

The Roles of Universities as Drivers for Climate Action and the Sustainable Development Goals

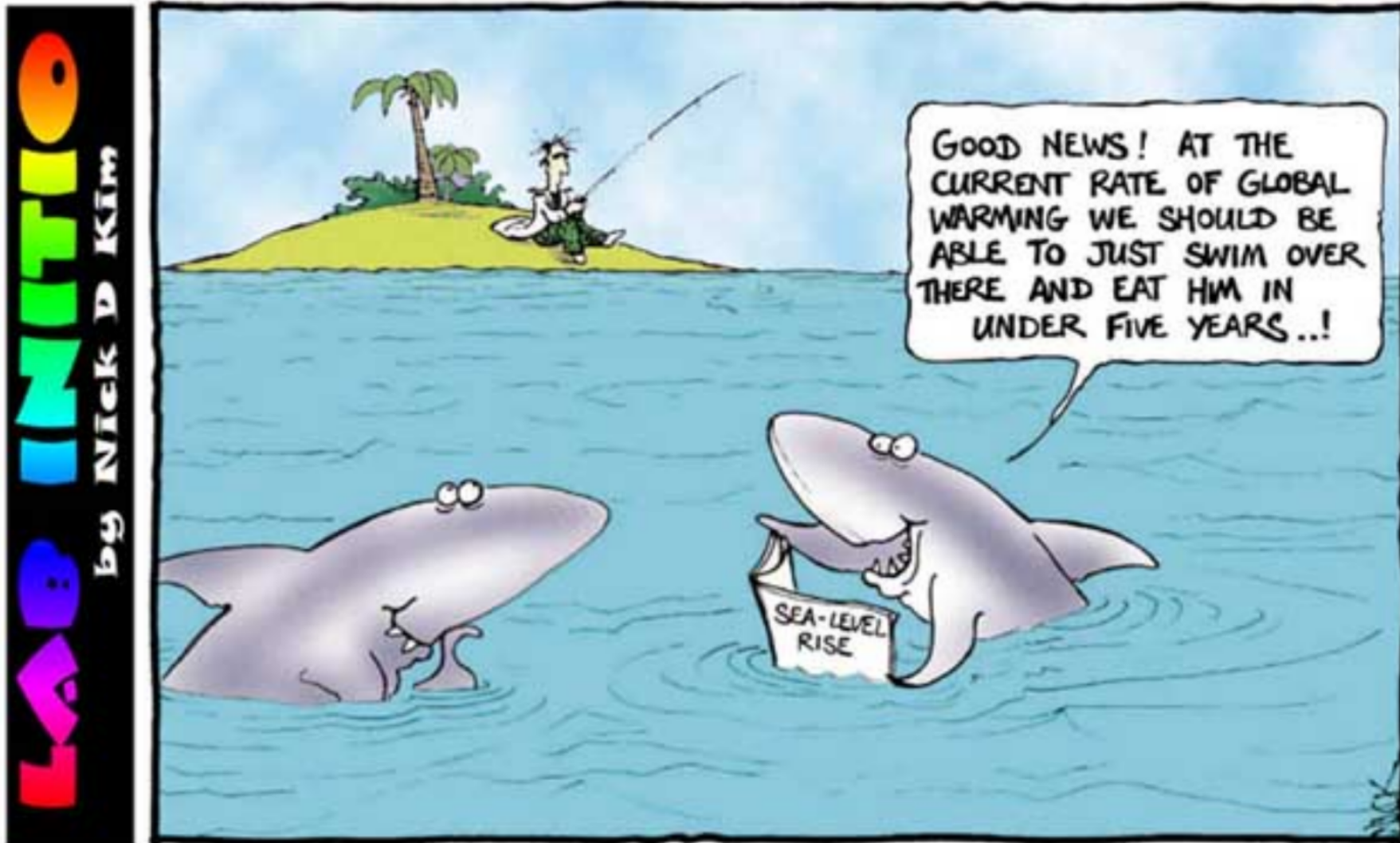
Hans-Peter Winkelmann

Director, CLIMATE CAMPUS



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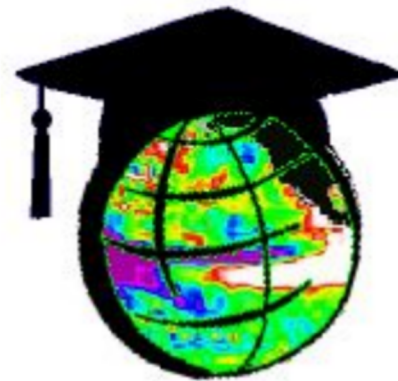
When we are talking about climate change...



