PRME
an initiative of the
United Nations Global Compact

2025 Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) Report

College of Interdisciplinary Studies

Zayed University

December 2025

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About the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)

The Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) is a United Nations-supported initiative founded in 2007 that aims to raise the profile of sustainability in their classrooms through Seven Principles focused on serving society and safeguarding our planet.

PRME engages business and management schools to ensure they provide future leaders with the skills needed to balance economic and sustainability goals, while drawing attention to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aligning academic institutions with the work of the UN Global Compact. Driven by its mission to transform management education, PRME equips today's business students with the understanding and ability to deliver change tomorrow. As a voluntary initiative with over 800 signatories worldwide, PRME has become the largest organized relationship between the United Nations and management-related higher education institutions.

The PRME initiative was launched to nurture responsible leaders of the future. Never has this task been more important. Bold leadership and innovative thinking are needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Antonio Guterres

Secretary-General (2017 - Present)

United Nations

Principles of PRME

Purpose
We advance responsible management education to foster inclusive prosperity in a world of thriving ecosystems.

Values
We place organizational responsibility and accountability to society and the planet at the core of what we do.

Teach
We transform our learning environments by integrating responsible management concepts and practices into our curriculum and pedagogy.

Research
We study people, organizations, institutions, and the state of the world to inspire responsible management and education practice.

Partner
We engage people from business, government, civil society, and academia to advance responsible and accountable management education and practice.

Practice
We adopt responsible and accountable management principles in our own governance and operations.

Share
We share our successes and failures with each other to enable our collective learning and best live our common values and purpose.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In September 2015, all 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted a plan for achieving a better future for all – laying out a path over the next 15 years to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and protect our planet. At the heart of Agenda 2030 are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 related targets that address the most important economic, social, environmental and governance challenges of our time. The SDGs clearly define the world we want – applying to all nations and leaving no one behind. Successful implementation of the SDGs will require all players to champion this agenda; the role of higher education is critical to this.

Getting Started

This section provides foundational information about the College of Interdisciplinary Studies, Zayed University, including key details and basic institutional data.

Mission

Zayed University: Contributing to the social, cultural, and economic advancement of the UAE and beyond through education and research, inspiring open and robust inquiry, a reverence for learning, and a commitment to service.

The College of Interdisciplinary Studies: Driving bold interdisciplinary programs, research, and partnerships to tackle complex challenges shaping the UAE and the region.

Vision

Zayed University: To be an educational force, embodying Sheikh Zayed's timeless values and principles into academic and research excellence.

The College of Interdisciplinary Studies: A global leader in interdisciplinary education and research, driving innovation for a sustainable, inclusive, knowledge-powered UAE.

Strategy

CIS-Strategy   View document ☐ Download document

Strategic Alignment

The College of Interdisciplinary Studies (CIS) refreshed its strategy in November 2025, expanding its remit to contribute more broadly at the institutional level. The CIS Strategy Update articulates a vision of becoming 'an internationally recognized leader in innovative cross-disciplinary learning and research' (p. 1). This vision aligns structurally with the Seven Principles of PRME by embedding responsibility, sustainability, and societal impact within institutional purpose, programme design, research priorities, governance, and external engagement.

Purpose

The strategy's emphasis on interdisciplinarity, systems thinking, and complex problem-solving directly reinforces PRME's commitment to advancing responsible management education that fosters inclusive prosperity in thriving ecosystems. By positioning higher education as a vehicle for addressing societal and ecological challenges aligned with UAE national priorities, CIS affirms that the purpose of management and interdisciplinary education is inseparable from broader public and planetary well-being. The commitment to developing a university-wide, interdisciplinary undergraduate curriculum that fosters systems thinking (p. 1) strengthens graduates' ability to navigate uncertainty, complexity, and long-term impact.

Values

CIS's stated vision — to be 'a global leader in interdisciplinary education, research, and innovation advancing a sustainable, inclusive, knowledge-based UAE' (p. 2) — reflects the normative foundations of PRME's Values principle. Sustainability, inclusion, ethical leadership, and societal progress are embedded as strategic anchors rather than peripheral themes. The Social and Sustainable Enterprise focus area (p. 3), which advances education and research to generate measurable social and environmental impact, demonstrates how these values are operationalized in curriculum and research design.

Teach and Research

The College's dual role — as both a college in its own right and a catalyst for Zayed University-wide interdisciplinarity (pp. 2–3) — aligns closely with PRME's 'Teach' and 'Research' principles. Through challenge- and problem-based learning, applied research addressing UAE and global priorities, and the formation of cross-college research clusters focused on grand challenges (pp. 4–5), CIS integrates responsible management concepts into both curriculum and scholarly inquiry. The strategy's emphasis on 'Connecting Ideas to Real-World Impact' (p. 2) reflects an educational model that links theory, evidence, and application in ways consistent with PRME's call for transformative learning environments and research that informs responsible practice.

Partner

The strategy's commitment to industry and government partnerships (pp. 2–3), policy analysis for public and commercial partners (p. 5), and alignment with national frameworks such as *We the UAE 2030* and *UAE Centennial 2071* (p. 7) demonstrate alignment with PRME's Partner principle. CIS positions itself as a bridge between academia, government, industry, and community, ensuring that interdisciplinary education and research contribute to tangible societal outcomes and informed public decision-making.

Practice

The governance model outlined on p. 6, including structured oversight through the Interdisciplinary Steering Committee and reporting mechanisms tied to interdisciplinary metrics, reflects alignment with PRME's Practice principle. By embedding interdisciplinarity and accountability within institutional structures, CIS aligns organisational processes with the values it seeks to advance in its teaching and research. This coherence between institutional conduct and educational mission strengthens its commitment to responsible management education.

Share

The strategy's emphasis on collaboration across colleges, external engagement, and knowledge exchange contributes to PRME's Share principle. By institutionalizing cross-college coordination, fostering partnerships beyond the University, and contributing to regional and national conversations on sustainability and innovation, CIS positions itself as an active participant in collective learning. Strategic alignment with national development agendas further reinforces the outward-facing dimension of its work.

