

As the global population continues to increase at an exponential rate, with expected numbers to reach 9.8 billion by 2050 (United Nations, 2017), the tourism industry is faced with the growing threat of overtourism (Dodds & Butler, 2019). In recent decades, there has been a growing consensus in the industry towards the need for sustainable tourism development (Dodds & Butler, 2019; Hall, 2019). Yet, despite the growing support for sustainable tourism development, there has been a lack of consensus surrounding its application and thus limited adoption in practice (Dodds & Butler, 2019; Hall, 2019). Academics have argued that this may be due in part to the functioning of our education systems (Beveridge et al., 2015). The current education system has been frequently criticized for being a one-size-fits-all model that is metrics focused with a continuously increasing workload at a continuously increasing pace (Holt, 2002; O'Neill, 2014; Smith, 2017; Van der Sluis, 2020). As a result, students and professors often suffer from mental and physical stress related illnesses with a declining ability for innovation, creativity, critical thinking, and curiosity (O'Neill, 2014; Smith, 2017). The main culprit, however, is the underwhelming inclusion of sustainability in post-secondary curriculum (Beveridge et al., 2015). Thus, new graduates are ill equipped with the knowledge and skills to implement sustainable practices and to achieve international sustainability benchmarks.

However, an emerging movement, known as the Slow Movement, promises practical and functional implementation of sustainable principles through its holistic and direct approach (Heitmann et al., 2011). The Slow Movement is a social movement characterized by a cultural shift away from the rapid speed of westernized consumption and a movement towards a more mindful, sustainable, and authentic lifestyle (Osbaldiston, 2013; Honoré, 2004; Heitmann et al., 2011). Slow cities are an emerging branch of the Slow Movement that abide by seven founding principles: energy and environment, infrastructure, social cohesion, quality of urban life, agriculture and tourism, hospitality and awareness policies, and partnership (Heitmann et al., 2011). A paradigm shift towards the Slow Movement philosophy will involve the reimagining of future cities and hospitality businesses from what we know them as today. What would this future hospitality concept look like? The answer to this question exists in our newly designed brand: SLO.

SLO is a multi-disciplinary institute of higher education applying principles of the Slow Movement to academics and student life. SLO is a reimagined hospitality concept that aims to become a hub of innovation within future cities and offer an experiential model for learning. Its mission is to instil values of the Slow Movement within students through academics, work, and lifestyle. While it is positioned in multiple existing markets, including sustainable tourism, educational tourism, agricultural tourism, and traditional universities with sustainability related programs, SLO University provides an affordable and accessible hospitality experience for those seeking long-term stays, immersive experiences, and educational opportunities. Our community members are a diverse group of individuals from all walks of life that share in common a desire of a sustainable and prosperous future. During their stay, SLO community members will engage in a multi-disciplinary self-guided curriculum supervised by industry thought leaders. Class discussions and projects are founded in slow and sustainable values and focus on practical and collaborative community projects that provide students with the tools to continue to make actionable change once they graduate. In addition to education, the SLO University experiences allows students and instructors a balanced life with a flexible schedule geared to encourage time to connect with oneself, others, and nature. In addition to the practicality and need for this institution, SLO University is a feasible business model. With an initial investment of \$230 million (CAD), SLO is projected to achieve a 6-year pay-back period and an additional 87% ROI by Year 10.

A fundamental shift in society can occur as people around the world engage with SLO and its learning opportunities resulting in environmental protection, mental wellbeing, cultural authenticity, among many more benefits. As SLO will offer the facilities, resources, and programs to facilitate transformative experiences for its students, it is a feasible solution to the dire issues facing society and the planet with the power to influence entire cities, leading them into the future.

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