...let's talk about universities!



What do universities have to do with climate change?



The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is quite clear about that:

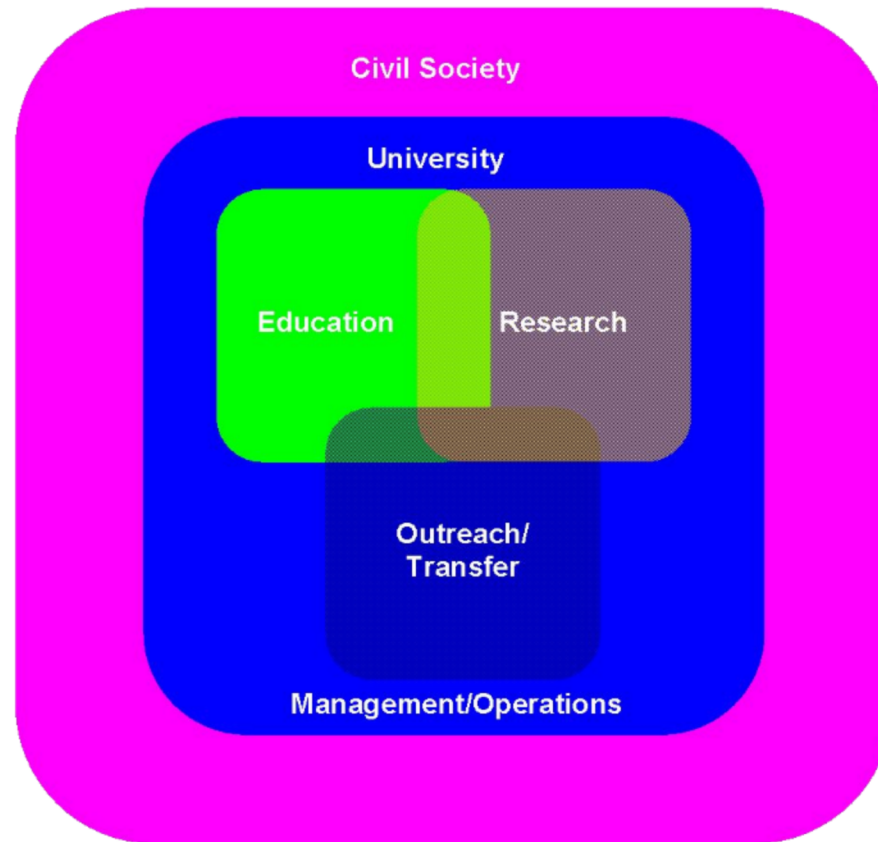
“Collaboration between educational, training and research institutions would help to enable the formal exchange of experience and lessons learned among different institutions of the respective regions. Universities, tertiary centres and research centres have a special role to play in educating and building the capacity of stakeholders in key sectors, and climate change and adaptation issues should be integrated into education curricula.”

Let's have a look at the three core functions of universities first:

