

# **Sustainability in the Mission Statements of Argentine Higher Education Institutions**

Arias-Valle María-Belén

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8114-2945>

National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET)  
Catholic University of Cuyo, San Juan, Argentina

Marimon Frederic

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5572-7341>

International University of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain

## **Abstract**

This study examines the integration of sustainability in the mission statements of Argentine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Using a qualitative approach, the study analyzes both public and private universities through semiotic and discourse analysis. Results indicate that only 15% of HEIs explicitly mention sustainability in their missions, with significant differences between public and private institutions. Public HEIs often link sustainability to public service and social justice, while private universities focus on competitiveness and innovation. References to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are rare, appearing in only 2% of the statements. This suggests that sustainability integration is still nascent and needs to align more closely with the 2030 Agenda. The study concludes that there is a need to enhance coherence between stated missions and institutional practices to foster a more committed higher education system that advances sustainable development in Argentina.

*Keywords:* sustainability, mission statements, higher education, Argentina.

## **Introduction**

Sustainability has become a fundamental pillar for societal development in the current global context (Arias-Valle & Coria Augusto, 2024; Salite et al., 2024a). HEIs play a crucial role in promoting sustainable values and practices, not only through academic training but also by leading knowledge generation and implementing initiatives that contribute to social, economic, and environmental well-being (Cortese, 2003; Zhou et al., 2020). University mission statements serve as strategic documents that define their values and objectives, guiding their activities towards fostering sustainable development (Cortese & Hattan, 2010; Ramísio et al., 2019).

In Argentina, HEIs face the challenge of effectively integrating sustainability into their institutional missions, reflecting their commitments and priorities (Papadimitriou & Schiffecker, 2023a; Ruiz-Mallén & Heras, 2020). However, the extent of this

integration varies significantly across institutions, raising questions about their genuine commitment to the SDGs and their transformation towards a more responsible higher education system (Arias-Valle & Marimon, 2025a; Bedoya-Dorado et al., 2022).

This study aims to analyze how Argentine HEIs integrate sustainability into their mission statements, focusing on a comparison between public and private universities. By employing a semiotic and discourse analysis approach, the study seeks to identify trends, similarities, and differences in how sustainability is addressed in these institutional texts. This study addresses the question: how do public and private Argentine universities incorporate sustainability in their mission statements, and what discursive differences exist between them in adopting this value? By conducting this analysis, the study not only contributes to the field of higher education and sustainability but also offers a basis for future research and institutional policies aimed at strengthening the integration of sustainability into the missions of Argentine universities.

### **Literature Review**

Sustainability has emerged as a central paradigm in the reconfiguration of higher education worldwide, especially after the adoption of the SDGs in 2015 (Filho et al., 2024; Salite et al., 2016; Heasly, et al, 2025). Universities are recognized as key actors in promoting sustainability, not only for their role in training future leaders but also for their influence on society through research and community outreach (Barth & Rieckmann, 2012; Bush et al., 2025). In this context, university mission statements, as foundational documents articulating institutional values and objectives, are significant in analyzing the commitment of these institutions to sustainability (Acaali, 2024; Cortese & Hattan, 2010).

According to Drucker (1954), an institution's mission defines its purpose and direction, guiding all decisions and activities. A clear mission unifies members and effectively communicates the organization's role and objectives, ensuring that everyone works towards a common goal. In the context of an HEI, the mission statement takes on particular importance by defining its commitment to the comprehensive education of students, knowledge generation, and contribution to social well-being (Ortega y Gasset, 1930; Ramísio et al., 2019). When sustainability is integrated into an HEI's mission, it establishes a framework that guides all institutional functions—teaching, research, outreach, and management—towards promoting sustainable development (Ferguson & Roofe, 2020; Sanches et al., 2023).

The discussion regarding the integration of sustainability into HEIs unfolds between a global imperative and a regional historical legacy (Arias-Valle, 2023; Filho et al., 2021). Globally, the adoption of the SDGs by the United Nations provides a key reference framework that urges universities to adjust their institutional missions (Cortese & Hattan, 2010; Trencher et al., 2014). Various studies indicate that aligning the mission with the SDGs is a critical factor for developing more robust, coherent, and systemic sustainability strategies (Sterling, 2013; Tilbury, 2011).

Against this backdrop, the integration of sustainability within Latin American Higher Education remains markedly incipient, despite regional efforts promoted by bodies such as UNESCO-IESALC (Arias-Valle et al., 2024; Vallaes et al., 2022). The literature underscores that commitment to the SDGs is still in its early stages of institutional maturity, evidenced by the limited participation and disparate

performance of HEIs in international impact metrics, which reflects weak institutionalization (Arias-Valle & Marimon, 2025b).

