Queen's University SDG Implementation Council – Pilot Survey Summary Report

November 2025

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the findings from the pilot SDG Activity Survey conducted across Queen's University units. The survey aimed to capture initiatives, challenges, and opportunities aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Methodology

The survey was distributed to eleven units in the pilot phase, representing students, faculties, administrative units, and community partners. The 13-question (mainly qualitative, open-ended) survey collected responses on SDG-related actions, challenges, and collaboration opportunities (Appendix I). The survey also asked for feedback about how to improve the data collection process in the future. Units were given two weeks to complete the survey. Overall, we had a 64% response rate, with answers from the following units:

- Education (x4)
- Engineering
- School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs
- Society of Graduate and Professional Students
- Student Affairs
- University Relations
- Vice-Principal, Culture, Equity, & Inclusion

SDGs of Focus

The most frequently cited SDGs of focus included (5 times each):

SDGs cited 1-3 times included: 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17.

Contributions to the Operational Framework

Because the Operational Framework was not available for a clickable link as envisioned, some units did not have the relevant information and were instructed to simply report N/A for the pilot. Some units, however, have been engaged in the OF creation and were able to answer this question. Specifically,

- SGSPA recently updated Standards for Graduate Theses, which will come into effect on January 1, 2026. <u>As part of the new thesis standards, there is an optional introductory page, directly after the abstract, entitled "United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Connections</u>." This optional section invites students to detail connections between the thesis and specific UN sustainable development goals. The theses are publicly available on the repository QSpace, so this allows us to highlight the important scholarly contributions that students make, and frame these in relation to the UN SDGs.
- <u>SGSPA is planning to host the 2nd "Sustainable Development Goal Graduate Research Day" to be held in March 2026</u>. This event will be a 3-hour research showcase where graduate students and postdoctoral fellows will present their research in talks, drawing connections to the UN-SDGs. Attendance will be open. (See "Research and Teaching Integration Priorities" in the SDG Operational Framework).
- University Relations: Submission to the<u> 2026 Times Higher Education Impact Ratings</u>; Development of the 2024-2025 Advancing Social Impact: Queen's Contributions to the SDGs report; Continued maintenance and development of the Queen's Advancing Social Impact report; Campaign to promote Queen's results in the 2025 THE Impact Rankings
- University Relations also contributed to writing and supporting the <u>Strategic Research Plan</u>

Upcoming Events

- (SGSPA): SDG Graduate Research day in March, 2026
- (VPCEI): Re-imagining Academia Speaker Series, revised H&D Policy and Procedure, Elder talks, Community Fires
- (Education): Food drives and fundraisers coming up for NOURISH-Q.
- (SGPS): Naloxone training (planned/scheduled – Dec. 1, 2025); Mason Jar Meals and Fresh Food Boxes (ongoing).
- (Engineering) International Symposium on Innovative Design for Excellence, Affordability, and Sustainability (IDEAS 2026), will be hosted at Queen's University next summer. This event aims to create new opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaboration among researchers from various regions around the world, all with the goal of advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- (Engineering): The Reimagining Engineering Education (REE) initiative in Smith Engineering will transform undergraduate programs (all departments and programs, and all years) over the next several years. One priority of REE is to better equip students to develop solutions to complex problems with positive social impact through a combination of systems thinking, authentic engineering experiences, and interdisciplinary teamwork. The UN SGDs serve as excellent examples of these types of problems and are likely to underpin multiple new courses and learning activities.