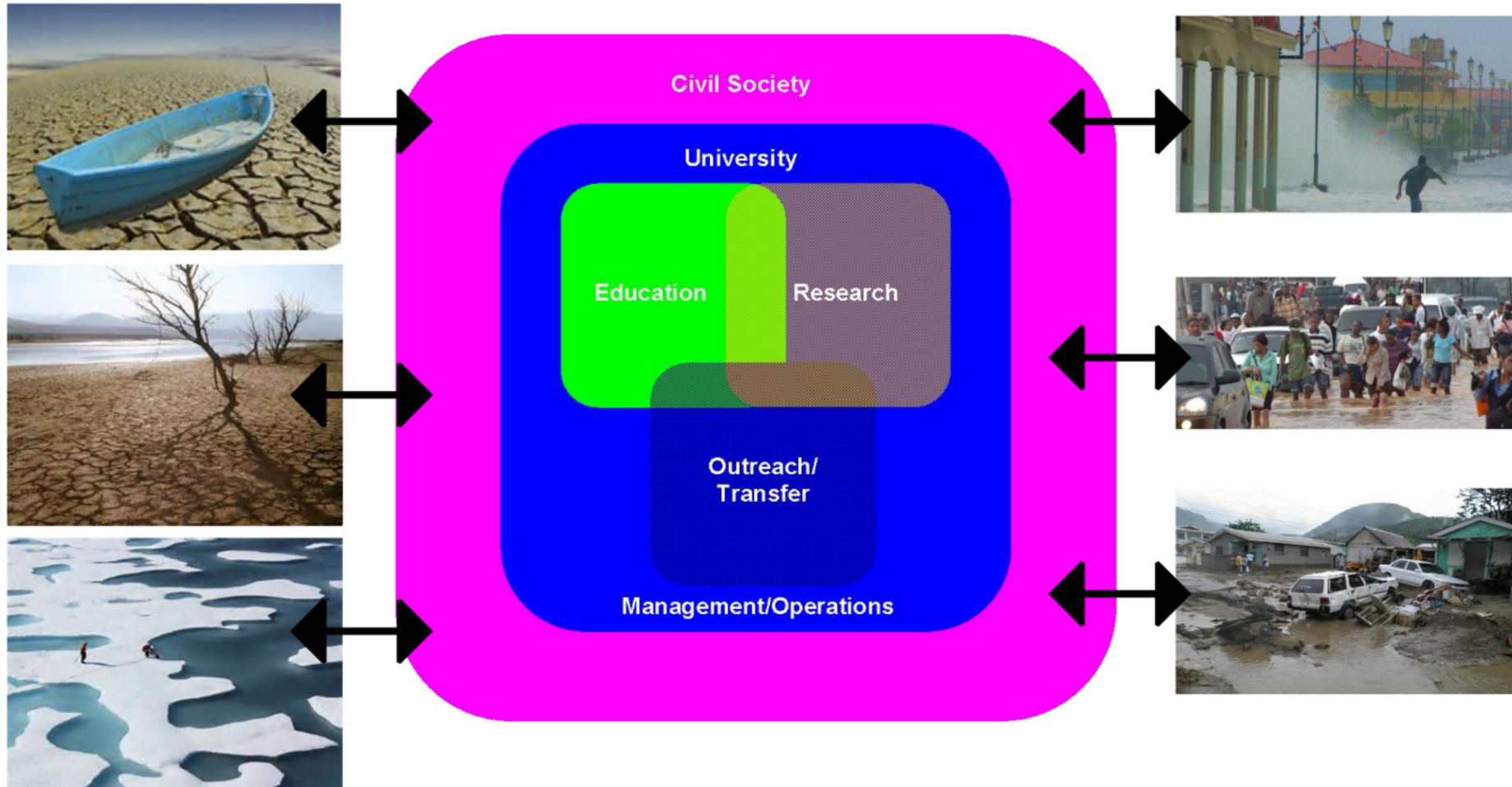
- Research
- Teaching
- Transfer and outreach



