

Administrator Stay at University of British Columbia (UBC)

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Diane Hessler Bittl is responsible for the division “Construction and Property Management” at the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy of Freie Universität Berlin (FU). She is involved in the conception and planning of constructions, adapting premises for research and teaching, scientific facility management, and topics concerning environment, energy and safety.

Frank Wolkers represents the Technical Division for Engineering and Utilities at Freie Universität Berlin, he is in charge of retrofit and development projects for chemical and lab buildings at FU. His function is to coordinate and supervise the building processes from conception to their handing over to the users.

Both work together on several building projects for the Institute of Chemistry of Freie Universität Berlin. The purpose of their stay at UBC was to visit LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified buildings to get insights into the requirements of this certification and experience how UBC implements this. A further goal was to learn about sustainability criteria applied at UBC and strategies used to reduce the environmental impact of research-related activities. Another objective was to create long-term contacts with counterparts at UBC to further exchange ideas, discuss problems and improve the development of sustainable strategies at both universities.

Next to a campus tour, Diane and Frank visited the following LEED certified buildings, getting detailed information about planification, architecture, structure, materials, history and usage under different sustainability aspects:

- Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS), LEED Platinum
- Forest Science Centre, LEED Gold
- Pharmaceutical Science Building, completed 2012, LEED Gold, RAIC Governor General’s Medal in Architecture
- Life Sciences Centre (LSC)
- Earth Science Building (ESB), opened 2012, LEED Gold
- C.K. Choi Building, opened 1996, first green building
- Alma Mater Society Nest (AMS Nest), goal LEED Platinum

- Bioenergy Research & Demonstration Facility (BRDF)
- Chemistry Building, heritage building, renewal LEED gold
- Quantum Matter Institute (QMI), under construction, goal LEED Gold
- Brock Commons, under construction, tallest wooden building in the world, goal LEED Gold
- Alumni Center, goal LEED Gold

They had personal discussions with representatives of different divisions at UBC:

- Shannon Lambie, Communications and Engagement Specialist, campus overview
- Gavin Patton, Student Coordinator, green building tour
- Penny Martyn, Manager, Green Buildings, sustainability process in major planning projects, LEED vs. BNB (Bewertungssystem Nachhaltiges Bauen, German building certification)
- Charlene Ponto, Coordinator, Sustainability Policy Implementation
- Bud Fraser, Senior Planning and Sustainability Engineer; Orion Henderson, Director, Energy Planning & Innovation
- John Madden, Director, Sustainability and Engineering, energy management and challenges of retrofit of chemical buildings.
- Ligia Gheorgita, Environmental Services Advisor, risk management
- Nick Maile, Development Manager, Quantum Matter Institute (QMI)

Diane and Frank also gave an overview presentation of their work and projects in a lunch and learn meeting.

Diane Hessler Bittl

The several visits and discussions we had with our counterparts at UBC gave us a broad overview of the different strategies applied at this partner university to improve sustainability in all its aspects and meet the prerequisites for the LEED certification UBC strives to reach for all new constructions and major renovations.

FU and UBC have very different resources and institutional structures, which lead to different approaches towards sustainability and make it difficult to apply directly the strategies of one university to the other. Besides several environmental aspects related to building structure and energy management, I was impressed by the importance given to social aspects of sustainability. One of these, which is a currently very much discussed topic in the actual planning of new buildings at FU, are the numerous communication and encounter areas available all over campus. These are permanently in use and give a very lively atmosphere in the buildings and outside areas. Another aspect is the way UBC integrates its members, going from students to faculty and staff, into the development and implementation of projects related to sustainability. These social aspects lead to a strong identification of university members with their institution, which makes them ready to invest their time and knowledge to improve campus life.

In conclusion, this stay at UBC has been very enriching for me, not only because it opened my eyes to several aspects of sustainability we can develop at FU, but also because I realized how many innovative projects, which are also of great interest for our partner university, we developed and successfully implemented at FU.

Frank Wolkers

The administrator stay was very worthwhile for my current work as coordinator for the retrofit and development of research and teaching lab buildings of FUB. It confirmed the relevance to formulate the goals and to include the topics of sustainability in the very beginning of a project.

Beside the economic and energy efficient matters of sustainability it was also highly interesting to learn how socio-cultural and functional qualities are important for UBC as part of sustainability, which generates a lively atmosphere on campus.

It was impressive to see how the outside surrounding nature is integrated inside the new buildings through materials like glass and wood. They bring a communicative atmosphere, especially in the inviting entrances, the informal learning spaces and the communication points. All of them have a very high quality and are intensively used.

Another important architectural concept is the transparency of working spaces and lecture rooms, supported by the natural light through the skylights.

I hope further on I can exchange and deepen knowledges with my colleague Penny Martyn, especially about the sustainability certification in the planning process and discuss ideas of sustainability in the architectural design.