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Former premier Mike Harcourt to guide UBC Continuing Studies Centre for Sustainability

After decades of guiding sustainability programs at the national and international level, former B.C. premier Mike Harcourt is partnering with the University of British Columbia to develop a new, one-of-a-kind initiative that helps people make a difference in their communities and businesses.

Through his appointment as associate director of the new UBC Continuing Studies Centre for Sustainability, Harcourt will contribute his expertise to educational programs that stress practical knowledge in tackling climate change and sustainability issues.

“The UBC Continuing Studies Centre for Sustainability recognizes the need for working professionals with the skills and perspective to take the lead in sustainability projects, which will make all the difference in transforming our economy, our society and our environment,” says Harcourt.

“These are practical programs for the real world,” says Director William Koty. “We’re thrilled to have Mike’s guidance as we develop this exciting new array of courses.”

The UBC Continuing Studies Centre for Sustainability offers applied education in programs that cover a wide range of sustainability issues for practitioners in the public and private sectors, as well as interested citizens. These include the economics of climate change, implementing sustainability projects, measuring carbon footprints and developing an effective response to climate change.

For Harcourt, the appointment marks a return to both UBC and his roots as an activist for sustainable development. As a former premier, mayor of Vancouver and city councillor, he helped B.C. earn its reputation as one of the most livable places in the world. Harcourt is also a UBC alumnus (BA’65, LLB’68, LLD’07) and serves as honorary co-chair on the President’s Advisory Council on Sustainability.

Programs at the UBC Continuing Studies Centre for Sustainability include:
• Sustainability Management Program, for individuals who wish to take the lead in helping to build sustainability into their organizations.

• Summer Institute on Sustainability, an intensive professional development program focused on developing organization-wide sustainability policies, procedures and projects.

• Certificate in Decision Making for Climate Change, an online program providing students with the most up-to-date knowledge on climate change issues, including how to develop and implement an effective response plan.

Harcourt’s career as lawyer, community activist, and politician has been recognized with the Woodrow Wilson Award for Public Service and the Canadian Urban Institute’s Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award. Al Gore applauded Harcourt for permanently preserving the jointly shared ecosystem of the Tatshenshini River and Alaska’s Glacier Bay National Park. In 2007, he was the Walter Bean Visiting Professor on the Environment at the University of Waterloo, and in 2008 UBC awarded Harcourt its Alumni Achievement Award.

Between 1996 and 2004, Harcourt was appointed by the prime minister to serve as a member of the National Roundtable on the Environment and Economy where he chaired the Urban Sustainability Program. He is honorary chair of the International Centre for Sustainable Cities, and co-chair of the International Panel of Advisors.

UBC Continuing Studies reaches beyond the UBC campus to offer innovative courses, programs and initiatives that meet the interests and needs of the wider community.

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