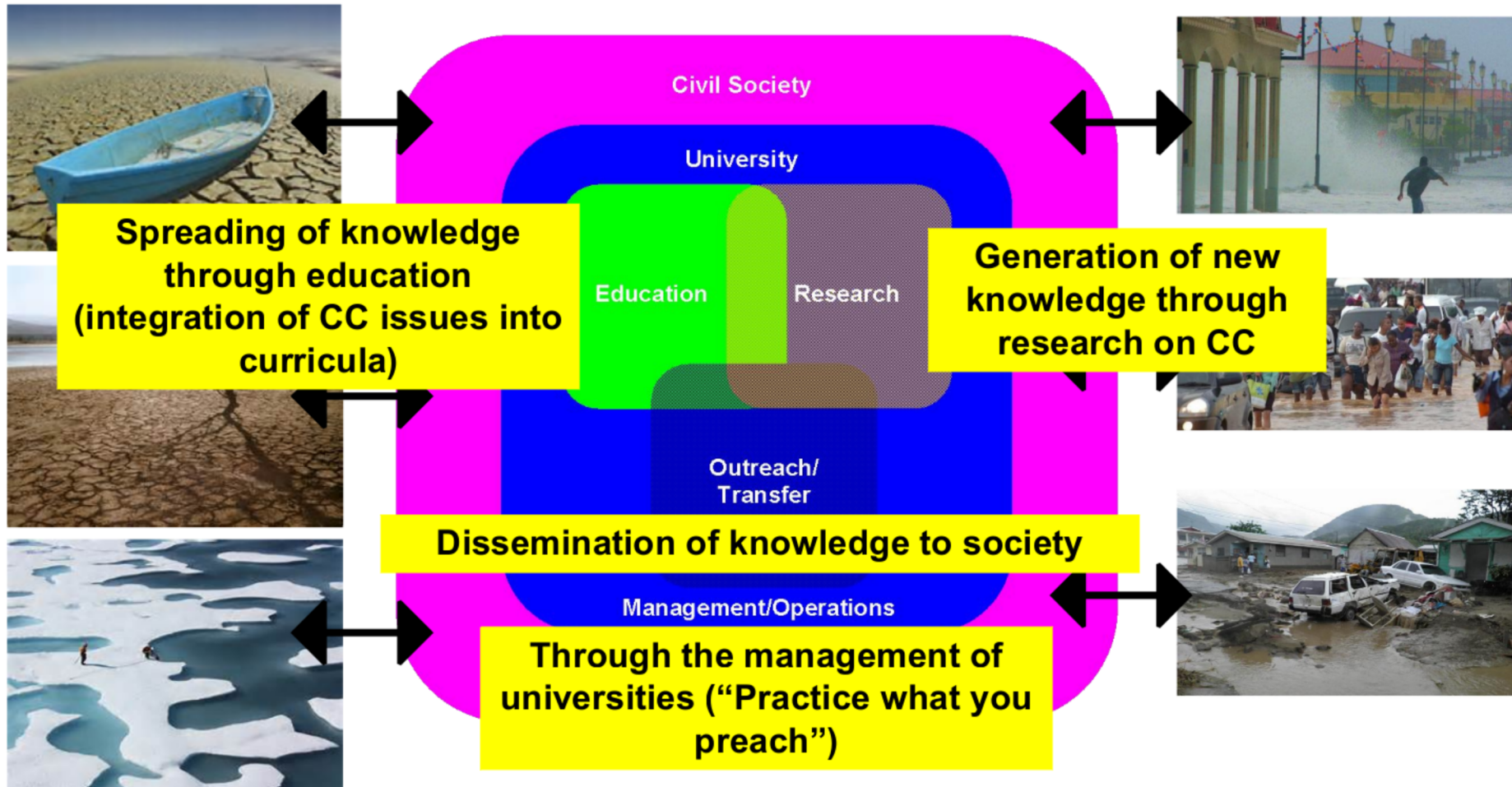
Let's look at the role of universities in society in view of the core functions of universities



What is the role of universities in society in view of the impacts of climate change?



What is the role of universities in society in view of the impacts of climate change?



Universities have a particularly important role to play:

- because of their traditional mission in research and teaching,
- because of their increasing role in the complex process of innovation, along with their other contributions to economic competitiveness and social cohesion,
- because of their role in the life of the community and in regional development.

➔ Universities have a special responsibility for society on the **local level** and should play an important role as **local knowledge centers** for climate change mitigation and adaptation to help society to meet the challenge of climate change.

Regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation, universities are critical social multipliers in achieving sustainable production and consumption patterns.

Universities are important actors in the community, as employer, purchaser and service user.

Beside the teaching and learning function of universities the good housekeeping of universities becomes more and more decisive:

“Practice what you preach!”

8,000 universities worldwide can become models for society in the pursuance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and tackling climate change.

140 million students are critical agents for a safer future!

The challenge:

Mainstreaming the environment and climate change into universities!

What do we mean by mainstreaming of environment and climate issues?