In the Argentine context, this global expectation interacts with the tradition of the 1918 University Reform, which cemented the university's role in social commitment and public service (Tünnermann, 2019). This historical legacy provides a natural philosophical foundation for sustainability integration. However, despite possessing this dual reference framework—a clear global guide and a tradition of social commitment—the Argentine institutional reality reveals a significant gap (Arias-Valle, 2024). Recent literature highlights that the commitment to the 2030 Agenda remains incipient and limited, suggesting that HEIs have failed to capitalize on either their historical legacy or the global mandate to translate them into an explicit commitment within their missions (Arias-Valle & Marimon, 2025a).

The literature review reveals that although sustainability has gained importance in global higher education, its integration into the institutional missions of Argentine HEIs is inconsistent and, in many cases, superficial. There is a need to advance towards greater coherence between mission statements and institutional practices, ensuring that sustainability is not only a declared concept but also implemented effectively. This study aims to contribute to the field of discursive and semiotic analysis by providing a critical and comparative view of how Argentine HEIs address sustainability within their institutional missions.

### **Methodology**

A qualitative approach, using semiotic and discourse analysis, was applied to a representative sample of 132 HEIs to explore the integration of sustainability into their mission statements, focusing on key themes and terms such as 'sustainability' and 'social responsibility'. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which sustainability is embedded in the mission statements of Argentine HEIs.

The documentary corpus for this study was designed as an exhaustive analysis of the total network of officially recognized HEIs in Argentina. The primary inclusion criterion was the status of being a university institution (university or university institute) of either public or private management, officially recognized by the National Ministry of Education. An exclusion criterion was applied to institutions that did not have a mission statement, vision statement, or publicly accessible foundational statute on their websites or in institutional documents. This resulted in an analyzed universe of 132 HEIs, ensuring census coverage of the entities operating within the Argentine higher education system

### **Analytical Model: Discourse and Semiotics of the Mission Statement**

To reveal the integration and hierarchical positioning of sustainability within the foundational discourses of the HEIs, a hybrid methodological approach was adopted, combining Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with principles of Social Semiotics. This model allowed us to move beyond the mere identification of keywords (e.g., "sustainability," "SDGs") to analyze their mode of production, lexical choices, and ideological function within the discursive genre of the "Mission Statement."

The CDA framework, primarily drawing on the tenets of Norman Fairclough (2004), focused on three interconnected dimensions. First, at the textual level, we identified lexical units related to sustainability, social responsibility, and development

(e.g., “commitment to the environment,” “social justice,” “impact”). This descriptive analysis examined the transitivity of sentences to determine which actors (the HEI, the student, society) are active subjects of sustainability and what actions are predicated upon them. Second, within the discursive practice level, we analyzed the intertextuality of each mission, specifically the explicit or implicit references to other social discourses (e.g., the market discourse, the university reform discourse, the Agenda 2030 discourse). This interpretive step enabled classification of the HEI’s discourse as reproductive (maintaining the status quo), assimilative (integrating new terms without changing core practice), or transformative (proposing radical change). Third, at the social practice level, the identified discursive structures (e.g., emphasis on “competitiveness” versus “public service”) were correlated with the institutional nature (private or public management), thus interpreting how socioeconomic or historical pressures, the conditions of discourse production, influence the articulation of sustainability in their foundational texts.

Complementary to the CDA, semiotic principles were applied to evaluate content non-literally, focusing on the use of signs and the dimension of reception. Each mission statement was treated as a complex sign whose meaning operates as an institutional marketing discourse. The analysis assessed the use of signifiers (the chosen words) and their denotational meaning, and, crucially, their connotative meaning, the associated values and ideologies. We further examined the language modality (e.g., the use of infinitive verbs of promise versus present-tense verbs of action) and the implied audience. A mission is a message aimed at shaping the reception by key stakeholders (prospective students, donors, the State). Therefore, the inclusion or exclusion of sustainability terms constitutes a strategic act of selection and omission to project an image of institutional value and social legitimacy.

#### *Procedure for Analysis*

**Data Collection:** Mission statements will be collected from HEIs’ official websites and publicly available institutional documents. This information will be organised into a database for subsequent analysis.

**Coding:** The mission statements will be coded using an open coding approach to identify themes and patterns related to sustainability. Special attention will be paid to direct references to the SDGs and to their integration into the institutional mission.