In sum, the *CIS Strategy Update* embeds responsibility and sustainability across institutional purpose, academic programming, research priorities, governance structures, and national engagement. Alignment with PRME is therefore structural rather than symbolic. The strategy positions CIS as a driver of responsible, interdisciplinary education at Zayed University and as a contributor to broader societal transformation in the UAE.

Institutional History

Zayed University is a national and regional leader in educational innovation. Founded in 1998 and proudly bearing the name of the late Founder of the Nation, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, this flagship institution has met the President's high expectations. Today, Zayed University has two modern campuses in Dubai and Abu Dhabi that welcome both national and international students.

PRME History at Zayed University

Zayed University first became a signatory to PRME in 2017 through the College of Business, under the coordination of Dr Wasseem Abaza. The following year, the 8th PRME MENA Regional Forum took place at Zayed University, with the theme 'Social Enterprise in Support of the UN SDGs'. Following a restructuring of the University's colleges in 2021, ZU became a 'non-communicating' signatory for a short period, until February 2023, when the relationship was reactivated through the newly founded College of Interdisciplinary Studies, with Professor Jeremy Williams becoming the new PRME coordinator.

Institutional Context and Reporting Scope

This SIP report, therefore, reflects the activities and developments undertaken by CIS from February 2023 onward, with a primary focus on the 2024 calendar year. CIS submits this report as a college-level SIP, recognizing PRME as a framework for reflection, learning, and continuous improvement in responsible management education. The initiatives described herein represent progress made during a period of consolidation and experimentation.

Graduates & Enrollment

2024 Statistics	Number
Graduates	—
Faculty & Staff at the University	990
Faculty & Staff at the Institution	163
Student Enrollment at the University	8733
Student Enrollment at the Institution	1278
Undergraduate Attendance	1278

Degrees Offered

Bachelor Programs

Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Computational Systems

Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Business Transformation

Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Social Innovation

Purpose

We advance responsible management education to foster inclusive prosperity in a world of thriving ecosystems.

Letter of Renewed Commitment

College of Interdisciplinary Studies   كلية الدراسات متداخلة التخصصات

ZAYED UNIVERSITY
جـامـعـة زايـد

To:
PRME Board
c/o PRME Secretariat
United Nations Global Compact Office 685 3rd Avenue, 12th Floor
New York, New York 10017

16 February 2026

Commitment to the Principles for Responsible Management Education

As a higher education institution dedicated to the preparation and development of current and future leaders, Zayed University reaffirms its strong commitment to the implementation of the Principles for Responsible Management Education. In alignment with our institutional mission and strategic capabilities, we will initially prioritize the Principles most relevant to our academic and organizational context. We further commit to providing regular and transparent updates on our progress to our stakeholders and to engaging in the exchange of effective practices with peer academic institutions that support these Principles.

We acknowledge that our institutional policies, governance structures, and operational practices must exemplify the values, ethics, and professional standards that we endeavor to instill in our students.

Moreover, we encourage academic institutions and professional associations to adopt, promote, and support these Principles in order to advance responsible management education globally.

Prof. Paul Hopkinson
Dean, College of Interdisciplinary Studies
Zayed University

Professor Paul Hopkinson, Dean, College of Interdisciplinary Studies, Zayed University.

✏️ Definition of Purpose

We develop students' capabilities to become future generators of sustainable value for business and society, and to work toward an inclusive, sustainable global economy.

CIS understands that the purpose of management education is inseparable from societal and ecological well-being. During the reporting period, the College continued to advance an educational philosophy that positions enterprise as a means to contribute positively to communities, economies, and ecosystems, rather than as an end in itself.

Across its undergraduate programmes, CIS emphasized the development of capabilities beyond technical competence. These include systems thinking, ethical reasoning, critical reflection, and the ability to work collaboratively across disciplinary and cultural boundaries. Courses and learning activities were designed to encourage students to interrogate dominant narratives of economic success and to explore alternative conceptions of value creation aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Global Compact principles.

In 2024, this purpose was enacted through curriculum design that integrates sustainability, social justice, and responsible leadership across a range of subject areas, including business transformation, social innovation, computational systems, and sustainable enterprise. Students were encouraged to engage with real-world challenges through project-based learning, applied research tasks, and participation in external events and forums. These experiences were intended to help students connect theoretical concepts to practical contexts and to reflect on their own roles as emerging professionals and citizens.

CIS also sought to extend learning beyond formal coursework by supporting student participation in conferences, workshops, and dialogue-based events related to sustainability and environmental education. Such activities reinforced the College's commitment to preparing graduates who can engage thoughtfully with complexity and uncertainty, and who are motivated to contribute to inclusive and sustainable forms of economic activity.

Twelve CIS students presented at 12th World Environmental Education Congress (February 2024) in Abu Dhabi, accompanied by Dr Suzanna ElMassah, Dr Leonard Chirenje, and Dr Jeremy Williams.

Institutional Engagement

26% - 50%

of faculty at the College of Interdisciplinary Studies actively contribute to our work with PRME, advancing responsible management education, or addressing sustainable development challenges through their work.

Values

We place organizational responsibility and accountability to society and the planet at the core of what we do.

✏ How We Define Values

We incorporate global social responsibility values into our academic activities and curricula, as reflected in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

The integration of global social responsibility values into teaching, learning, and institutional practice is a core commitment of CIS. During 2024, the College continued to make these values explicit within curricula and pedagogical approaches, recognizing that values are conveyed not only through content but also through the ways learning is designed and facilitated.

Courses across CIS programmes incorporated themes of ethical responsibility, social inclusion, environmental stewardship, and intergenerational equity. Faculty framed disciplinary knowledge within broader societal contexts, prompting students to consider the ethical implications of decision-making in business, policy, and organisational settings. This approach aligns with CIS's broader commitment to interdisciplinary learning to address complex sustainability challenges.

