

Written by Luke

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Today (January 20th), it's been announced that UWTSD has won a First Class Award and has been ranked 8th out of 151 universities across the UK and 1st in Wales in the People & Planet University League 2015 – the UK's only comprehensive and independent green ranking of universities.

This is a huge improvement in terms of rankings for UWTSD, with the University seeing a dramatic rise from its 113th position in the 2013 League to 8th in 2015. UWTSD has also been ranked the top green University in Wales, moving from a 3rd Class Degree to a 1st Class Degree award.

The People & Planet University League, an annual ranking by the national student campaign group, assesses the environmental and ethical performance of all universities, awarding First Class 'degrees' to the greenest and Fail to those doing the least to address their environmental and social impacts. UWTSD is one of 30 universities to achieve a 'First' in the 2015 league.

But how has UWTSD managed to dramatically increase its ranking to be named the 8th most effective University in the UK in terms of environment and ethics?

"The answer is simple," says Dr Jane Davidson, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Sustainability and Engagement at UWTSD. "We care about sustainability; although delivering it has meant a fundamental review of what we do and how we do it across the university – its culture, campuses, curricula and communities. We believe that universities should actively ensure their graduates become responsible citizens and creative problem solvers that the uncertain world we live in demands, so we reflected this in our strategic plan.

"We joined the HEA Green Academy for inspiration and created our own virtual institute INSPIRE – Institute for Sustainable Practice, Innovation and Resource Effectiveness in 2012 to lead our systemic approach. We identified staff capabilities and interests through a staff skills audit and have redefined our academic offer with every module going through the INSPIRE gateway. We carried out a curriculum audit this summer and found that all our faculties and schools are delivering sustainability throughout their curriculum – and have an appetite for more.

"We are still at an early stage of the journey, but have now developed systems in all areas of

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the university's activity, so we know where we're going and we have a pretty good idea how long it will take us to get there," adds Dr Davidson. "With the active support of the Vice-Chancellor, the governors, senior managers, students and the inspirational Sustainability Committee members, we are approaching 2015 re-invigorated by this award which demonstrates that embedding sustainability within the university is everybody's business and to everybody's benefit."

Rosie Scannell, an INSPIRE intern studying at UWTSD Lampeter is equally proud of the University's achievement. "This amazing leap in the league table is testament to the hard work and determination of UWTSD to improve its own sustainability levels," she says.

"After doing environmental work within the university and Students' Union for the past three years, I am both delighted and proud that the hard work and persistence of staff and students has started to show," adds Rosie. "The work we have done is crucial to the development of the university, both for existing students as well as any future students. Furthermore, it is important for students across the university because it is the first step in ensuring that staff and students take what they have learnt through the UWTSD's sustainability work and hopefully apply it to their own future careers and lives."

Hannah Smith, who compiled the People & Planet University League, said:

"University of Wales Trinity Saint David is proving to be one of the UK's leading universities for environmental and ethical standards. People & Planet celebrate their commitment to meeting the expectations of their students with skills and understanding for sustainable development (2); for working with their students, staff and community to bring about a culture of change in social and environmental practice; for working on sustainability across the board - from curriculum to catering - and for its leadership for sustainable development."

"University of Wales Trinity Saint David has rocketed up the People & Planet University League, we're seriously impressed!" continues Hannah Smith. "We've witnessed a vision for sustainable development brought to fruition in a matter of years; Jane, the staff and the students at UWTSD are showing us what can be achieved when a university takes stock of their impact on our communities and the wider world. By resourcing their staff, listening to their students and understanding environmental issues right across the university, UWTSD are stepping up to a unique opportunity to meet student demand for the skills and understanding they need to tackle the biggest challenges of our time and we can't wait to see the results in years to come!"

"It's the progressive universities ranking top 30 in the league that are setting an example of what can be achieved in higher education, responding with speed to the oncoming challenges of climate change and global inequality," adds Ms Smith. "These are the universities equipping their graduates with the skills they need to tackle these threats."

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At the end of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2004-14) 44% of all UK universities now demonstrate a high level commitment to integrate education for sustainability across the curriculum (3). The universities ranked show a 3.4% carbon reduction against last year's emissions.

For further information regarding UWTSD's commitment to sustainability as well as case studies and comments, please visit www.uwtsd.ac.uk/inspire