**Comparative Analysis:** A comparative analysis will be conducted between public and private HEIs to identify differences and similarities in the inclusion of sustainability in their missions. Additionally, a comparative analysis will be performed by Argentine provinces. These analyses will allow an assessment of how different types of HEIs in Argentina are addressing sustainability challenges and the extent to which they align with the SDGs.

**Validation:** The findings will be validated through a cross-review process that compares the results of semiotic and discourse analysis to ensure coherence and depth of analysis. Additionally, data triangulation will be performed using institutional reports and previous studies on sustainability in higher education.

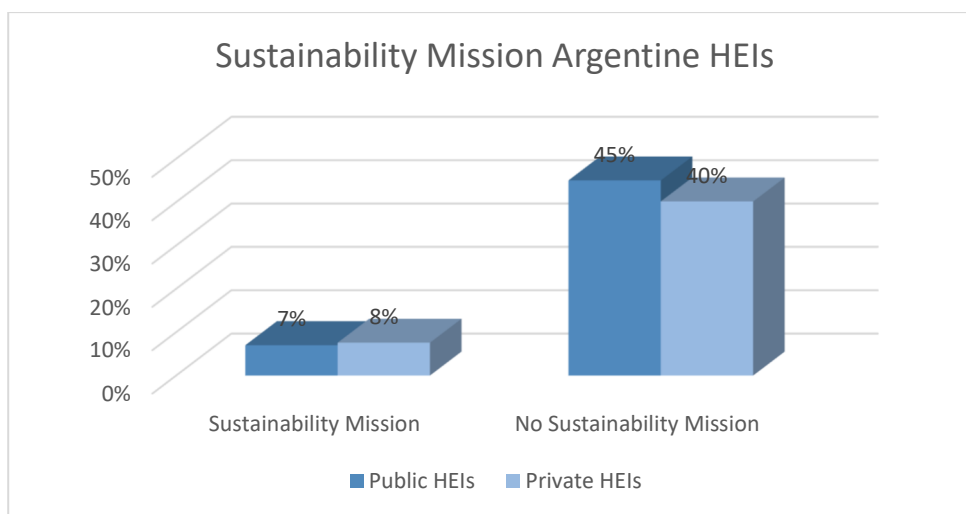
## **Results**

Only 15% of Argentine HEIs include sustainability in their mission statements, with 8% being private and 7% public universities, reflecting a limited commitment and various challenges in its implementation.

This limited incorporation of sustainability into the mission statements of Argentine HEIs raises concerns about the priority it is given in institutional strategy and vision. Despite the growing global relevance of sustainability and its recognition as a fundamental pillar for future development, only a small percentage of Argentine HEIs have formalized it in their missions (Cortese, 2003). The fact that only 8% of private HEIs and 7% of public HEIs mention sustainability suggests that although some institutions have begun to recognize its importance, most have not fully integrated this approach into their institutional identity. This situation could reflect a lack of alignment between declared missions and international expectations regarding the SDGs, which could limit the capacity of HEIs to effectively contribute to the formation of responsible citizens and address current global challenges (Tomasella et al., 2023). Additionally, this disparity in the adoption of sustainability between the public and private sectors may also indicate differences in institutional priorities and how each sector perceives its role in promoting sustainable development (Filho et al., 2023; Holst, 2023). Figure 1 shows the results.