At an institutional level, CIS demonstrated its commitment to PRME values through active engagement in regional and international responsible management education initiatives. Hosting the 11th PRME Middle East Chapter Regional Forum in December 2024 provided a visible expression of these values, creating a platform for dialogue on climate leadership, sustainability education, and the role of higher education in advancing responsible management practices. Student involvement in the moderation and organisation of Forum sessions reinforced the College's emphasis on inclusive participation and shared responsibility.

CIS recognizes that embedding values is an ongoing process that requires continual reflection and adjustment. During the reporting period, the College used PRME as a reference point for evaluating existing practices and for identifying areas where values could be more clearly articulated or more effectively enacted.

Who Champions Responsible Management Education at Our Institution

- ❖ Interdisciplinary efforts across the College
- ❖ Student-led Sustainability Club
- ❖ Disciplinary efforts within the College

Student Voices

The following narrative demonstrates how CIS has influenced students' academic journey and personal growth.

Sofía Gattini, BS Social Innovation graduate, 2025:

"From my experience as a CIS student, PRME creates real opportunities for students to actively engage with responsible management beyond the classroom. Through PRME initiatives, I participated in structured programs, including the PRME Global Ambassador role for the Middle East, which provided continuous training in sustainable development, ethical leadership, and impact-driven decision-making. These initiatives push students to apply what they learn by developing concrete ideas and presenting solutions rooted in ethics and sustainability. Experiences like this strengthen students' skills, global exposure, and professional credibility. I believe that if CIS aims to continue building a strong, values-driven student body, PRME offers meaningful opportunities that empower students to grow into responsible future leaders."

(From left to right) Sofía Gattini, Professor Omid Ashari, Shanzila Ahmed and Fatima Binkhusaif, at the 11th PRME Middle East Chapter Regional Forum, Zayed University, Dubai (December 2024).

Shanzila Ahmed, BS Business Transformation graduate, 2025:

"At CIS, responsible management education became real for me — not a theory, but a way to make decisions. In the Economics and Environmental Economy & Policy courses, we developed business strategies that focused on profitability while meeting sustainability goals, our simulations making the trade-offs and long-term costs visible. Professors helped connect climate urgency to practical action, showing how regulation, climate disruption, and stakeholder trust shape a business's survival. That foundation gave me the confidence to start building a sustainable enterprise while still pursuing my university studies. It's how we began Carbon2Capital: a venture that humanizes carbon footprints and turns sustainability into something people and businesses can actually act on."

(From left to right) Arthur Diniz, Maryam Alabbar, Shanzila Ahmed and Sohazur Islam Sozib, co-founders of Carbon2Capital.

## Aisha Lihwaidi, BS Computation Systems graduate, 2025:

"As a CIS graduate, my experience at the university played a significant role in shaping both my academic mindset and personal development. One of the most impactful aspects of my journey was the strong emphasis on self-learning and collaboration in the classroom. Rather than relying solely on traditional lectures, CIS encouraged students to take ownership of their learning through research, discussion, group projects, and problem-based tasks. This approach pushed me to think independently, question assumptions, and engage more deeply with real-world issues. Collaboration was equally crucial. Working closely with peers from diverse backgrounds exposed me to different perspectives and ways of thinking, which strengthened my communication skills and broadened my understanding of ethical decision-making and social responsibility. These experiences nurtured my critical thinking skills, sharpened my analytical abilities, and helped me approach challenges with a more responsible, reflective, and solution-oriented mindset. Overall, CIS did not only equip me with academic knowledge, but also instilled values aligned with responsible management education, such as accountability, ethical awareness, and teamwork, which continue to influence my professional and personal journey today."

(From left to right) Dr Jeremy Williams, Alia Ahli, Fatima Binkhusaif, Aisha Lihwaidi, and Fatma Al-Suwaidi, representing CIS at the 24th Inter-College Emirates Environmental Public Speaking Competition organized by the Emirates Environmental Group.

Student Awards

Faculty, staff and students in CIS and the broader ZU community were very proud to learn that the ZU Sustainability Club were crowned Regional Winners and Global Winner of the 2024 PGS Sustainability Awards, during a special ceremony session at the 2024 PRME Global Forum. The purpose of the PRME Global Students Sustainability Awards is to honor outstanding student-led initiatives within the PRME community that demonstrate exceptional levels of innovation and impact in their actions toward the advancement of Responsible Management Education and the Sustainable Development Goals.
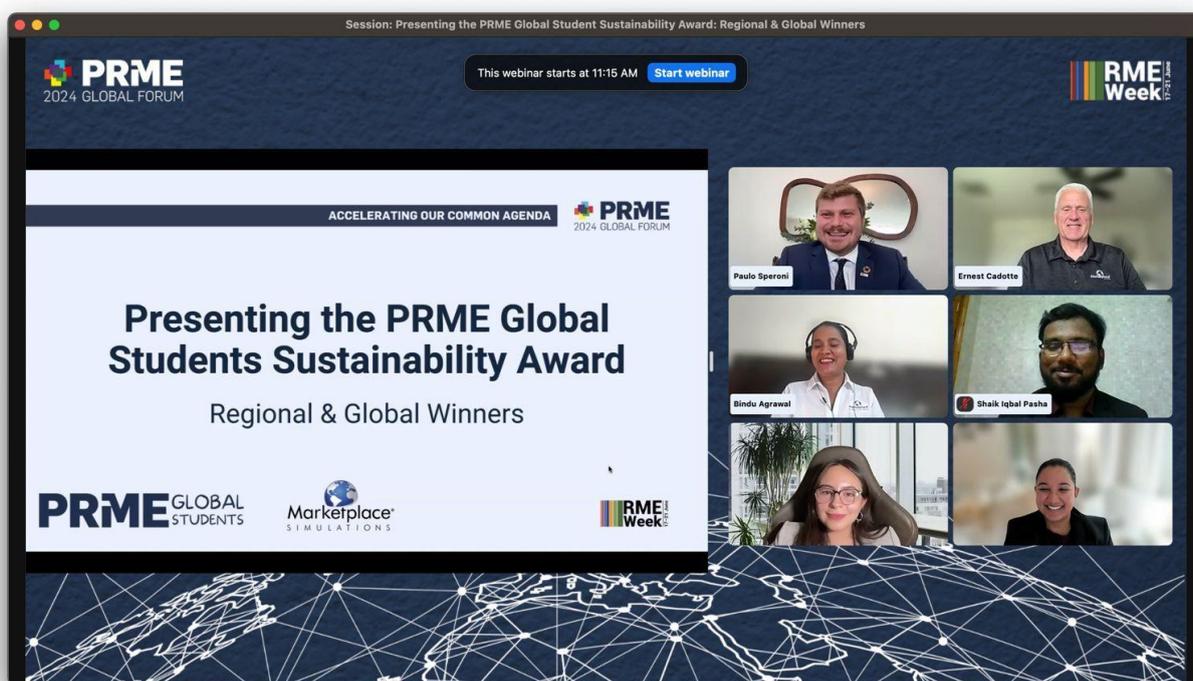
Club Vice-President, Sofía Gattini (pictured bottom left), accepted the prize on behalf of club members.

