

SDG Awards Ceremony
Master of Science in Sustainability Management (MScSM) Program
IMI, University of Toronto Mississauga

Dear Members of Sustainability/SDG Family,

We are pleased and feel honored to be part of this event, and this opportunity to talk about the unique philosophy, approach, and impact of our program. Before I talk about those aspects, on behalf of every one from our Sustainability Management Family, I would like to express our sincere thanks to all who are here and not here who have supported us in our sustainability journey for about 5 years.

The program's philosophy is that sustainability includes social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects, but there is no way to separate "social" or "economic" or "environmental sustainability" because one of these cannot be achieved without the others. Sustainability related issues are interconnected and interdependent, and these need to be analyzed, synthesized and addressed using systems and integrative approaches. This is the key challenge to humanity in this century, and it will require a new paradigm of sustainability. The program is committed to this new paradigm.

Paradigm change occurs only due to love of people who want to see that change. The program's culture, therefore, is driven by the values of a sustainability management family which are purpose, relationships, and collaborations. The culture is founded on three pillars of "love and sustainability" -- respect, integration, and balancing of diverse views/perspectives of everyone. Given this foundation, the program covers not merely how to manage sustainability but how it should be managed, and thus integrates relevance and ethical aspects with rigor.

On practical aspects, the program is about sustainability management at any type of organization – profit, non-profit, or government organization. The program requires students to act outside the traditional disciplinary black boxes; integrate knowledge from management, social, and natural sciences to address sustainability issues. Diversity - academic, cultural, social, religious – is the key feature of the program.

In brief, the program is designed to enhance and build capacity to implement all SDGs in a comprehensive manner.

The program has made multi-dimensional impacts on numerous SDGs. These impacts include cultural transformation within the program and UTM; impacts by our graduates/ students on numerous SDGs including gender equity, sustainable use of water, renewable energy, circular economy, and education of youth; establishment of new enterprise – Just Vertical which has a potential of becoming the biggest farmer while owning no land. Impacts of our SM family have been recognized by many awards.

The program strongly believes that partnerships are the key for advancing the agenda of SDGs. The program has developed a multitude of partnerships including partnerships with network organizations like GCNC, PPG, and TSSS. We have also started our own Sustainability Leaders Series.

The program has future two goals over the next five years: (i) to launch executive development programs on sustainability management; and (ii) to offer sustainability education opportunity to all undergraduate students at the UTM.

Finally, our new paradigm of sustainability has to be based on the fundamental truth – that we all are connected and interdependent on each other and on nature; this truth is supported by science – quantum physics, deep ecology, integrative biology – as well as by religions, spirituality, and different worldviews - - Aboriginal Worldview talks about 7 generations. Hence, if we are serious about SDG/sustainability:

“We have to fall in true love (love by heart) with sustainability and serve sustainability by mind and brain.”

When we go home we should ask our heart and hear our own heart – its opinion about sustainability. The true voice of our heart will always be for true love with sustainability, the challenge is to make effort to hear that true voice of our own heart. If we do so, our world will be sustainable.

Nature bless sustainability.

Thanks for your attention and this opportunity.

Shashi Kant
Director, MScSM
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