**Figure 1.**

*The Presence of Sustainability in the Mission Statements of Argentine HEIs*

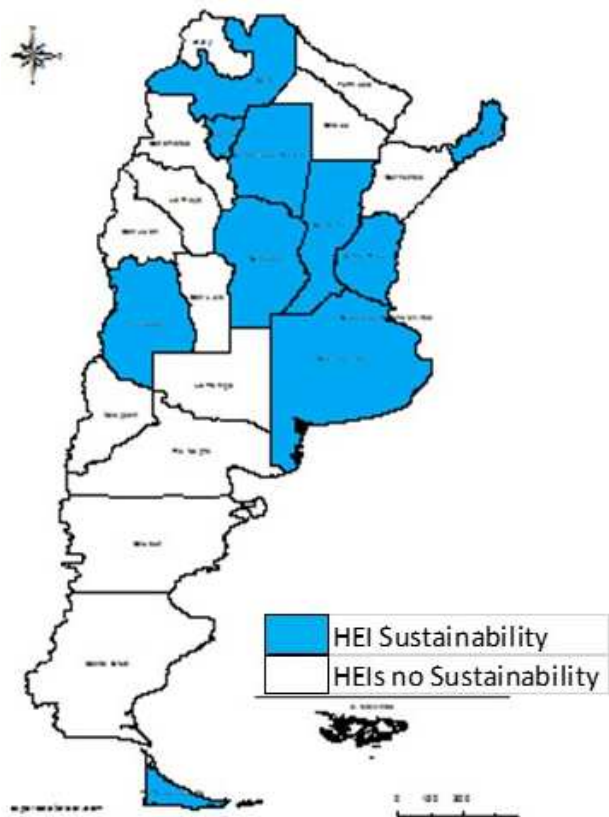


Source: Own elaboration

### Geographic Analysis of the Mission Statements of Argentine HEIs

The study found that Argentine HEIs integrating sustainability into their mission statements are unevenly distributed across the country. While some institutions in provinces like Buenos Aires, Córdoba, and Mendoza show significant progress, others, especially in less developed regions, demonstrate limited or no integration. This regional disparity highlights the influence of socio-economic and political factors on the prioritization of sustainability. Figure 2 displays the results.

**Figure 2.**  
*Geographic Location of Argentine HEIs that Include Sustainability in Their Mission*



Source: Own elaboration

**Semiotic Analysis of Mission Statements**

The semiotic analysis revealed that terms such as “sustainability,” “social responsibility,” and “sustainable development” are present in 60% of the mission statements analyzed, but only 2% mention the SDGs. Public HEIs often associate sustainability with social justice and community development, reflecting their public service orientation. In contrast, private HEIs tend to frame sustainability within narratives of innovation and competitiveness, aiming to enhance their market position. Figure 3 illustrates the results.



**Discursive Formulation of Sustainability:** Public HEIs construct their sustainability narratives around the idea of public service and inclusive development. This approach is reflected in statements that emphasize the role of HEIs as agents of social change, committed to training responsible citizens and promoting sustainable development that benefits the entire community. In contrast, private HEIs tend to position sustainability within a framework of innovation and competitive leadership. This discourse highlights the institution's ability to lead in implementing sustainable practices but may, in some cases, minimize the focus on social equity and justice.

**Inclusion of the SDGs in Mission Statements:** Direct reference to the SDGs was found in approximately 2% of the HEIs analyzed. HEIs that mention the SDGs usually align them with their strategic mission, highlighting their commitment to the 2030 Agenda and their role in addressing global challenges such as climate change and inequality. This finding suggests that, while the SDGs are influencing the formulation of institutional missions, their explicit adoption is still limited in the Argentine context. HEIs that integrate the SDGs tend to be those that have developed specific sustainability policies and have dedicated structures for their implementation.

**Omissions and Contradictions:** The analysis revealed some omissions and contradictions in the mission statements. For example, in some HEIs that actively promote sustainability in their practices and policies, the institutional mission does not clearly reflect this commitment. This could indicate a lack of coherence between the declared mission and institutional actions. Additionally, in certain cases, sustainability is mentioned superficially, without a clear link to how this value is implemented in practice, which could question the depth of the institutional commitment to sustainable development.

**Discursive Analysis and Semiotic Contradictions:** The semiotic and discourse analysis, applied to the 15% of mission statements that formalize sustainability, revealed a clear divergence in the term's ideological coding, primarily differentiated by the HEI sector. This duality in discourse creates a semiotic contradiction that reflects each institution's strategic positioning. On the one hand, Public HEIs that address sustainability (the 7%) systematically link it to concepts of social justice, equity, and service to the common good, emphasizing a role as a guarantor of rights and territorial development; for example, one mission establishes: "The University, as an institution of democracy, must ensure the sustainability of the social system through training with equity and community commitment." On the other hand, in Private HEIs (the 8%), sustainability is frequently subsumed under the lexicon of innovation, competitiveness, and leadership, being encoded as an attribute for excellence and relevance in the global market. This narrative is illustrated by statements such as: "We train leaders with a global vision for sustainable innovation and competitiveness in dynamic markets, contributing to economic growth" (Arias-Valle & Marimon, 2025a). This discursive disparity underscores the nascent nature of sustainability integration in Argentina, where its meaning adapts to the priorities and the basis of legitimacy of each sector.

### **Comparison Between Public and Private HEIs**

The comparison between public and private HEIs revealed significant differences in how sustainability is addressed in institutional missions.