The mission of the ZU Sustainability Club:

To empower students with the knowledge and skills to champion sustainability, inspired by COP28. We bridge academia and industry, promoting practical environmental advocacy and sustainable practices across all majors, in line with the UAE's Net Zero 2050 vision. Our aim is to foster a proactive community of future leaders committed to making a positive impact on the planet.

The ZU Sustainability Club was awarded a USD2000 prize as Global Winner. During the reporting period, the College used PRME as a reference point for evaluating existing practices and for identifying areas where values could be more clearly articulated or more effectively enacted.

Projects and Initiatives undertaken included:

1. Monthly SDG-related Company Collaborations
2. COP28 Simulation Student Participation in the British University in Egypt in collaboration with the UNDP (30 students)
3. COP28 Participation as UAE youth delegates
4. EXPO Road to COP28 Participation
5. Higher Education Climate Dialogues (HECD) conference participation
6. 'Road to COP 28' Workshop Series in collaboration with the Environmental Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD)
7. Formed partnerships with key organizations like Environmental Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD), Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCAE), and others, enhancing the club's outreach and impact.
8. Launch of the Bachelor of Science in Sustainable Enterprise at Zayed University, highly supported and endorsed by the club.
9. Participation in National and International Competitions related to sustainability awareness and action, sustainable development, and advancement of the SDGs.

Student Awareness

26% - 50% of students at CIS are aware that we are a PRME Signatory Member.

Student Engagement

26% - 50% of students at CIS actively contribute to our work with PRME, advancing RME, or addressing sustainable development challenges through their work.

Teach

We transform our learning environments by integrating responsible management concepts and practices into our curriculum and pedagogy.

✎ How We Define Teach

We create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

CIS prioritized pedagogical approaches that support active, reflective, and experiential learning. The College's interdisciplinary structure provides a foundation for learning designs that encourage students to engage with sustainability challenges from multiple perspectives.

Across its programmes, CIS adopted learning methods that focused on student agency, collaboration, and engagement with real-world contexts. Teaching approaches in 2024 included project-based learning, case-based discussions, simulation exercises, and design-oriented activities that required students to apply conceptual knowledge to practical challenges.

Pedagogical experimentation was guided by an understanding that responsible management education must be iterative and adaptive. Drawing on the PRME Impactful Five (i5) pedagogical framework, CIS emphasized learning designs that support meaningful learning, active engagement, social interaction, and iterative development. Rather than relying solely on fixed curricula or prescriptive learning outcomes, the College encouraged reflective teaching practices and ongoing refinement of learning designs.

Courses that support RME and the SDGs

CIS has a Bachelor of Science degree program in Sustainable Enterprise awaiting final approval, with a program launch schedule for the Fall semester of 2026. During the interim, several courses that form a part of the proposed new program have been offered as a Minor in Sustainable Enterprise for interested students enrolled in the Social Innovation, Business Transformation, and Computational Systems majors. A selection of these courses is detailed below:

Principles of Sustainability (ISU-202)

The course examines the complex relationship between humans and the natural environment. The three pillars of sustainability (society, economy and environment) will be discussed through the holistic approach of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how they might be achieved while remaining within planetary boundaries. Topics covered fall within four broad units: Becoming a Sustainability Professional, Earth Systems, Human Welfare, and Levers of Change for a Sustainable Future. Students will apply appreciative inquiry methods to explore local examples of sustainable enterprises. **All 17 SDGs are addressed in this course. The four units in the course all align with the Sulitest TASK questionnaire that tests sustainability literacy.**

Environmental Economy and Policy (ISU-205)

This course introduces key economic concepts within the context of environmental problems, including market forces and failure, consumer behavior, environmental valuation, cost-benefit analysis, and international trade. The course also provides an overview of the policy-making process, enforcement and regulation, the behavior of interest groups and stakeholders, and the actions of policymakers. Students critique the current policy responses to some of the major environmental issues of our time, including climate change, water pollution, deforestation, and the loss of biodiversity. Local and international case studies are discussed and compared. **There is light reference to SDGs in this course, the main focus being SDGs 8, 9, 10, and 12.**

Earth Systems (ISU-201)

This interdisciplinary course offers a foundational introduction to Earth system science through the lens of systems thinking. Designed for sustainability-focused students, the course explores Earth as a dynamic, interconnected system by integrating geology, biology, physics, and environmental science perspectives. Students will analyse the interactions among the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and geosphere to understand global change across spatial and temporal scales. Through case studies, modelling, and digital simulations, students will use tools to think holistically about Earth systems, climate change, energy transitions and human impacts on planetary boundaries. **This course focuses on SDGs 6, 13, 14 and 15.**

Teaching Voices: Dr Michael Bowles

During 2024, as Chair of the department, I oversaw one of the core General Education courses, Ethical Systems and Moral Dilemmas. This is taught in the fourth semester of all degree programs in CIS and aims to develop students' knowledge of different ethical theories and frameworks and application of these theories to moral dilemmas in the areas of climate change, artificial intelligence and care workers. We used the five practices for teaching responsible leadership, otherwise known as the Impactful 5 (i5), to enhance the pedagogy. To make learning meaningful, in each class we included discussions and debates around a specific moral dilemma, such as who should pay for the green transition to mitigate climate disaster. As students became more familiar with the concept of a moral dilemma, they chose and then devised their own dilemmas to ensure active engagement and 'hands-on' learning. These dilemmas were usually based on cycles of performance and feedback from other students. Social interaction outside class was encouraged through completing pre-class work such as reading and video viewing on a social reading website called Perusall. For several days before each online class, students posted comments about the texts and videos and responded to each other's comments asynchronously. The final reflective assignment at the end of the course asked students to consider their overall moral framework and key values and how they would apply these to the future working and personal lives.