Useful Links / Resources

➢ Civil Engineering has an informative document that maps all of its faculty's research to the UN SDGs: https://smithengineering.queensu.ca/civil/_files/UN%20Goals_Civil%20Engineering.pdf

➢ The Faculty's Centre for Social Change and Community Engagement's mission is to build a world in which all students, families, and communities belong and flourish by advancing equitable and inclusive education. There are several projects that address the SDGs around neurodivergent education, teachers' perceptions of cultural literacy, and community-embedded internships led by Dr Michelle Searle. Read more: https://educ.queensu.ca/research/CCESC

➢ With the TAP waiver now, staff are able to apply to the Canadian Academic Skills, English, and Sustainability (CASES) program: https://qsoe.educ.queensu.ca/programs

➢ Human Rights and Equity Office Key Achievements Report: https://www.queensu.ca/hreo/sites/hreowww/files/uploaded_files/Publications/Annual%20Reports/2025-05-16_Achievements_2024-25.pdf

SDG-related Challenges, Barriers, or Resource Needs

➢ (Education) Further funding opportunities for research and outreach activities related to the SDGs would be appreciated. Further, if there were central resources for writing, promoting, and other KMb activities would be helpful as we have limited resources as the Faculty level. Re: Funding, School of English indicated they tried some Queen's Gives options, but they were not permitted after a year. An education-affiliated report also flagged financial barriers experienced by low SES Kingston families.

➢ (Engineering) Funding Issues: Researchers face inadequate funding to effectively implement projects and sustain programs aimed at addressing SDG targets in Africa and India. They need assistance in identifying funding opportunities and navigating the grant application process. Collaboration: While many researchers at Queen's are working on projects that advance the SDGs, a lack of information and knowledge sharing creates barriers to collaboration for new SDG initiatives.

➢ (SGPS) Funding, space, collaboration opportunities, resources, and personnel

➢ (University Relations) Prioritization of SDG initiatives

Topics to Raise on Future SDG Implementation Council Agendas

➢ (SGSPA): We need to do more in terms of the stated Global Engagement Priorities. I think it would be worthwhile to discuss how SGSPA can work with Global Engagement to make more progress toward those goals, as stated in the Operational Framework.

- ➢ (Education): There are limitations on this reporting format. <u>Three hundred words is very limited for sharing the work happening at the Faculty level</u>. We have tried to utilize links in this report so that further details are easily accessible. We also shared the link to this report with our researchers, as well as our non-credit teams that undertake SDG-related work. As a result, there will be several submissions from our units and faculty members.
- ➢ (Education): Are there <u>ways to support grassroots initiatives right here on campus with funding? Ones that are not just credit course based</u>?
- ➢ Suggestion by Dr. Qingguo Li: <u>Creating a Queen's Network of Researchers Engaging in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Activities</u>

Completed Actions

Research

- ➢ SSHRC PEG: Bridging the Gap: Fostering Success for Youth in Care (A. Butler, L. Morcom, I. Bayoumi) focused on youth poverty, well-being, education etc.
- ➢ Dr Heather McGregor's Climate Justice work directly address SDG 13; Drs Douglas and Butler are funded for research that addresses SDG 4; and Dr Airton's work addresses SDG 5. Learn more about this research: https://educ.queensu.ca/dr-heather-mcgregors-insight-grant-climate-justice-education-ontario-creating-and-sustaining
- ➢ Engineering: A Tier 1 Research Centre for Radiation Impact on Materials was established in 2025. To ensure the safe, efficient, and long-lasting performance of nuclear reactors, the centre will play a pivotal role in enabling nuclear power to serve as a low-carbon power source. (SDG7, 12) https://www.queensu.ca/vpr/centres-and-institutes/radiation-impact
- ➢ In May-October, Smith Engineering researchers started 50 new SDG-relevant grants, totaling $7.3M (16 x SDG3, 13 x SDG12, 5 x SDG11, 4x SDG9). Examples:
  - ✓ Mahmoud Alzoubi received a Scotia Bank Climate Action Reseach grant to advance hydrogen-based technologies for remote underground mines to minimize diesel reliance (SDG12, 13). https://www.scotiabank.com/content/dam/scotiabank/canada/common/documents/2025_CARF_Recipient%20List_EN.pdf
  - ✓ Xian Wang received a Brain Canada Future Leaders award to research microbubbles that mechanically destroy treatment-resistant cancer cells (SDG3). https://smithengineering.queensu.ca/news/2025/10/brain-canada-future-leaders-award-highlights-xian-wangs-work-at-the-frontier-of-brain-health-research.html
  - ✓ Cao Thang Dinh published break-through carbon conversion research in Nature (SDG13): https://smithengineering.queensu.ca/news/2025/10/turning-pollution-into-potential.html

➢ Dr. Mark Green's 2023-2025 position as National Scholar at NSERC, advising the funding agency from the perspective of an Indigenous researcher has now been extended for another year to shape the agency's policies on the incorporation of Indigenous research perspectives (SDG 10).