Public HEIs align sustainability with public service, focusing on social justice and community development, while private HEIs emphasize innovation and competitiveness. Private HEIs often frame sustainability within a narrative of

innovation and competitive leadership. Many of these institutions have developed strong narratives around sustainability, integrating it as a central pillar in their institutional mission. In particular, faith-based HEIs stand out for their ethical commitment to sustainability, reflecting their core values. Although this approach may sometimes be linked to competitiveness in the global market, the commitment to sustainability in private HEIs underscores their dedication to leading the creation of a more just and equitable future.

## **Discussion**

The low level of sustainability formalization in the mission statement (an explicit mention by only 15%) is not an isolated finding; rather, it operates as a significant institutional bottleneck that accounts for the fragmented and nascent implementation across the core functions of the Argentine university system (Arias-Valle & Marimon, 2025a). This lack of a high-level mandate weakens the necessary vertical coherence between strategic discourse and operational practice (Holst, 2023). Recent studies confirm this dispersion: in the area of governance, it has been documented that 73% of Argentine HEIs lack formalized strategic management tools to evidence their commitment to sustainability (Arias-Valle & Marimon, 2025b, 2025a). Similarly, integration across the central academic functions is limited and unbalanced: only 26% of HEIs have established specialized research lines on the subject (Arias-Valle & Marimon, 2025c), while in outreach activities—which are key for social engagement—integration does not exceed 21% (Arias-Valle & Marimon, 2024a). Even more concerning, the failure to articulate the sustainability commitment within the foundational mission dilutes the basis for necessary curricular reform in teaching, where the mainstreaming of the SDGs and ESD becomes an ad hoc initiative rather than a systemic policy (Arias-Valle & Marimon, 2024b). This lack of synchronicity between the institutional being (the mission) and doing (teaching, research, outreach, and governance) translates into reduced capacity for influence on the national agenda and inconsistent international visibility, as evidenced by the disparate performance of Argentine HEIs in global impact rankings (Arias-Valle, 2024). Therefore, formalizing sustainability within the mission is revealed not merely as a declarative act, but as an essential prerequisite for driving systemic change and ensuring that efforts do not remain confined to mere rhetoric or isolated goodwill initiatives (Papadimitriou & Schiffecker, 2023b; Ruano-Borbalan, 2024).

The results of this study indicate that the integration of sustainability in the mission statements of Argentine HEIs is an evolving process, characterized by significant differences between public and private universities. These findings are consistent with recent studies, such as those by Arias Valle and Marimon (2025a). While there is a growing effort among some HEIs to incorporate sustainability into their institutional missions, the adoption of this value remains limited and uneven across Argentine HEIs (Arias-Valle & Marimon, 2024c). Only a small percentage of the analyzed institutions explicitly include sustainability in their missions, reflecting an incipient commitment to this fundamental principle. This pattern is also reflected in other Ibero-American countries like Spain (Arias Valle et al., 2021a; 2021b), and also in Latin American nations (Arias-Valle & Marimon, 2025b; Filho et al., 2021).

The finding of low sustainability formalization in the institutional mission (15%) necessitates the implementation of corrective measures that transcend mere declarative intent (Bedoya-Dorado et al., 2022; Papadimitriou & Schiffecker, 2023). To

overcome the fragmentation observed across substantive functions, Argentine HEIs must adopt a systemic four-pillar approach (Biermann et al., 2023; Filho et al., 2025). First, it is imperative to establish dedicated sustainability centers or offices with clear mandates from senior management. This is fundamental for fostering a culture of sustainability through institutional campaigns (Bautista Chamizo et al., 2023; Filho et al., 2019) and for reversing the fact that 73% of HEIs lack formalized strategic management tools (Arias-Valle & Marimon, 2025a; 2025d). Second, the mission commitment must be translated into the teaching function through curriculum updating and the mainstreaming of the SDGs, ensuring that environmental education is not an exception but a unified policy (Arias-Valle & Marimon, 2024b; Buerkle et al., 2023). Finally, the implementation of training programs targeting faculty, researchers, and administrators is essential to ensure that research and outreach initiatives (Filho et al., 2020; Nketsia et al., 2020). Finally, the implementation of training programs targeting faculty, researchers, and administrators is essential to ensure that research and outreach initiatives—where integration is limited to 26% for research lines and 21% for outreach activities, respectively—achieve the necessary scale and coherence to generate a systemic impact and effectively contribute to the national 2030 Agenda (Arias Valle & Marimon, 2025c; 2024a).