Teaching Voices: Prof Suzanna Elmassah

I approach sustainability education as both a lens and a practice, helping students connect evidence, policy design, and real-world implementation. Rather than treating sustainability as a standalone topic, I embed it across decision-making discussions so students learn to assess trade-offs, stakeholder impacts, and ethical implications in applied contexts. As former Chair of the Sustainability Program, I also focused on building interdisciplinary pathways that connect. I focus on achieving sustainability goals through economic tools, effective governance, and measurable outcomes. In the classroom, I prioritize experiential learning and locally grounded cases, so students move beyond 'awareness' toward practical competencies: problem framing, data-informed reasoning, and implementation planning. The goal is for graduates to leave with the confidence and capability to translate sustainability principles into credible action in government, industry, and society.

Teaching Voices: Dr Veronika Pereseina

While teaching Sustainability courses at CIS, I am passionate about learning experiences that operationalise PRME principles through experiential and flipped pedagogies. Foundational content is engaged with before class through curated readings, short videos, and reflective prompts, freeing classroom time for deeper knowledge via theory application and higher-order discussions on applied sustainability cases in the UAE context. Students also translate their insights into professional social media contributions, strengthening the bridge between knowledge and action. This approach intentionally cultivates agency, collaboration, creativity, and critical reflection – key capacities of conscious leadership for a sustainable future. By integrating Inner Development Goals, a design thinking approach, and real-world socio-ecological developments, I create educational spaces for students to discover their inner leadership and make meaningful impacts. Blended tools, including hybrid presentations, AI-supported assignments, and scaffolded project stages, enhance inclusivity and formative feedback opportunities. Ultimately, my teaching reflects a purpose- and passion-driven approach to education that empowers students to become conscious changemakers in complex sustainability transitions.

Educator Recognition

At CIS, we recognize educators for quality of teaching in the following ways:

❖ Course evaluation scores
❖ Institutional recognition events
❖ Professional development opportunities
❖ Publication or research support

♀ Fostering Innovation

To a great extent
Teaching and learning at our institution strongly promote a lifelong learning mindset.

♀ Experiential Learning

To a great extent
Teaching and learning at our institution strongly promote a lifelong learning mindset.

♀ Learning Mindset

To a great extent
Teaching and learning at our institution strongly promote a lifelong learning mindset.

♀ Method of Teaching and Learning

Hybrid
Combination of in-person and virtual learning methods.

Barriers to Innovation in Curriculum and Pedagogy

As a new college, founded with a remit to be innovative, there are few obstacles preventing CIS faculty from innovating, updating, or taking risks in existing pedagogy. The main barriers (to the extent they exist) are operational:

❖ Budget constraints
❖ Overloaded faculty
❖ Resource constraints
❖ Time constraints
❖ Delays in program approvals

Additional Evidence

Micro-credentials:

AIM2Flourish

Starting in the Fall semester of 2023, students enrolled in the ISU-202: Principles of Sustainability course complete a final assignment in conjunction with the AIM2Flourish initiative coordinated by the Fowler Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit at Case Western University in the United States. This is a team-based, appreciative inquiry project that involves an in-person interview with a business leader to write a story about a successful sustainable enterprise in UAE or the Middle East region. At the time of writing, 5,883 stories have been submitted since the initiative started in 2017, documenting sustainability success stories from all over the world. All submissions are published on the AIM2Flourish website, and students receive a micro-credential certification from Case Western University. In 2024, CIS students presented their AIM2Flourish sustainable enterprise case studies at the 12th World Environmental Education Congress in Abu Dhabi, and at the 7th Emerging Research Paradigms in Business & Social Sciences (ERPBSS) Conference at Middlesex University in Dubai. One student team also won first prize in the Sustainable Societies and Economies category of the AIM2Flourish global competition, a great achievement given there were 473 stories submitted during 2024.

(From left to right) Athba Almaazmi, Noora Alfalasi, Khadija Saeed, Meera Ahli, Shyam Abulohom, and Hind Alhammadi, presenting their AIM2Flourish projects at the Seventh ERPBSS Conference at Middlesex University, Dubai. Athba Almaazmi also won the award for Best Poster based on her final project in ISU-201: Earth Systems under the supervision of Dr Mohammad Al-Alaween.

Shamma Alketbi ✓ · 1st

Student at Zayed University | Majoring in Environment Science & Su...

6mo · 🌐

✨ Honored to share some exciting news! ✨

Together with my amazing teammates Jawaher Almulla and Ayesha Almarri, we have been recognized as 2025 Flourish Prize Honorees in the Sustainable Societies and Economies category.

A big thank you to our professor, Jeremy B Williams, for guiding us, and to my teammates for their dedication and collaboration. Most importantly, we are deeply grateful to Desert Control and its inspiring CEO, Ole Kristian Sivertsen, for giving us the opportunity to present their innovative and impactful work.

