

50 higher education institutions' (HEIs) strategic plans were analyzed for engagement with sustainability and categorized by Sustainability Response Type

BREADTH OF ENGAGEMENT

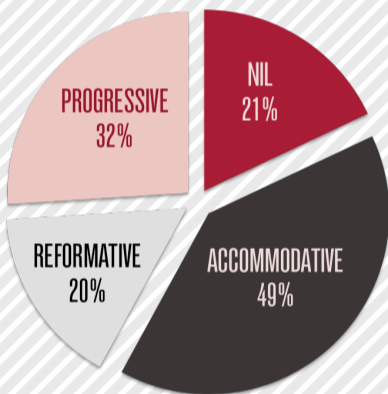
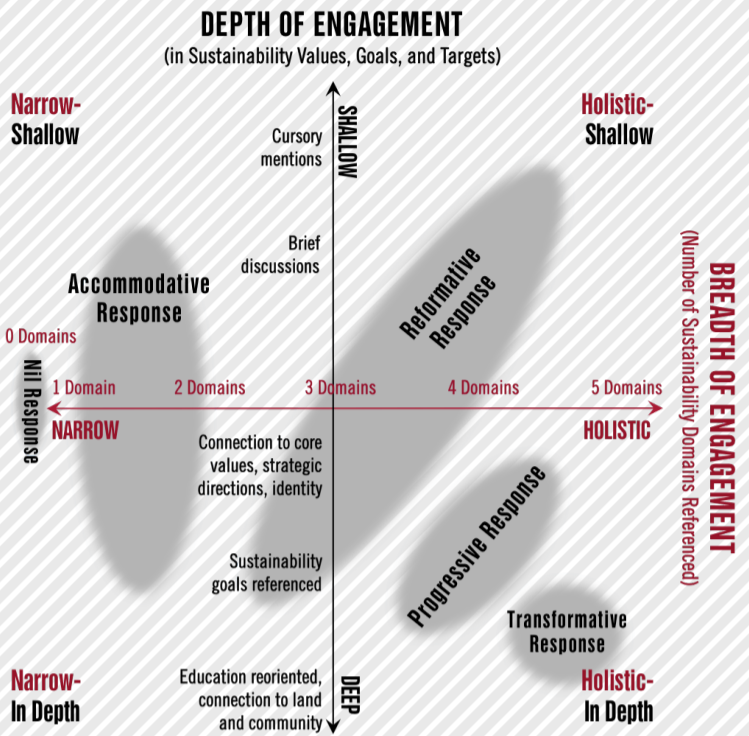
- 1** Governance **3** Research **5** Community Outreach
- 2** Education **4** Operations

DEPTH OF ENGAGEMENT

Meaningful discussion of sustainability in relation to core values, goals, and sustainability-specific policies

INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY RESPONSE TYPES

- NIL** No engagement with sustainability in policy or practice
- ACCOMMODATIVE** Sustainability one of many priorities; 1-2 domains in variable depth
- REFORMATIVE** Policy priorities align with sustainability values in 3-5 domains, variable depth
- PROGRESSIVE** Sustainability in mission, goals, policy across 4-5 domains
- TRANSFORMATIVE** Rethinks educational paradigms to correspond with sustainability values



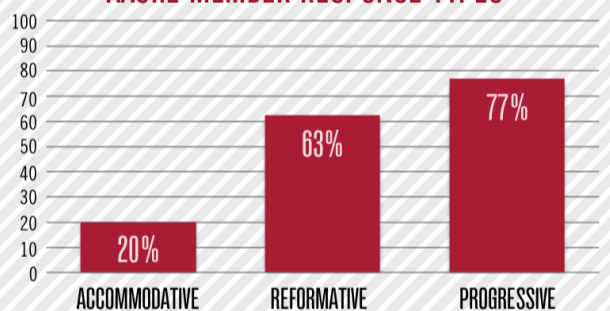
Accommodative and reformative responses were the most common response types. These strategic plans had weak language related to sustainability and lacked specific sustainability goals. No plans had **transformative responses** that reoriented educational purposes and paradigms to correspond with sustainability values. A lack of engagement with **community outreach** was evident in all strategic plans.

SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE SCORES

Drawing on SEPN's previous sustainability policy initiatives census, Sustainability Initiative (SI) Leaders (with all of sustainability assessment, declaration, policy, office) engaged more strongly with sustainability in strategic planning. Only 7 of 20 (or 35%) accommodative responders were SI Leaders whereas 4 of 8 (50%) reformative and 10 of 13 (77%) progressive responders were SI Leaders.

Institutions affiliated with the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) were more likely to exhibit reformative or progressive sustainability responses in their strategic plans. Only 4 of 20 (20%) accommodative responders were AASHE members whereas 5 of 8 (63%) reformative responders and 10 of 13 (77%) progressive responders were AASHE members. The results suggest AASHE membership may be a significant factor in progressive engagement with sustainability at the strategic planning level.

AASHE MEMBER RESPONSE TYPES



SHIFTING PARADIGMS

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

- ✗ Complex, corporatized governance structures
- ✗ High faculty and departmental autonomy
- ✗ Fit with identity, teaching, research priorities
- ✗ Politicization of sustainability values

SHIFTING EDUCATIONAL PARADIGMS

- ✓ Specific, concrete sustainability goals
- ✓ AASHE assessment processes
- ✓ Integrated, holistic targets
- ✓ Improved monitoring capabilities
- ✓ Re-conceptualizing purposes of education
- ✓ Integration of Indigenous perspectives

WHERE NEXT? Stronger engagement with sustainability is needed in strategic planning in Canadian HEIs. The shift to transformative sustainability responses requires HEIs to re-think existing educational paradigms and re-conceptualize the purpose of higher education to support the transition to more sustainable societies.