Future research could explore how HEIs implement the sustainability commitments declared in their institutional missions in practice. Such studies would allow for an assessment of the coherence between institutional missions and actual actions, providing a more comprehensive view of the commitment of Argentine HEIs to sustainable development. It would also be valuable to expand the analysis to other regions and types of universities to compare how sustainability is integrated into institutional missions at the national and international levels. Additionally, research could investigate how government policies and regulatory frameworks influence the adoption of sustainability in university missions, particularly in the context of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

### **Conclusion**

This study reveals that the integration of sustainability into the mission statements of Argentine HEIs is an emerging, yet still limited process, marked by significant differences between public and private institutions. Public HEIs tend to present a more explicit and holistic commitment to sustainability, aligning it with their mission of public service and social development, consistent with the values promoted by the 1918 University Reform. In contrast, private HEIs often frame sustainability within a narrative of competitiveness and innovation, which, while relevant in a globalized context, may overlook aspects of social equity and environmental justice.

The findings indicate that, despite some progress, the incorporation of sustainability in institutional missions remains incipient and uneven, reflecting a need for stronger alignment with the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. A key challenge identified is the lack of coherence between the declared missions and actual institutional practices, which can undermine the credibility and effectiveness of HEIs in promoting sustainable development.

To address these challenges, it is essential for HEIs to implement systematic and structured approaches to sustainability, including continuous staff training, the development of clear policies, and the establishment of dedicated sustainability units. Moreover, there is an urgent need for a robust regulatory framework that provides

specific guidelines and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that sustainability is genuinely integrated into the missions and actions of HEIs.

In conclusion, while some Argentine HEIs are taking steps towards integrating sustainability into their institutional missions, a more comprehensive and consistent approach is required to fully realize the potential of higher education as a catalyst for sustainable development. Strengthening the alignment between institutional missions and sustainable practices will not only enhance the impact of HEIs on society but also position them as leaders in the global movement towards a more just and sustainable future.

## References

- Acaali, C. M. (2024). Sustainability and the triple mission of the University: Uganda Martyrs University in Perspective BT - The sustainability of higher education in sub-Saharan Africa: Quality assurance perspectives (Ed.) pp. 115–134, Springer Nature Switzerland. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-46242-9\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-46242-9_6)
- Arias-Valle, M.-B., Berbegal-Mirabent, J., & Marimon-Viadu, F. (2021a). How do socially responsible universities perform? The case of Spanish universities. *Tec Empresarial*, 15(3), 64–82. <https://doi.org/10.18845/te.v15i3.5816>
- Arias Valle, M.-B., Berbegal-Mirabent, J., & Marimon, F. (2021b). How much are universities engaged with their social responsibility? *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 29. <https://doi.org/10.14507/EPAA.29.5399>
- Arias-Valle, M.-B. (2023). The promotion of Education for sustainable development. *Revista Estudios Ambientales*, 11(2), 111–123. <https://doi.org/10.47069/estudios-ambientales.v11i2.1905>
- Arias-Valle, M.-B. (2024). Performance of Argentine universities in international sustainability rankings. *Revista Estudio Ambientales*, 12(12), 64–80. <https://doi.org/10.47069/estudios-ambientales.v12i2.2773>
- Arias-Valle, M.-B., & Coria Augusto, C. J. (2024). Sustainability in action: Building a responsible future. *RevIISE - Revista De Ciencias Sociales Y Humanas*, 24(24), 53–54. <https://ojs.unsj.edu.ar/index.php/reviise/article/view/1215/1387>
- Arias-Valle, M. B., & Marimon, F. (2024a). Do Argentine universities incorporate sustainability in their extension activities? *Luna Azul*, 59, 172–194. <https://doi.org/10.17151/luaz.2024.59.9>
- Arias-Valle, M.-B., & Marimon, F. (2024b). Do Argentine higher education institutions promote sustainability? *Revista Andina de Educación*, 8(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.32719/26312816.2024.8.1.2>
- Arias-Valle, M.-B., & Marimon, F. (2024c). Integrating social responsibility into sustainability strategies: The case of the Catholic University of Cuyo. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 26(2), 194–210. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jtes-2024-0022>
- Arias-Valle, M.-B., Marimon, F., Coria-Augusto, C. J., & Apaza-Canquí, A. E. (2024). Perspectives on sustainability in higher education: A comparative analysis between Argentina, Spain, and Peru. *Revista de Investigación En Educación*, 22(3), 604–620. <https://doi.org/10.35869/REINED.V22I3.5768>
- Arias-Valle, M. B., & Marimon, F. (2025a). The engagement with sustainability: The case of the Argentine university system. *Educación y Humanismo*, 27(49), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.17081/eduhum.27.49.7385>

