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## M E D I A   R E L E A S E

**April 20, 2007**

**For Immediate Release**

### **UWinnipeg's SUNSET Student Group Launches New Sustainability Research Program**

WINNIPEG—The University of Winnipeg's Sustainable University Now, Sustainable Earth Tomorrow (SUNSET) student group recently received \$25,000 from The Winnipeg Foundation for one year of project funding, and \$3,385 from EcoCanada, to officially launch a new program intended to give students hands-on experience in social and environmental sustainability research.

Through SUNSET's *Student-Led Initiative in Experiential Sustainability Education*, students will undertake classroom projects that will develop practical solutions to local social and ecological issues.

The SUNSET office will collect research proposals from community groups and campus sources, and compile them into a database hosted on the Campus Sustainability Office webpage at

<http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/sus-student-initiatives>

A new full-time coordinator, made possible with the project funding, will build SUNSET's capacity to ensure the success of this exciting project. "Students will produce research findings that directly inform and support our campus and community's efforts to find creative ways to overcome social and environmental challenges," says Kate Dykman, SUNSET Program Coordinator. "We are pleased to have the confidence and support of The Winnipeg Foundation and EcoCanada. Their funding will solidify our programming and assist us to engage and support additional environmental sustainability research by students."

Anna Weier, Spence Neighbourhood Association Board Member and SUNSET's previous interim coordinator, adds, "I am really excited about students becoming more involved in our community. We are already thinking of research projects that could be done by students including research around a community composting program." Various community groups have already responded with project ideas ranging from collecting data on commuter cycling patterns to research into improving the recycled content of paper produced in Manitoba.

"This project clearly advances the sustainability process underway at our University, and it is a great example of the kind of synergies that can occur when students, faculty and administrators support each other's common goals. The leadership students have taken in initiating this project is to be commended," comments University of Winnipeg President Lloyd Axworthy.

"We created this program to foster the active citizenship of our student body," says Alana Lajoie-O'Malley, SUNSET founding member. "Early on, students working on campus sustainability issues recognized that students are often too busy studying and working to take the time to become engaged. By providing students with course credit for performing research relevant to their community, we hope

to help overcome this problem. We want to challenge our peers to translate our academic learning into practice.”

SUNSET was formed in 2003 by a group of students committed to conducting a comprehensive environmental and social sustainability audit of the University. The student leadership role of the SUNSET project helped create momentum for the University to hire a Sustainability Officer and to create a Task Force, charged with designing a set of environmental sustainability policies that were adopted by the University of Winnipeg’s Board of Regents in October 2006. More recently, the University turned its Vice-President of Human Resources position into the Vice-President Human Resources, Audit & Sustainability, making UWinnipeg the first institution in Canada to have a Vice-President directly in charge of sustainability.

The *Student-Led Initiative in Experiential Sustainability Education* program will work in collaboration with the Global College’s Institute for Literacy and Transformative Learning and the Campus Sustainability Office to identify roles for students in research and community service.

SUNSET is grateful for the support it has received from The University of Winnipeg Foundation in making this project a reality. “This project might never have come to fruition had it not been for the Foundation. They were a huge support in helping the SUNSET members create their proposal and find funding,” says Dykman.

*Located in the heart of downtown, The University of Winnipeg is a compact, diverse, multicultural academic community committed to access and excellence. Home to more than 9,200 full- and part-time students, UWinnipeg has been ranked by our graduates in the Top Ten of all Canadian universities when asked about their “Entire Educational Experience” (Maclean’s Graduate Survey, June 2006). The Globe & Mail 2006 Report Card gives The University of Winnipeg an overall ‘A’ grade in the areas of quality of education, teaching quality, class sizes, faculty-student interaction, and the availability of faculty outside classroom hours. Find out why. Visit [www.uwinnipeg.ca](http://www.uwinnipeg.ca)*

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For more information, please contact:

Kate Dykman, SUNSET Program Coordinator  
Office: 204.789.1435  
Email: [uwsunset@yahoo.ca](mailto:uwsunset@yahoo.ca)