➢ Dr. Li (Engineering) has collaborated with researchers from Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo (UJKZ) in Burkina Faso to identify key contributing factors to occupational risks faced by women weavers. During his visit in July 2025, Dr. Li delivered lectures and training sessions to students and researchers on human movement analysis and injury prevention, which are related to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education).

Teaching / Students

➢ Dr. Qingguo Li recently supervised 12 undergraduate students from Queen's University, including 5 from Smith Engineering, on community-based projects in India, supported by the QES 2025 transdisciplinary climate resilience initiative. In collaboration with the Department of Design at IIT Roorkee, Queen's students have gained hands-on experience addressing socio-economic challenges in three communities in Uttarakhand, India. These activities contribute to the advancement of SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure). (QES News Letters)

➢ In May 2025 Smith Engineering debuted the First Nations STEM Futures Academy, a long-term engagement program for youth living in First Nation communities (reserves) to increase the numbers of students completing high school and being prepared for post-secondary STEM programs (SDG4, 10). https://ifinengineering.ca/educational-outreach/FN-stem-futures-academy.html https://ifinengineering.ca/educational-outreach/good-roots.html

➢ In July, Black Youth in STEM partnered with YAAACE to deliver hands-on STEM programming to over 360 inner-city youth in North York (SDG4, 10). In August, 40 additional YAAACE participants visited Queen's for a day of experiential learning. BYiS also partnered with the Durham District School Board to engage 30 high school students in programs supporting SDG4,7. In Kingston, they deliver ongoing STEM programming to 12 kindergarten-aged children and 24 parents (SDG4, 10): https://www.instagram.com/p/DMN1qmqKw8y/

➢ SGPS Equity and student engagement activities: Equity survey (ongoing); SGPS naloxone training (Dec 1); Student Advisor program has been providing one-on-one support to students; Financial assistance program assisting students who have maxed out health and dental benefits; Specific financial support offered for gender affirming care; Ongoing supports for students from equity deserving groups via monthly office hours.

➢ School of English has an SDG focused course (CASES) that runs twice per year.

➢ School of English: Regularly sponsor students through ISKA/KEYS to join EAP program; has representation on the Scholars at Risk committee; offers a free beginner online course that has been accessed by thousands around the world; offers a free online English Test to help anyone gauge their language ability to support their decision to pursue ELL education.

- EDST 290 Understanding at-risk children and FOCI 290 Teaching at-risk children (taught by Alana Butler since 2017): The final course project addresses the UN Sustainable Development Goal of addressing poverty by implementing a school project that will benefit the children and their families in low-income/underserved areas of Kingston.
- Continuing Teacher Education completed re-writing the Ontario-based course, CONT 562, Environmental Education, which was submitted to the Ontario College of Teachers for accreditation. This course directly aligns with SDG 13: Climate Action and SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. It will be offered to in-service teachers.
- Student Wellness Services piloted 2 new food access programs: 1) Grocery Game Plan workshop and grocery store visit; 2) Food & Community, a weekly summertime gathering to connect students and staff over globally-inspired freshly prepared snacks
- Lionhearts' Fresh Food Market began bi-weekly campus pop-up dates, providing access to fresh produce at a discounted rate, along with other select food items.
- Housing and Ancillary Services introduced the "Just in Time" initiative, offering 50% off discounts on baked goods and grab-and-go items in retail food locations across campus.
- Student Wellness Services ran events including Healthy Cooking Sessions, Fresh Food Boxes, Mason Jar Meal Kits
- Work With Impact: Queen's Career Guide to the UN Sustainable Development Goals – New in 2025: Career Services launched the Work With Impact online guide to help students explore meaningful career pathways aligned with the UN SDGs. Designed to foster hope, purpose, and informed decision-making, the resource supports students in identifying opportunities to contribute to global challenges through their careers. Students can explore the resource independently, or dive deeper in a workshop led by Career Services. The guide was a finalist for the International Green Gown Awards 2025, in the category of Next Generation Learning & Skills. A Work With Impact panel was held to mark the launch of the guide, where alumni shared how their work relates to the UN SDGs, and inspired students to envision careers with impact.