- Arias-Valle, M.-B., & Marimon, F. (2025b). Evolution of Latin American higher education institutions' commitment to the 2030 Agenda. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 27(1), 115–134. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jtes-2025-0007>
- Arias Valle, M., & Marimon, F. (2025c). Evaluating sustainability research in Argentine Higher Education. *Higher Learning Research Communications*, 15(2). <https://doi.org/10.18870/hlrc.v15i2.1614>
- Arias-Valle, M. B., & Marimon, F. (2025d). Higher education and sustainability: The challenge of financing in Argentina. *Kawsaypacha Journal: Society and Environment*, 16, A-005. <https://doi.org/10.18800/kawsaypacha.202502.A005>
- Barth, M., & Rieckmann, M. (2012). Academic staff development as a catalyst for curriculum change towards education for sustainable development: An output perspective. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 26, 28–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2011.12.011>
- Bautista Chamizo, E., Martinez Martinez, D., Andrades Peña, J., Herrera Madueño, J., & Larrán Jorge, M. (2023). Spanish universities and SDGs achievement: Analysis of strategic plans and other sustainability-related practices. *Revista Espanola de Financiacion y Contabilidad*, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02102412.2023.2284469>
- Bedoya-Dorado, C., Murillo-Vargas, G., & Gonzalez-Campo, C. H. (2022). Sustainability in the mission and vision statements of Colombian Universities. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 23(1), 67–86. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-08-2020-0284/FULL/XML>
- Biermann, F., Sun, Y., Banik, D., Beisheim, M., Bloomfield, M. J., Charles, A., Chasek, P., Hickmann, T., Pradhan, P., & Sénit, C. A. (2023). Four governance reforms to strengthen the SDGs. *Science*, 381(6663), 1159–1160. <https://doi.org/10.1126/SCIENCE.ADJ5434>
- Buerkle, A., O'Dell, A., Matharu, H., Buerkle, L., & Ferreira, P. (2023). Recommendations to align higher education teaching with the UN sustainability goals – A scoping survey. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 5, 100280–100280. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2023.100280>
- Bush, J., Hürlimann, A., March, A., Moosavi, S., & Warren-Myers, G. (2025). Sustainability professionals' roles in advancing action for climate change and sustainable cities. *Npj Urban Sustainability*, 5(1), 60. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s42949-025-00249-1>
- Cortese, A. D. (2003). The critical role of higher education in creating a sustainable future. *Planning for Higher Education*, 31(3), 15–22.
- Cortese, A. D., & Hattan, A. S. (2010). Research and solutions: Education for sustainability as the mission of higher education. *Sustainability*, 3(1), 48–52. <https://doi.org/10.1089/SUS.2009.9802>
- Drucker, P. F. (1954). *The Practice of Management*. Harper & Brothers.
- Ferguson, T., & Roofe, C. G. (2020). SDG 4 in higher education: Challenges and opportunities. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 21(5), 959–975. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-12-2019-0353/FULL/XML>
- Filho, W. L., Amaro, N., Avila, L. V., Brandli, L., Damke, L. I., Vasconcelos, C. R. P., Hernandez-Diaz, P. M., Frankenberger, F., Fritzen, B., Velazquez, L., & Salvia, A. (2021). Mapping sustainability initiatives in higher education institutions in Latin America. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 315, 128093–128093. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.128093>
- Filho, W. L., Salvia, A. L., Frankenberger, F., Akib, N. A. M., Sen, S. K., Sivapalan, S., Novo-Corti, I., Venkatesan, M., & Emblen-Perry, K. (2020). Governance and sustainable