#AIM2Flourish #FlourishPrize #Sustainability #Teamwork #Innovation

2025 Flourish Prize Honoree

FOR BUSINESS AS AN AGENT OF WORLD BENEFIT

Category 2: Sustainable Societies and Economies

PRESENTED AUGUST 05, 2025

Shamma Alketbi

This certifies with appreciation your role in helping to lift up and amplify the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Megan Schulstad Buchter, MBA
Director
Fowler Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit
Weatherhead School of Management | Case Western Reserve University

Ayushee Agarwal, PhD
Program Director, AIM2Flourish
Fowler Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit
Weatherhead School of Management | Case Western Reserve University

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
Weatherhead School of Management

AIM2Flourish
Global Discovery of Business for Good

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
The Fowler Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit

Research

We study people, organizations, institutions, and the state of the world to inspire responsible management and education practice.

✎ How We Define Research

We engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding of the role, dynamics, and impact of business organizations in creating sustainable social, environmental, and economic value.

CIS recognizes research as an important, though evolving, component of its contribution to responsible management education. During the reporting period, research activity related to PRME themes was primarily concentrated in pedagogical scholarship, interdisciplinary inquiry, and applied sustainability research aligned with the College's teaching mission.

In 2024, CIS faculty contributed to scholarly outputs that explore sustainability education, interdisciplinary learning, responsible leadership, and systems-oriented approaches to social and environmental challenges. Much of this work focused on conceptual development, case-based inquiry, and reflective analysis of educational practice, reflecting the College's current stage of development and teaching-led orientation.

CIS views research capacity as an area for continued growth and intends to build on its existing strengths in pedagogical and interdisciplinary scholarship.

Research vs Research for RME/Sustainable Development

161 Peer-reviewed articles were published by CIS during the 2024 calendar year.

vs

25 Peer-reviewed articles were published by CIS during the 2024 calendar year in support of RME.

Research Funding

In 2024, CIS was awarded funding for research that is:

Local	Regional	National	International

Socializing Research

In 2024, CIS contributed research findings to:

- ❖ Community organizations
- ❖ Government and policy makers
- ❖ Industry and business networks
- ❖ Local media
- ❖ National media
- ❖ Open-access platforms
- ❖ International media

Research Projects

In 2024, CIS were involved in multiple research projects that implemented responsible or sustainable activities. Included below are selected presentations, panel discussions, webinars, and peer-reviewed articles:

Research Presentations Related to RME and/or Sustainability

Professor Suzanna Elmassah represented CIS and ZU at both COP28 and COP29:
Across both conferences, Suzanna's contributions can be characterized as:

- ❖ **Bridging academia and policy** — translating COP negotiations into educational and institutional action.
- ❖ **Youth climate leadership development** — mentoring students, enabling presentations, and facilitating workshops.
- ❖ **Carbon literacy advocacy** — embedding climate competence within university ecosystems.
- ❖ **Regional collaboration** — strengthening UAE higher education networks in global climate governance spaces.
- ❖ **Knowledge dissemination** — amplifying key negotiation themes and connecting them to SDGs and sustainability education.

COP 28, Dubai

Professor Elmassah's engagement reflects a shift from active participant and session contributor (COP28) to mentor, network representative, and structured youth delegation facilitator (COP29), demonstrating increasing strategic depth and institutional impact.

Dr Mohammad Al-Alaween (far left) accompanied Professor Elmassah and a large group of CIS students to Egypt to take part in the COP28 Simulation game.

COP 29, Baku

Professor Jeremy Williams served as the Chair of PRME Middle East Chapter in 2024, and was active in promoting the work of the Expert Pedagogy Group (ExPeG) of academics in promoting its work on the Impactful Five (i5) framework for developing responsible leaders is a student-centered holistic pedagogy.

In September 2023, he received best paper award at the ICSD Conference in the Enhancing Responsible Business Education category for his presentation on 'The "Really Nice Fashion Company" 'live' simulation and the economics of business transformation: Playful learning and knowledge co-creation for an environmentally safe, socially just world'. Along with other ExPeG colleagues, he served on several panels (including at the Academy of Management Conference in Boston, 2023), and various webinars promoting the i5 pedagogy and *The i5 Playbook* (published in October 2023)

In February 2024, Professor Williams also presented at the Times Higher Education (THE) MENA Reputation Forum as part of a panel discussion on 'Leadership Reflections: Sustainability as a Marker for Reputation', and in October at the Casablanca Climate Leadership Forum on the topic of 'Educating for Change: Turning Insights into Responsible and Impactful Solutions.

Publications Related to RME and/or Sustainability

A selection of papers published by CIS faculty related to RME and/or sustainability during the 2023-24 review period are detailed below:

Are wars detrimental to the environment? Evidence from air pollution and land use

Authors: Dr Nagham Sayour (with Walid Marrouch, Lebanese American University)

Date: July 2024

Publication: *Oxford Development Studies, 52*(2), 205–223.

https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2024.2382996

Department: Business Transformation

Abstract: This paper studies the long-run effect of war on environmental quality. Using data from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset and the World Development Indicators, we apply a generalized difference-in-differences methodology. We compare the airborne emissions of countries that have experienced war after World War II (WWII) before and after the occurrence of the war event with the emissions of countries that did not experience any war after WWII. We find that, although wars decrease per capita CO2 emissions, they increase CO2 intensity. We also examine the effect of war on forest cover, which is found to be positive across all specifications. Lastly, we document differential effects by war type, country's legal origins, and income level.

Determinants of Renewable Energy Production in Emerging and Developed Countries

Author: Prof Suzanna Elmassah

Date: July 2024

Department: Business Transformation

Abstract: This paper examines the drivers of renewable energy production across emerging and developed economies, focusing on the policy and structural conditions that enable renewable scale-up. It provides important information for energy transition strategies by identifying what increases renewable energy use and by suggesting policies to accelerate adoption and enhance sustainability in the energy sector across various countries.

