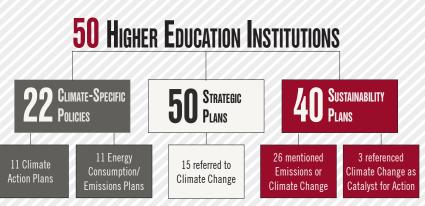


## CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE CANADIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM AN INSTITUTIONAL POLICY ANALYSIS

To address a gap in existing understandings of how higher education institutions (HEIs) were responding to climate change at the policy level. SEPN analyzed the climate change policies, sustainability policies, and strategic plans from a representative sample of 50 Canadian universities, colleges, and CEGEPs in five domains pertaining to overall sustainability: (1) governance, (2) curriculum, (3) operations, (4) research, and (5) community outreach.

# By THE NUMBERS

#### ONLY 44% OF POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS IN THE SAMPLE HAD A CLIMATE POLICY.



**30%** OF STRATEGIC PLANS REFERRED TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

**65%** OF SUSTAINABILITY PLANS MENTIONED EMISSIONS OR CLIMATE CHANGE.

#### ONLY 7.5% OF STRATEGIC PLANS REFERENCED CLIMATE CHANGE AS A CATALYST FOR INSTITUTIONAL ACTION.

Climate policies particularly lacked RESEARCH and CURRICULUM based responses.

#### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

was limited primarily to knowledge transfer to off campus communities.

63%

of HEIs with a climate policy were members of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). POLICY DOCUMENTS FOCUSED DISPROPORTIONATELY ON OPERATIONS.

The most common words in climate policies were "energy" and "building."



# BEYOND OPERATIONS WHOLE INSTITUTION SUSTAINABILITY APPROACHES

- Retrofit existing buildings
  - Use sustainable designs
  - Improve transportation systems
  - Conduct feasibility studies & demonstration projects
  - Change procurement processes

### VEKNANCE

- Create Sustainability Policy & Climate Action Plan
- Sign sustainability declarations
- Establish planning bodies
- Integrate sustainability in Strategic Planning
- RRICULUIN
- Develop programs to target staff and student behaviour
  - Inventory & develop new courses, programs, research, & immersive experiences
  - Modify existing curriculum
- ESEARCH
- Support technological innovations in natural sciences
  - Foster social, cultural, political solutions in social sciences
  - Establish interdisciplinary units
- TREACH
  - Disseminate best practices & findings to stakeholders
    - Develop collaborative partnerships with non-HEI stakeholders

SUSTAINABILITY INTEGRATED ACROSS ALL ASPECTS OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITY

SUSTAINABILITY BECOMES A
CORE PROPERTY OF
INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES

**TAKE ACTION.** Hels working to improve their responses to climate change should integrate sustainability across all aspects of institutional activity in climate action plans, sustainability policies, & strategic plans.