- development at higher education institutions. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 23(4), 6002–6020. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S10668-020-00859-Y>
- Filho, W. L., Sierra, J., Price, E., Eustachio, J. H. P. P., Novikau, A., Kirrane, M., Dinis, M. A. P., & Salvia, A. L. (2024). The role of universities in accelerating the sustainable development goals in Europe. *Scientific Reports*, 14(1), 15464–15464. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-65820-9>
- Filho, W. L., Will, M., Salvia, A. L., Adom̂sent, M., Grahl, A., & Spira, F. (2019). The role of green and sustainability offices in fostering sustainability efforts at higher education institutions. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 232, 1394–1401. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.05.273>
- Filho, W. (2025). The future of competence building for sustainable development (pp. 423–434). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-80380-2\\_20](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-80380-2_20)
- Filho, W., Simaens, A., Paço, A., Hernandez-Diaz, P., Vasconcelos, C., Fritzen Gomes, B., & Maclean, C. (2023). Integrating the sustainable development goals into the strategy of higher education institutions. *The International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology*, 30(5), 564–575. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504509.2023.2167884>
- <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5572-7341>
- Heasly, B., Iliško, D. & Lindner, J. (2025). Editorial: Reimagining the future: Unleashing the potential of transformations. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education*, 16(2), 2025. 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.2478/dcse-2025-0012>
- Holst, J. (2023). Towards coherence on sustainability in education: A systematic review of Whole Institution Approaches. *Sustainability Science*, 18(2), 1015–1030. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-022-01226-8>
- Nketsia, W., Opoku, M. P., Saloviita, T., & Tracey, D. (2020). Teacher educators’ and teacher trainees’ perspective on teacher training for sustainable development. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 22(1), 49–65. <https://doi.org/10.2478/JTES-2020-0005>
- Ortega y Gasset, J. (1930). *Misión de la universidad. Obras Completas*, 4, 325.
- Papadimitriou, A., & Schiffecker, S. M. (2023a). Looking good or doing good? Define the U.S. university’s public mission by analyzing mission statements and strategic planning. *The TQM Journal*, 36(8), 2551–2569. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-10-2022-0313>
- Ramísio, P. J., Pinto, L. M. C., Gouveia, N., Costa, H., & Arezes, D. (2019). Sustainability strategy in higher education institutions: Lessons learned from a nine-year case study. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 222, 300–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.02.257>
- Ruano-Borbalan, J.-C. (2024). New missions for universities in the era of innovation: European and global perspectives for excellence and sustainability. *International Journal of Chinese Education*, 13(1), 2212585X241234334. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2212585X241234334>
- Ruiz-Mallén, I., & Heras, M. (2020). What sustainability? Higher education institutions’ pathways to reach the Agenda 2030 Goals. *Sustainability*, 12(4). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12041290>
- Salite, I., Drelinga, E., Iliško, D., Oļehnoviča, E., & Zariņa, S. (2016). Sustainability from the transdisciplinary perspective: An action research strategy for continuing education program development. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 18(2), 135–152. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jtes-2016-0020>

- Salite, I., Fjodorova, I., & Ivanova, O. (2024). Editorial: Teacher education and leadership for a sustainable world. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 26(2), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jtes-2024-0013>
- Sanches, F. E. F., Souza Junior, M. A. A. de, Massaro Junior, F. R., Povedano, R., & Gaio, L. E. (2023). Developing a method for incorporating sustainability into the strategic planning of higher education institutions. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 24(4), 812–839. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-10-2021-0439>
- Sterling, S. (2013). The future fit framework: An introductory guide to teaching and learning for sustainability in HE (Guide). *Journal of Education for Sustainable Development*, 7(1), 134–135. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973408213495614b>
- Tilbury, D. (2011). Higher education for sustainability: A global overview of commitment and progress. In *Higher Education in the World 4. Higher Education's Commitment to Sustainability: From Understanding to Action*; Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI), (pp. 18–28), Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tomasella, B., Wylie, A., & Gill, D. (2023). The role of higher education institutions (HEIs) in educating future leaders with social impact contributing to the sustainable development goals. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 19(4), 329–346. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SEJ-03-2022-0027>
- Trencher, G., Yarime, M., McCormick, K. B., Doll, C. N. H., & Kraines, S. B. (2014). Beyond the third mission: Exploring the emerging university function of co-creation for sustainability. *Science and Public Policy*, 41(2), 151–179. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scipol/sct044>
- Tünnermann, C. (2019). The Córdoba University Reform. In *Higher Education and Society Journal (ESS)*, 9(1), 103–127. <https://ess.iesalc.unesco.org/index.php/ess3/article/view/182>
- Vallaëys, F., Oliveira, M. L. S., Crissien, T., Solano, D., & Suarez, A. (2022). State of the art of university social responsibility: A standardized model and compared self-diagnosis in Latin America. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 36(3), 325–340. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-05-2020-0235/FULL/HTML>
- Zhou, L., Rudhumbu, N., Shumba, J., & Olumide, A. (2020). Role of higher education institutions in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. In G. Nhamo & V. Mjimba (Eds), *Sustainable development goals and institutions of higher education*. Sustainable Development Goals Series. (pp. 87–96). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-26157-3\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-26157-3_7)

Correspondence related to this paper should be addressed to: Arias-Valle, María-Belén, National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), Catholic University of Cuyo, San Juan, Argentine, e- mail [phd.marias@gmail.com](mailto:phd.marias@gmail.com).