Upcycling Waste Cotton Cloth into a Carbon Textile: A Durable and Scalable Layer for Vanadium Redox Flow Battery Applications

Author: Dr Abdulmonem Fetyan (with Mohamed Adel Allam, Mohammad Ali Abdelkareem, Hussain Alawadhi, and Abdul Ghani Olabi from the University of Sharjah)

Date: December 2024

Department: Social Innovation

Abstract: In our investigation, we unveil a novel, eco-friendly, and cost-effective method for crafting a bio-derived electrode using discarded cotton fabric via a carbonization procedure, marking its inaugural application in a vanadium redox flow battery (VRFB). Our findings showcase the superior reaction surface area, heightened carbon content, and enhanced catalytic prowess for vanadium reactions exhibited by this carbonized waste cloth (CWC) electrode compared to commercially treated graphite felt (TT-GF). Therefore, the VRFB system equipped with these custom electrodes surpasses its treated graphite felt counterpart (61% at an equivalent current) and achieves an impressive voltage efficiency of 70% at a current density of 100 mA cm^{-2}. Notably, energy efficiency sees a notable uptick from 58% to 67% under the same current density conditions. These compelling outcomes underscore the immense potential of the carbonized waste cotton cloth electrode for widespread integration in VRFB installations at scale.

Greenland summer blocking characteristics: an evaluation of a high-resolution multi-model ensemble

Author: Dr Dilkushi A de Alwis Pitts (with Linh N. Luu and Edward Hanna (University of Lincoln), Jacob Maddison, James A. Screen, and Jennifer L. Catto (University of Exeter, and Xavier Fettweis (University of Liège))
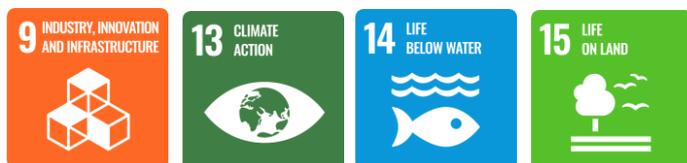
Date: October 2024

Department: Computational Systems

Abstract: Abstract

Atmospheric blocking is a phenomenon that can lead to extreme weather events over a large region, yet its causes are not fully understood. Global climate models show limitations in representing Northern Hemisphere blocking, especially its frequency, and decadal variability in Greenland blocking in summer in the recent decades. In this study we evaluate the ability of high-resolution (HighResMIP) Earth System Models (ESMs) to simulate summer blocking over the Greenland area, using different but complementary methods to describe the characteristics of blocking. We find that the HighResMIP ensemble can reproduce the spatial pattern of Greenland blocking events, albeit with systematic biases, and capture the relative frequencies of the main blocking patterns: namely the wave breaking structure, North Atlantic ridge, and omega-type blocking. However, the HighResMIP ensemble fails to simulate the observed temporal variations of Greenland blocking index (GB2) and the extremely high values of daily GB2 observed in recent decades. In addition, we do not find clearly superior representation of blocking features from higher-resolution in HighResMIP models compared with

lower-resolution models. We also find large sea surface temperature (SST) biases over the North Atlantic and seas surrounding Greenland, and biases in moisture transport over the North Atlantic toward Greenland, especially over the western flank of blocking areas, which might together contribute to model biases in the representation of blocking magnitude.

Driving transformation in higher education: Exploring the process and impact of educational innovations for sustainability through interdisciplinary studies

Author: Dr Sandra Baroudi and Dr Areej ElSayary

Date: October 2024

Publication: *Higher Education Quarterly, 78*, e12529. https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12529

Department: General Education

Abstract: In recent years, there has been a growing focus on innovation research, particularly in the manufacturing and information technology sectors in the US and Europe. However, the disruptions caused by the recent pandemic called for more innovations, especially in the education industry. Innovation is viewed as an outcome of a set of various drivers. This study explored faculty perspectives on the drivers of innovation that can transform the curriculum into an interdisciplinary model to promote sustainability in education. Additionally, it examined the relationship between these drivers and the outcome of innovation, particularly at the process level. An explanatory sequential mixed-method approach was employed to collect quantitative and qualitative data from a purposive sample of 60 faculty members at one federal higher education institution in the UAE. Findings indicated that while there is a correlation between the drivers and process of innovation and sustainability in education, other factors played a more significant role in facilitating this transformation. Empowering faculty members and involving them in the process of transformation, connecting them with the institutional vision and mission for innovation, fostering a clear understanding of the value of the transformation, providing faculty with continuous professional learning to promote the use of innovative pedagogical methods, are among the key factors

Partner

We engage people from business, government, civil society, and academia to advance responsible and accountable management education and practice.

✏️ How We Define Partner

We interact with managers of business organizations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.

Partnership is not treated within CIS as an adjunct to teaching, but as a structural component of the undergraduate learning experience. During the reporting period, engagement with external organisations was most visibly enacted through Zayed University's Partner Challenge Program, a mandatory, real-world challenge framework embedded across interdisciplinary degrees

The Partner Challenge Program requires students to apply academic learning to authentic organisational problems identified by external partners. Organisations define real-world challenges, provide feedback, and engage with student teams, while faculty integrate these challenges into coursework as applied, real-time case experiences. This structure ensures that partnership is not symbolic but operationalized within curricula. Students engage directly with organisational constraints, decision-making contexts, and stakeholder expectations, bridging theory and practice in structured, mentored environments.

The ecosystem underpinning the Partner Challenge reflects a multi-layered engagement model. External mentors identify challenges and support student teams. Faculty guide academic integration and assessment. Partnership specialists coordinate relationships and monitor progress. Coaches facilitate reflective and professional development conversations. This distributed model reinforces the shared responsibility of students, faculty, and partners in advancing meaningful learning.

The scale of engagement is significant. The program has involved more than 2,500 students, over 200 organisations, and more than 250 mentors, spanning public, private, and non-profit sectors. While not all projects are explicitly framed around sustainability, many challenges intersect with issues of innovation, operational efficiency, digital transformation, and organisational resilience. These contexts create opportunities for students to consider how social and environmental responsibilities are negotiated within contemporary organisational practice.

In 2024, partnership was also expressed through CIS's role in hosting the 11th PRME Middle East Chapter Regional Forum. Convening institutional leaders, educators, and students provided a complementary form of partnership grounded in dialogue and shared reflection on responsible management education and climate leadership. Together, the Partner Challenge framework and PRME-related convening activities illustrate CIS's commitment to partnership as a structured, educationally integrated practice rather than an episodic engagement.