Campus and Community
- The VP, CEI completed the following: ICOUNT Census for Governance Committees (Board, UC, Senate), Continue to provide leadership and support to EE Reps and Senior Hiring Committees across the university, Provided funding for Women in Science and QWN for International Women's day event, PAGGAS produced a report on gender inclusive washrooms, Funded 15 Inclusive Community Fund Initiatives, ERG Time Release Policy, Launched the 25/26 Employment Equity Plan.
- Queen's School of English: Volunteer Club has done a number of fundraisers to support displaced persons and other community needs. SoE also runs a staff group - NOURISH-Q - that focuses on food security on West Campus; organizes SDG-related outings for students to go out into the community - including trips to Elbow Lake to learn about water and land; has active members on the Queen's Wellness Champions Advisory Committee; is a member of Languages Canada for quality assurance; and offers National Scholarships as an equity initiative to make language learning more affordable.

➢ Nixon Field Resurfacing - Queen's installed a leading sustainable playing surface at Nixon Field, replacing the existing turf with a carbon-sequestering surface, in partnership with Canadian Wollastonite and FieldTurf. Queen's is the first institution in North America to capitalize on environmental technologies to promote carbon sequestration via turf replacement. The environmental impact of the field over its lifetime is estimated to be equivalent to having a 117-acre forest in the heart of Queen's campus.

➢ Queen's opted in to the Eco-Anxiety module within the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey to benchmark student feelings of anxiety related to the environment and climate change. Results will be released later this fall.

Events

➢ The STEAM+ Conversations series fostered interdisciplinary dialogue and community engagement through panel discussions and student-focused events. They also launched the Research Brownbag Series to highlight and promote STEAM-related research from both Queen's faculty and external collaborators. Read more: https://educ.queensu.ca/research/groups/steam

➢ Queen's Imagines the Future Festival was a collaborative project at the Faculty that included several workshops on building a hopeful climate future. Several workshops were held to inspire our community and an exhibition was held in November 2025. A curated collection of submissions is available here: https://www.educarts.ca/webinar-registration.

➢ SGPS was involved in a range of anti-hunger and wellness events: Mason Jar Meal and Fresh Food Box Programs (ongoing); Hunger Action Month; LionHearts Pop-Up Markets; Existing partnership with OPIRG Kingston Mutual Aid Garden; ASUS Good Times Diner; AMS Food Bank contributions; Monthly wellness events

Pilot Study Feedback and Recommendations for Improvement

1. It was helpful to think about our alignment with SDG's.
2. I think it was a good format, and it prompted me refer back to the framework and evaluate the progress we have made, and where we still have work to do.
3. Shorten and clarify survey questions to improve response rates.
4. Send survey to VPR (not just University Relations)
5. It is difficult to source this information and to select what to include.
6. I assumed that the reporting period was May-October 2025, but it was not clearly indicated
7. More space would have been good for question 4.
8. A shorter survey with clearer questions may support better response rates.
9. 300 words was not enough to share everything we do at the Faculty-level.
10. I think expectations need to be set early on... how many questions, length of the survey, time expected to complete... I think even a quick overview of what to expect. If it can be shortened, that would be great... and I wonder about some more multiple

choice questions to gather specific data and add some variety to the question types. Also, I think maybe noting future areas of interest... ideas that people are holding on to... if help or money was available, what would you want to initiate?

