

STORIES OF SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable Fashion



For Campus Sustainability Month, we explored the topic of sustainable fashion with campus and community leaders at the forefront of innovation, unpacking its ecological and social impact and building zero-waste culture and community. Sustainable Fashion and Social Impact with EcoChampion Kimberly McGlenn of Grant Blvd Bucha Leather and Sustainable Innovation with EcoChampion Zimri Hinshaw. In this collection, find curated discussion guides from these events and a TU Sustainability blog summarizing the expert-led campus conversation.



SUSTAINABLE FASHION AND SOCIAL IMPACT WITH ECO- CHAMPION KIMBERLY MCGLONN

Grant Blvd uses sustainable fashion by designing inclusive pathways and creating employment opportunities. Kimberly uses her platform and business to bring attention to the challenges of mass incarceration and need for prison reform. Grant Blvd and Kimberly propose a solution to addressing the larger global crises and social problems stemming from climate change and poverty.

Join the conversation with Kimberly McGlonn, CEO and Founder of Grant Blvd, and travel to the place where she learned the power of acting with love and speaking out against inequity. Expect conversation, led by sustainability student leaders, to cover diverse topics such as:

- Leveraging your passions for social change
- Local impacts of fast fashion
- Social-impact entrepreneurship and ecologically-minded solutions to poverty

Check out the blog post about Kimberly [here](#).

DISCUSSION GUIDE

For this event, we invited select student leaders and entrepreneurs involved in sustainable fashion initiatives and even their own fashion brands to help guide the discussion as roundtable participants. The roundtable centered around the three themes of people, planet and profit. Below are selected discussion questions bucketed by these themes:

PLANET

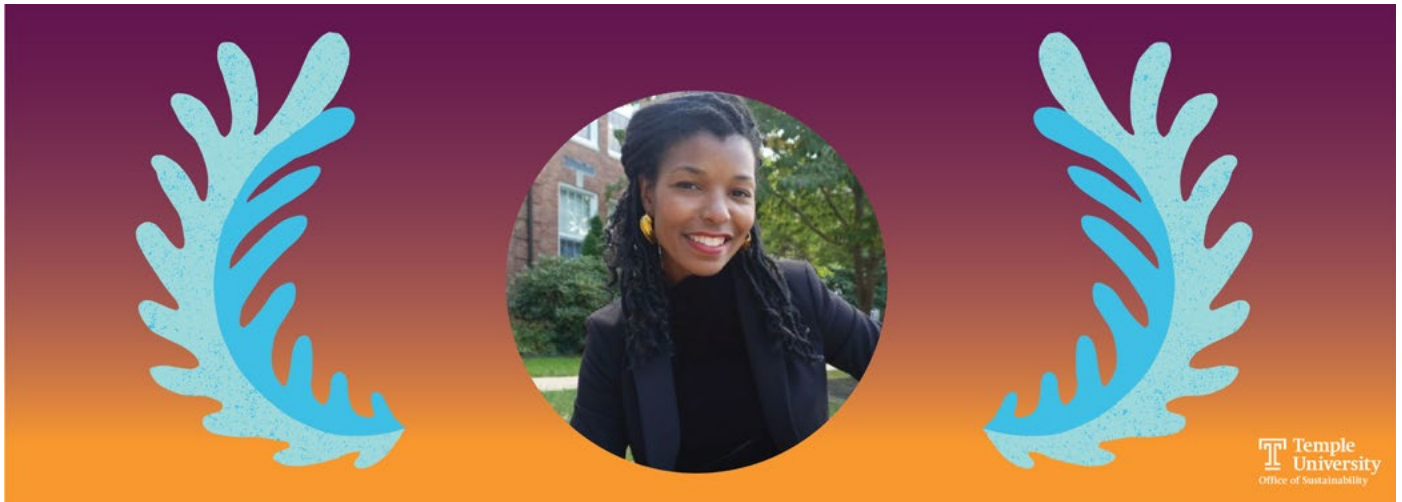
- What advice do you have for people who are beginning their journeys in sustainable fashion as entrepreneurs?
- What makes Grant BLVD stand out compared to other sustainability-focused fashion lines?
- What happens to pieces not sold? What would be your ideal destination?
- As a sustainable entrepreneur myself, do you have any advice on how to source sustainable fabrics?
- What sustainable considerations do you take in the manufacturing and designing process?

