

ENSU 1000

# Reflective Essay

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Growing up rurally, on a small, family-run organic farm has provided me with many benefits. The most significant impact I have felt from being raised this way would be my connection to the environment. From no cell service to quite literally having my hands and feet in the dirt, I was always in tune with nature. This childhood has formed many habits for me, but my true passion for sustainability developed much more once I began my education at Thompson Rivers University. Growing up came with new responsibilities for me, and in turn a strong feeling that I need to protect the environment.

Environmental sustainability, in my eyes, is contributing to the ecosystem to provide a positive impact on the Earth. Growing up on a farm has instilled the mindset of giving back to the environment by planting, harvesting and rotating crops. However, when I graduated from high school in 2019, I decided to lead my career toward the building industry. It was within the last three years that I really understood that creating a sustainable environment comes from more than just growing and eating farm fresh food. From a young age, my dad was always upgrading to different renewable energy sources on the farm such as solar hot water energy or wood fired boilers. Recently, I have found it very rewarding to discuss the benefits of these systems, and how the performance of the house will change. I have noticed that, as I have progressed in the last few years, and how my passion for sustainability has grown, my interest in the positive impact of renewable energy sources has also increased.

The Architectural and Engineering Technology (ARET) program at TRU has taught me many ways in which the buildings we live, work, and shop in can easily provide a positive impact. From a variety of courses to third party seminars, the significance of promoting change was always a main topic of conversation. I have grown to understand that many different materials can be used in a design, and how they can be applied to reduce carbon footprints. For example, including

recycled materials within insulation, such as glass or plastic, reduces the amount of waste, as well as consumption of new materials. In addition, increasing the amount of insulation used provides a better building envelope that will reduce the energy use of a building. The benefits of that contribute to the overall energy consumption of a building. Similarly, providing photovoltaic or solar panels to a building promotes the use of natural energy sources. These were lessons I learned within the courses I have taken in the last three years that I had never formerly reflected on. In many ways, they proved to me the significance of sustainability. Another lesson I found very important from school was urban city design. I understood previously that the objective of public transportation is to reduce the number of vehicles commuting, which in turn reduces the emission of greenhouse gases. However, after learning about the requirements and techniques that can be used to create well thought-out city designs, my understanding of public transportation has expanded greatly. By providing accessible and safe bus stops as well as multiple routes and frequent transitions, the likelihood of public transportation being used increases significantly. This has taught me that creating designs for public transportation to be appealing to locals is another solution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions within busy cities. The Architectural and Engineering Technology program at TRU has opened my eyes to the possibilities within building and city design that can increase the performance while simultaneously decreasing the emissions and energy consumption.

Through my schooling, as well as personal growth and environmental changes, I have become much more knowledgeable with the significance of environmental sustainability and how I can actively promote change within my lifetime. My upbringing will always play a role in my environmental consciousness as it led me to continuously discover new forms of sustainability. The ARET program was a catalyst for my growing interest and knowledge in sustainability, and it

has led me to pursue a career within the environment. As I constantly evolve and learn, I am confident that my future will always lead toward protecting the environment. The last three years of growth has proved to me that my career can have a positive impact on the environment if I choose to use my knowledge in a beneficial way. As an architectural designer, I plan to make a difference by producing sustainable building designs by implementing step code, energy efficiency and net-zero practices. My experiences have made me eager to become a member of the Green Buildings' Association after graduation and further my education on the subject. With my growing interests, I am assured I will incessantly search for ways I can have an impact. I am a firm believer that, as a society, we can support the natural environment. I strive to be an individual that proves our habits can protect the environment rather than destroy it.