Further reflections arising from compiling the report to raise to Council:

1. There is overlap in completed activities and success stories – consider merging? Just focus on success stories? Activities is the category that can be quite diverse and very challenging to synthesize in this report.
2. Audiences question (#11): Helpful to refer to if there is targeted communication efforts, but did not include in SDG report to Council. Is it relevant to keep asking this in the survey?
3. The Faculty of Education indicated that one sole representative from the Unit was not appropriate to capture diversity of activities and sent out survey request to all faculty to complete on their own. Future survey iterations should offer more specific instructions about who is to complete and if link sharing is appropriate. This raises the ongoing question the Reporting/Communications Working Group has struggled with related to the most appropriate level to request reporting.
4. There was some confusion about the "reporting period" question, wherein a couple respondents were unclear if they should check May (reporting on past activities) or October (the date of the report). We will need to add clarity to that question.
5. It took about 5 hours to compile results from 10 respondents in the present format. What changes need to happen to efficiently scale up reporting to many more units across campus?

Appendix I: Survey Questions

SDG Implementation Council – Periodic Reporting Survey

As part of an initiative to strengthen communication and campus-community connections around actions related to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and to track progress on the institutional SDG operational framework [give link] the Queen's University Office of the Principal requests that you please complete this periodic SDG survey. Survey inputs will be compiled in a report to be provided to all members of the Principal's SDG Implementation Council in advance of every meeting and posted publicly on the SDG page on the Principal's website. Thank you for your participation in this effort. We look forward to learning more about your unit's recent SDG-related initiatives

Section 1: Group Information

1. **Name/Title of Person Completing Report** *(short text)*
2. **Unit/Title/Name of Group Reporting on behalf of** *(short text)*
3. **Reporting Period** *(dropdown)*
   - February
   - May
   - October

Section 2: Activity & Progress

4. Detail/list the **completed key actions, initiatives, or discussions** of your group during this reporting period that are relevant for the SDG Council and propelling SDGs at Queen's (e.g., new SDG-related funding achieved, SDG-related teaching and learning activities, policy changes in support of SDG-implementation) *(long text, 300 words max)*

5. Which **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are most relevant to the efforts of your unit/group? *(checkboxes, select up to three that MOST CLOSELY apply)*

   ☐ SDG 1: No Poverty

   ☐ SDG 2: Zero Hunger

   ☐ SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

   ☐ SDG 4: Quality Education

   ☐ SDG 5: Gender Equality

   ☐ SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

   … Etc. to 17

5. Describe how has your group contributed to the **SDG Operational Framework** [give link] since the last reporting period? *(long text, 300 word maximum). If your group has nothing to report in this period, please write N/A.*

Section 3: Challenges & Needs

6. Share any **SDG-related challenges, barriers, or resource needs** your group is experiencing? *(long text, 300-word maximum). Please respond N/A if you have no barriers or challenges to report.*

7. Are there any **topics you would like discussed at the next SDG Council meeting**? *(long text, 200 word maximum) Please respond N/A if you have no suggested topics at this time.*

Section 4: Collaboration & Opportunities

8. Do you have any **upcoming events, initiatives, or opportunities** you would like to share with council members or the broader Queen's community so they can support/promote/attend? *(long text) Please respond N/A if you have no upcoming events, initiatives, or opportunities to report.*

9. Which groups does your group/unit already collaborate with to advance SDGs? Are there opportunities for **collaboration with other groups** that the SDG Council could help with to advance your SDG efforts or amplify impact? *(long text, 200 words)*

Section 5: Communications & Recognition

10. Share **success stories, highlights, or achievements** that the SDG Council can help feature in institutional communications (e.g., website, newsletter, reports)? *(insert link or provide details) long text, 200 word max)*

11. Are there specific **audiences (internal or external)** that would benefit from hearing about your work? *(long text, 200 word max)*

Section 6: Additional Reporting

12. Is there anything else you would like the SDG Council to know about your group's work this period? *(long text, 300 word max)*

Section 7: Pilot Feedback

13. You have received this survey as part of a pilot test prior to wider rollout to gather SDG-related information from units across campus. What feedback can you provide to help us improve this survey and process prior to the wider campus rollout? (long text, 300 word max)