchase of low-energy consumption of electronics.
- Reduce utilities use in terms of powering off devices.

Food services:

- Decrease use of animal products at meetings/events.
- Prioritize purchasing of locally grown and sustainable food.
- List of Indigenous businesses/catering to support.
- Reminder for FPSE events to RSVP in order to reduce waste and waste food.

BARGAINING

Language:

- Develop bargaining language that addresses the climate crisis, Indigenous and human rights by holding a workshop to help bargainers and chief stewards build, revise and adopt that language.

Transportation:

- Contract items will prioritize transportation initiatives such as:
 - Incentivize transit, bicycling, and e-transport (claim bike mileage).
 - Support scheduling practices that reduce commutes.
 - Eliminate commutes by supporting at home work (e.g. recognizing virtual office hours).
 - Encourage monetary incentives for active transportation and transit.

Education:

- Establish the position of climate action pedagogy facilitator tasked with providing support.
- Establish sustainability and climate orientation for new employees.
- Reach out before finalizing document to affected groups – like DRISC.

ADVOCACY, LOBBYING, & PARTNERSHIPS

Divestment and investment:

- Lobby college pension fund, post-secondary institutions, and BC government to exclude fossil fuel industries/investments and invest in renewable energy.

Signatory:

- FPSE will sign the Global climate emergency letter (completed).
- Develop list of other letters.
- FPSE will sign the SFU student letter regarding the Trans Mountain Pipeline – see <https://sfss.ca/studentsagainstmx/>.
- Connection to all other climate emergency declaration letters (200 in Canada, thousands in world).

Partnerships:

- FPSE climate emergency committee members will collaborate with Indigenous groups/committees
- FPSE climate emergency committee members will collaborate with student groups.
- FPSE climate emergency committee members will explore partnership possibilities with green new deal coalitions.

Lobbying:

- Assist locals in lobbying to establish climate action as a priority at their institution.
- Monitor for new proposed mega projects that will adversely impact the environment, partner with other organizations in lobbying for their termination.

Definitions:

- Govt of Canada definition of carbon zero.. "Achieving net-zero emissions means our economy either emits no greenhouse gas emissions or offsets its emissions, for example, through actions such as tree planting or employing technologies that can capture carbon before it is released into the air."