CIS understands partnership as reciprocal learning. Organisations gain fresh perspectives and analytical insight from student teams, while students gain exposure to professional environments and real-world complexity. Through the continued development of the Partner Challenge and related initiatives, the College aims to strengthen this reciprocal model and deepen alignment between interdisciplinary education and societal needs.

Institutional Partnerships

❖ Carbon Literacy Project, Manchester, UK
❖ Business Schools for Climate Leadership (BS4CL)

Carbon literacy training

In early 2024, several CIS faculty members formally 'graduated' from a Carbon Literacy Training (CLT) course, becoming certified trainers with The Carbon Literacy Project in the UK. Along with several colleagues at other PRME Chapter Middle East signatory universities, the motivation was to offer a customized version of the CLT to interested parties in the Middle East that will use examples and case studies more in keeping with the regional context. This project also tied in with the commitment made at COP28 by PRME Chapter Middle East business deans to raise the level of 'climate literacy' in the Middle East region as part of their Business Schools for Climate Leadership (BS4CL) pledge.

(From left to right: Dr Suzanna ElMassah, Dr Mohammad Al-Alaween, Dr Leonard Chirenje, Dr Jeremy Williams, Dr Veronika Pereseina, and PRME Middle East Chapter, Carbon Literacy Lead, David May)

PRME Carbon Literacy Initiative – 2024

Activities led by David May

❖ **Launch & Accreditation (2024):**
The initiative started in 2024. The first PRME Middle East–specific Carbon Literacy course kit was written by faculty from Zayed University CIS and approved by the Carbon Literacy Project in October 2024.

❖ **First Delivery – In-Person (Dubai):**
Zayed University hosted the inaugural in-person course for 12 participants; all 12 successfully achieved Carbon Literacy status.

❖ **Regional Expansion – Online (December 2024):**
An online course facilitated by Zayed University faculty drew 30+ attendees from six institutions across Oman, Egypt, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia.
The December cohort resulted in 14 individuals certified as Carbon Literate from six different institutions.

The UAE Carbon Removal Breakthrough Coalition. CIS is represented here by Dr Mohammad Al-Alaween (far right) and Prof Suzanna Elmassah (centre).

Practice

We adopt responsible and accountable management principles in our own governance and operations.

✎ How We Define Practice

We adopt responsible and accountable management principles in our own governance and operations.

Responsible management education requires alignment between what is taught and how the institution operates. CIS therefore understands institutional practice not as peripheral to teaching, but as integral to the credibility of its educational mission.

During the reporting period, the College sought to ensure that governance practices, curriculum development processes, and partnership decisions reflect principles of accountability, transparency, and social responsibility. As a PRME signatory unit, CIS has incorporated responsible management considerations into programme design, external engagement, and event convening decisions.

Hosting the 11th PRME Middle East Chapter Regional Forum in December 2024 provides a concrete illustration of this commitment. Hosting and resourcing a regional forum required institutional coordination, cross-functional collaboration, and visible leadership support. This activity demonstrated that PRME principles inform not only curriculum content but also institutional behaviour and public engagement.

BS4CL panel discussion featuring (from left to right) Dr John Katsos (American University of Sharjah) Dean Namrata Kamath (Hult Business School, Dubai), Dean Paul Hopkinson (CIS), and panel moderator, CIS Computational Systems undergraduate, Mahreen Munir.

CIS recognizes that operational practice remains an area for continued development and reflection. The College intends to continue aligning governance processes, partnership structures, and academic initiatives with principles of responsibility and accountability, ensuring coherence between institutional values and institutional conduct.

Institutional Policies and Practices

- ❖ Ethical leadership or good governance policies
- ❖ Professional training opportunities
- ❖ Student equity, diversity, inclusion

Share

We share our successes and failures with each other to enable our collective learning and best live our common values and purpose.

✏️ How We Define Share

We share our successes and failures with each other to enable our collective learning and best live our common values and purpose.

CIS understands sharing not as dissemination for visibility, but as a contribution to collective learning within the responsible management education community.

During the reporting period, the College engaged in regional and international exchange through participation in PRME networks and by hosting the 11th PRME Middle East Chapter Regional Forum. The Forum created a structured space for educators, institutional leaders, and students to reflect on challenges, exchange practices, and consider emerging directions in sustainability education and climate leadership. In doing so, CIS contributed to the mutual learning processes that underpin the PRME community.

Faculty members also contributed to scholarly and professional conversations through conference participation, pedagogical dialogue, and engagement in sustainability-focused networks. These activities reflect an understanding that responsible management education evolves through shared inquiry and reflection rather than through isolated institutional effort.

This SIP report itself forms part of that commitment to transparency and shared learning. By documenting initiatives undertaken, acknowledging areas for continued development, and situating its work within the broader PRME framework, CIS seeks to contribute constructively to the ongoing evolution of responsible management education.

Engagement Opportunities

CIS offers transparent engagement opportunities for members of our institution and community to contribute to our sustainability and responsibility efforts in the following ways:

- ❖ Annual reports
- ❖ CIS Newsletter
- ❖ Community events and consultation forums
- ❖ Feedback mechanisms (e.g., surveys, suggestion boxes)
- ❖ Open faculty and student meetings and town halls
- ❖ Partnerships with local organizations
- ❖ Public events and panel discussions
- ❖ Sustainability-focused research and collaboration Opportunities
- ❖ Publicly accessible sustainability data and dashboards

Communication Audiences

CIS communicates its policies and progress on sustainable development and responsibility with:

❖ Accreditation bodies

❖ Business and industry partners

❖ Faculty and staff

❖ Prospective and current students

❖ Research and academic networks

Dr Leonard Chirenje, Dr Veronika Pereseina, (far left) and Dr Michael Brock (center), accompany a group of CIS students to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in Masdar City, Abu Dhabi (2024).

CIS, Zayed University

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