



# Planetary Wellbeing Institutional Framework at the Pompeu Fabra University

# Introduction

- In 2015, the Rockefeller Foundation and The Lancet proposed adopting [the concept of “Planetary Health”](#) as the highest standard of human health attainable without jeopardizing the Earth’s natural systems.
- Over the last five years, planetary health has been an active interest for various researchers at UPF. Building on this interest, in 2018, the University President, Professor Jaume Casals, launched the [Planetary Wellbeing Initiative](#) (PWI) as a **long-term institutional strategy**, animated by the UN SDGs:
  - Acknowledging the severity of the current global emergencies
  - Displaying a determination to transform the university internally to meet the new challenges those emergencies pose
- **The concept of “planetary wellbeing” as *the highest attainable standard of wellbeing for human and non-human beings and their social and natural systems*.** This definition assumes that we can hope to flourish in harmony with other human and non-human beings, only through judicious attention to the political, legal, economic, cultural, and social institutions that shape the Earth’s natural systems. Integral to the initiative is the idea that identifying strategies that promote planetary wellbeing requires a combination of impact-oriented research with multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary activity.

# Objectives

- **The primary goal:** to increase knowledge and understanding of the set of **complex, interrelated and systemic issues** affecting the wellbeing of humans, animals and the planet itself, as a global ecosystem, and **to identify innovative and integrated interdisciplinary solutions for them**. UPF as a societal leader in the transformation towards sustainability

1. **Organisational level** (PW taskforce under the guidance of prof. Antó, prof. Martí and prof. Mélon)

2. **Research**



3. **Education**

4. **Dissemination of knowledge**



# Methodology

**A mix of top-down and bottom up approach:**

**1. Leadership** (climate emergency, creation of Planetary Wellbeing, center for studies on Planetary Wellbeing)

**2. Incentives and support:**

1. Teaching
2. Research
3. Students

**3. International network:**



# Results

- SDG Project
- MOOC on Planetary Wellbeing (September 2022)
- Awards
- Seed funding
- EUTOPIA application
- See also the postgraduate courses, courses, masters, etc.
  - Postgraduate programme on Sustainability Transition and Climate Emergency ESCI-UPF
  - Masters on Sustainability Management BSM-ESCI
- See the milestones and the amount of publications and congresses

# Discussion

- Awareness raising is still an issue
- So is academic freedom
- Discussion on the responsibility of higher education institutions in the transition towards sustainable future (UNESCO Berlin Declaration)
- Next steps?

# Thank you for your attention!

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# **To be or not to be: educating for Planetary Wellbeing**

The (after)math

**Lela Mélon**



# The need for being the impetus for change – or simply accompanying the change?

- The “**social responsibility**” of universities
- **The needs of the labour market:** are we preparing students for the battlefield that is out there?
- **The disconnect** between the research and teaching
- The very much same old story of “**add-ons**” instead of an organic transition
  - A necessary but not sufficient condition for transformation

# The Planetary Wellbeing approach at the UPF



- The general direction of teaching at the UPF and the transition we are going through
  - **Proverbial openness to change and progress:** reputation of a “market leader” in advanced teaching and learning practices of the UPF
  - **Supported by the PW institutional framework:** an open door for being innovative, moral support and impetus for further work
- **The multitude of approaches and developments:**
  - **Individual aspirations** of professors exercising their academic freedom: e.g. prof. Llavador using the CORE project materials and approach to teaching Microeconomics
  - **Collective aspirations** of research groups and summer/winter schools: e.g. SDG PBL teaching project
  - **Institutional aspirations** on specific focus topics or programmes:
    - the focus on gender equality and support for diversity
    - Summer/Winter School
    - Postgraduate and master’s programmes
  - **MOOC on Planetary Wellbeing as an institutional approach and commitment**

# The How: Beyond Cherry-Picking Add On Approach

- The approach that has developed has developed as such **spontaneously and organically**, carrying with it a holistic and organic change:

## What is lacking?

The systematisation of changes and the knowledge conveyed through these courses/ programmes and practices in general

- Barcelona Program for Interdisciplinary Studies (BaPIS)
- Barcelona International Summer School
- Ad hoc winter/summer schools (Planetary Wellbeing Winter School co-organized with the University of Oxford)



- Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Introduction to Planetary Wellbeing
- A Minor on Planetary Wellbeing
- Sustainable Business Law course at the Faculty of Law

# Edvolució

- The EDvolució teaching model is characterized by putting the **student's active and collaborative learning at the center**, and by seeking a more flexible, transversal and individualized balance between face-to-face class and independent work, and between master class and active-methodologies learning.
- It takes into account hybrid teaching formats, with intensive use of new technologies and the online learning platform (Learning Management System) through a personal learning environment (EPA).
- In this sense, EDvolució proposes that the virtual platform serve as an interface from which the student can modulate their pace and depth in the acquisition of knowledge.

# Postgraduate Course in Sustainability Transition Management and Climate Emergency

**The main idea:** reimagining the approach on educating while inserting sustainability concerns

- Shying away from ex-catedra and theoretical approach
- Shying away in general from passive methods of learning
- Introducing PBL but also an interactive manner of studying
- Close three-way cooperation professor – student – group of students
- **Two-way learning:** the target group are established already active professionals which provide a valuable input and diverse questions to be answered as-we-go

**Extremely important in the current circumstances of rapid changes in the field**

# Postgraduate Course in Sustainability Transition Management and Climate Emergency



## The rationale

- Analyse a company or institution through the lens of sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- Calculate an organisation's environmental impact (water and carbon footprints, etc.).
- Design a strategy to implement sustainability-oriented change.
- Secure funding to carry out the necessary change.
- Communicate the company's new strategy, changes and objectives to win the backing and recognition of everyone involved.
- Set assessment criteria to help the company comply with the sustainable development goals.

# Postgraduate Course in Sustainability Transition Management and Climate Emergency



**The How – A transition of the approach itself**

- 1. Business Sustainability Management**
  - 2. Results-oriented climate management**
  - 3. Financing the transition to sustainability and the circular economy**
  - 4. Leadership and Communication for Sustainable Transition**
- The novelty here is in **the approach itself**, following the holistic and organic transition that sustainability requires:
    - Not strictly following the traditional division between disciplines themselves
    - Anticipating rapid changes in knowledge and legislation in the global and European space

# Postgraduate Course in Sustainability Transition Management and Climate Emergency



**What Are We Trying to Achieve? It's all about IMPACT and SYMBIOSIS**

- The **industry-university cooperation** is not a new topic, but the connection is more timely and material when established in the process of transition towards sustainability
- The hands-on experience of our students and our lecturers spontaneously create a fruitful field for creation of new approaches and knowledge
- **It is about guidance not preaching:** the data is there, our role is to transform it in information

**Support and guidance more than anything (through science)**