Mainstreaming the environment and climate change into all university programmes contributes to successful and long-lasting results. It provides tools and mechanisms to reduce vulnerabilities, build resilience, identify opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and contribute to the transformation to an inclusive green economy.

How can universities realize mainstreaming environment and climate change?

Universities can put mainstreaming environment and climate change into practice in different ways:

- In the area of research through the generation of new knowledge on climate change mitigation and adaptation,
- in the area of curriculum and teaching through the incorporation of environment and climate change issues and options in their teaching activities (“greening the curricula”),
- in the area of physical operations at university campuses committed to sustainability work to reduce the institution's carbon footprint and demonstrate practical examples of sustainable living (“greening the campus”),
- in the transfer of know-how and technology to society.

MAINSTREAMING CLIMATE CHANGE INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

Knowledge on
Climate Change

Input:

Students

Research
Education
Transfer

Output:

- New knowledge on climate change
- New employees with capabilities to address climate change
- Solutions for mitigation and adaptation

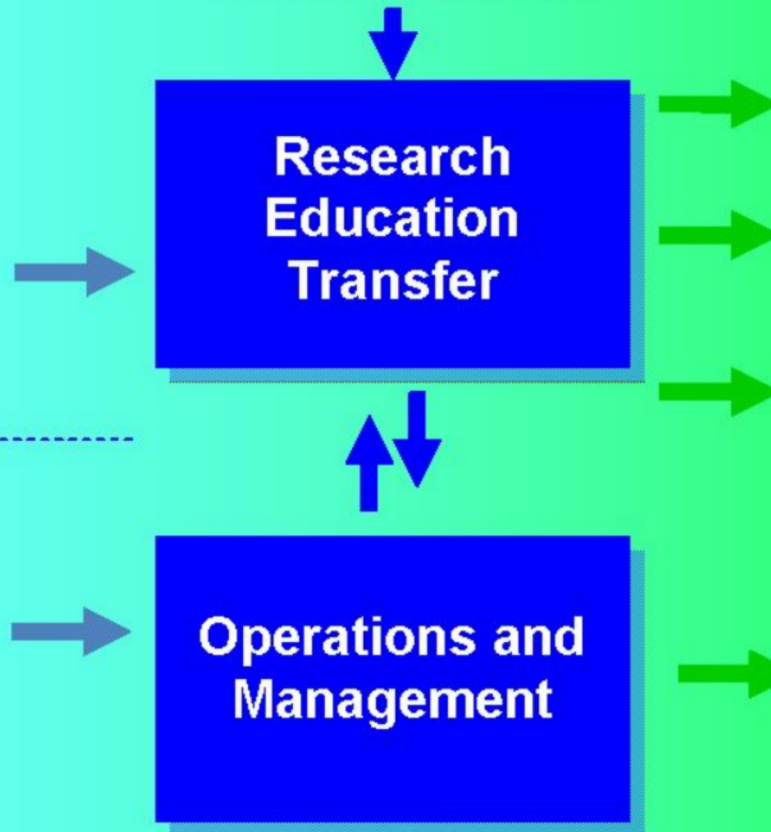
Academic level

Operational level

Resources,
e.g. energy

Operations and
Management

- Reduced emissions, e.g. CO₂



Let's discuss:

Think about your own university:

- How could your own university generate new knowledge on climate change?**
- How could your own university spread this new knowledge through education?**
- How could your own university better demonstrate sustainable living and working?**
- How could your own university be better managed in a climate friendly way?**
- How could your own university disseminate the new knowledge on climate change to society?**

Look at the following questions from the student's perspective:

- How could universities enable students to contribute to a climate friendly future?**
- What new key competences are needed to contribute to a climate friendly future and how can they be acquired?**
- How can students acquire new knowledge and skills on climate change?**
- What could students in general do to help universities to become climate friendly?**

International initiatives emphasising the role of Higher Education in sustainable development

1990 ... Talloires Declaration (ULSF)

1993 ... Koyoto Declaration (IAU)

1993 ... Copernicus Charter (CRE)

Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP)

(A type II partnership formed out of the World Summit on Sustainable Development involving all key HESD networks and initiatives: Copernicus Campus, ULSF, IAU and UNESCO)



'Nobody can get by on his own'

Thank you for sharing my ideas with you!

