

Biodiversity Management in Higher Education Institutions

Special issue call for papers from International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education

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About the Journal:

The International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education (IJSHE) is the world's leading journal specifically addressing sustainability issues in a higher education context. IJSHE is fully indexed and has an Impact Factor of 4.120* (2021) and 5-year Impact Factor (2018) of 4.351*, which attest to its influential role in the academic community and community of good practitioners. Further details on IJSHE can be found at: <http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/products/journals/journals.htm?id=IJSHE>

Background and Research Focus:

The Convention of Biological Diversity defines biodiversity as “the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems” (CBD, 2016, p. 3). Previous and current global agendas promote biodiversity protection and sustainable use, among them the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (2011-2020) (CBD, 2020) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015), specifically SDGs 14 and 15. Meanwhile, biodiversity loss is just one part of the wider global environmental challenge facing humanity (Roberts et al., 2020) and is recognized as one of the top five global risks for the economy (WEF, 2020). Viewed within the framework of the nine planetary boundaries, the rate of biodiversity loss ranks as one of the highest risks (Rockström et al., 2009). Thus, protection and preservation of biodiversity is one of the great challenges for humanity as human well-being depends greatly on the diversity of genetics, species, and ecosystems, the three essential elements that form biodiversity.

Higher education plays a crucial role in ensuring that the next generation of decision makers is capably responsive to global societal and environmental needs (Sassen & Azizi, 2018a, 2018b). These graduates will encounter a work environment that is challenging, constantly changing, and highly competitive, while at the same time being susceptible to sustainability dilemmas and various crises (Storey et al., 2017). In addition, higher education institutions actively work to reduce the negative impacts of their own actions and operations, which might be mitigated by sustainability related measures (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2015).

In recent years, the increasing pressure on universities has led to an expansion of the focus from the traditional teaching and research model to a broader contribution to society which is called the third mission (Etzkowitz, 1983). Engaging in entrepreneurial models, universities contribute to the social,

economic and cultural development of the regions in which they operate, by transferring knowledge and technologies to business sector and to society as a whole (Compagnucci and Spigarelli, 2020).

Prior research has shown that university campuses can provide living laboratory initiatives for species conservation, climate adaptation, and biodiversity restoration, preventing the environmental damages wrought by rapid urbanization (Liu et al., 2017; Susilowati et al., 2021; Kirpluk & Podstolski, 2015; Witte et al., 2018). For this reason, higher education institutions can position themselves through teaching, research and third mission activities as one of the solutions able to halt the further degradation of biodiversity.

Achieving biodiversity protection and preservation means that teaching, research, and third mission activities needs to be diffused throughout the entire higher education system, encompassing all elements of the higher education institutions (governance, teaching, research, outreach, campus operations) and interfaces among them.

However, although many universities worldwide have carried out much research and released reports regarding sustainability, there is still a lack of literature focusing on biodiversity. To broaden the concept of biodiversity, higher education institutions play a vital role in providing knowledge and research to individuals, communities, and society. Classroom offerings in the field promote a wider scale of knowledge to strengthen the linkage between biodiversity and human well-being. These positive contributions from campuses also support urban ecosystems on a local scale and, on larger scales, for cities, society, and the globe.

Thereby this special issue aims at explicitly addressing the current state of the art, delivering good practice examples, identifying drivers, describing challenges, delivering guidance, and developing new approaches to biodiversity management in higher education and meeting the SDGs in the higher education sector (e.g., SDGs 14 and 15).

Topical Areas of the IJSHE Special Issue:

The guest editors of this special issue are soliciting contributions from academia, in particular higher education institutions specialized in biodiversity management, as well as practitioners involved in projects for biodiversity integration within higher education institutions from different countries including, but not limited to, the following topical areas of biodiversity management at higher education institutions:

- Strategic approaches to biodiversity management
- Reporting on and assessment of biodiversity
- Stakeholder involvement and building strategic partnerships for the implementation of biodiversity management
- Organizational capacity building to develop biodiversity management
- Identification of biodiversity related processes within sustainability transitions
- Integration of biodiversity topic into curriculum and research projects
- Drivers and obstacles in implementation
- Differences in biodiversity awareness and integration across countries

Consistent with the aims of IJSHE and in line with the topical areas outlined above, contributions are invited on a range of empirical and conceptual issues, with priority given to papers expanding previous research while addressing challenges and methodologies related to biodiversity management of higher education institutions, taking a holistic approach, or focusing on biodiversity management for a special task or element of the higher education institutions (governance, education, research, outreach, campus activities). Contributions employing innovative and under-used methodological approaches or theoretical frameworks are particularly welcomed as well as elaborated case studies.

Dates & Submissions for special issue:

Please send expressions of interest with an extended abstract of 500 words and full contact details of the authors to the guest editor: Leyla Azizi (leyla.azizi@tu-dresden.de) until **January 31st, 2023**. Full papers are due by the **December 15th, 2023**.

Dates & Submissions for special issue conference track:

To aid in the development and integration of papers intended for the special issue, a conference track “Biodiversity Management in Higher Education Institutions“ at the **1st Euroregional Conference 2023 in St. Marienthal Abbey/Ostritz** (Germany, 16th – 20th October 2023) will be dedicated to this special issue.

The Euroregional Autumn School and Conference (Title: "Transformation - ecological, economic, social and cultural change and how it could/should be managed") of the Academic Coordination Center in the Euroregion Neisse (Academic Coordination Center - ACC) basically aims to identify and network under umbrella topics of the Euroregional research and teaching landscape. The aim behind this is to initiate cross-border, interdisciplinary research, teaching, and transfer projects.

Presenters at this track will have a unique opportunity to receive feedback on their work from researchers and practitioners, both the guest editors, and other participants. Contributions for the conference track are due May 31st, 2023 via the submission system. While participation in the conference is encouraged, it is not required for consideration in the special issue.

Independently, for submissions to the **1st Euroregional Autumn School and Conference 2023**, please send expressions of interest with an extended abstract of 500 words and full contact details of the authors to the guest editor: Leyla Azizi (leyla.azizi@tu-dresden.de) until **May 31st, 2023**. Full papers are due by the **December 15th, 2023**.

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