

February 27, 2015

STARS

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education

1536 Wynkoop St., Suite 100, Denver CO 80202

**Re: UWinnipeg Organizational Sustainability Competency**

In 2014, I was engaged by The University of Winnipeg to assist them in developing a Competency Model that would be integrated into the University's HR Practices such as Performance Management and Leadership and Employee Development. This was a collaborative process that involved a series of expert panels and focus groups with diverse groups at the University in order to identify the key competencies that will drive organizational success. The university was committed to ensuring that the competencies that the university chose reflected UWinnipeg's vision, mission, values, organizational needs and priorities.

As a result of these expert panels and focus groups, it became clear that the University deems Organizational Sustainability a key competency that employees at all levels need to demonstrate in some degree. I therefore worked with the University in designing the competency that was ultimately adopted as part of the competency framework that is now in place at the University.

This is a strategic step in shaping a sustainable culture at the University. Developing expectations regarding organizational sustainability for each level in the organization allows for discussion on how to demonstrate it. It sets a clear direction in terms of the behaviours that employees are expected to demonstrate and provides a tool to hold one's self and others accountable for delivering on those expectation. At the same time, clear expectations allow to better manage the return on investment of development activities.

In my research on best practices in competency models I reviewed at least 20 post-secondary institutions and none of them had articulated the expectations on sustainability. A few of them considered sustainability an organizational value, but neither one of them defined the competency expectation for each level nor did they explain how that value was to be demonstrated in every day's behaviours. Certainly, the University of Winnipeg is a pioneer in this area!

Sincerely,

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