PEOPLE

- How can businesses utilize their social platforms for advocacy/change? Do they have a social responsibility to do so?
- How has the community you've grown impacted your business action and strategy?
- Philly is the most incarcerated large city in America. Are you aware of any other efforts focused on mass liberation in Philadelphia? Do you work together with them?
- As a sustainable company with a mission to reform our justice system, do you ever find yourself dealing with someone who is actively against your mission? If so, what would you say to them as the CEO of Grant Blvd?
- When creating your brand, how did you utilize your childhood upbringing to create such a clear and uniformed brand? (as in the language you choose, the products you sell, and in the management of your staff?)

PROFIT

- Do you think that one day sustainable fashion will become "affordable" for the average person?
- Do you think there's value in pressuring big but affordable brands like Forever 21 or Zara to clean up their act? Is that a long term solution and how would we even do it?
- Sometimes sustainable fashions have a high price tag. Any advice for people to gain access to these fashions? Where should we start as consumers?
- How do you price your items?
- How do you leverage your social media to promote your mission?
- Where do you see/ where would you like to see Grant Blvd 10 years from now?
- Would the people you knew from 2677 Grant Blvd be proud of your success? What do you think they would have to say to you?
- What were some initial obstacles you dealt with in the beginning processes of Grant Blvd, and how did you overcome those obstacles?
- Do you have any other social impact initiatives that you are passionate about outside of your initiatives with Grant BLVD? What is an organization that you are proud to be involved with in Philadelphia or the greater area?



CHANNELING PASSION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Bringing awareness of mass incarceration through sustainable fashion.

Wrapping up Stories of Sustainability: Fashion Series with Sustainable Fashion and Social Impact Q+A! We welcomed CEO and Founder of Grant Blvd, Kimberly McGlenn, in conversation with Temple Made sustainable student leaders. Using sustainable fashion, Grant BLVD designs inclusive pathways and creates employment opportunities. Grant BLVD proposes a solution to addressing the larger global crisis and social problems stemming from climate change and poverty.

MEET OUR THOUGHT LEADER.

Kimberly is an activist, teacher, podcaster, and business owner tackling mass incarceration through sustainable fashion. She earned her Ph.D. from LSU and serves as a councilmember and school teacher in Montgomery County. Kimberly opened Grant BLVD's storefront in August of 2020, tapping into West Philly using fashion as a "mechanism for creating opportunities". As a creative director, she uses her platform to bring attention to the challenges of mass incarceration and the need for prison reform.



MEET OUR SUPERSTAR STUDENT LEADERS.



We were joined by five superstar students. With varying majors and career goals, student leaders came together through their passion and desire to learn. They channeled their passion for the environment, fashion, and making a positive difference by leading an insightful and empowering conversation with Kimberly.

THE POWER OF ACTING WITH LOVE AND SPEAKING OUT AGAINST INEQUITY.

Hear directly from Kimberly on her journey and present efforts to make a change! Here we have highlighted our answers and insight from Kimberly.

We are guided through this conversation by superstar student leaders with three main topics in mind: People, Planet, and Profit.

Layers of permanent disruption are created once someone is convicted of a crime. Whether one can secure a job trickles into their housing, funding, and ability to reunite with their children. Kimberly's legacy is just beginning as she founded Grant BLVD, knowing she could channel her passion for style by creating a sustainable fashion brand and eliminating barriers to provide employment opportunities.

Q: What advice would you have for people beginning their journeys in sustainable fashion, and for sustainable entrepreneurs?

A: Being sustainable starts with committing individually, to be able to defend the decisions that we make in terms of sustainability while educating others. The high standard of sustainability is reducing consumption, the second highest is repurposing items to avoid adding waste and the highest standard is that we don't buy new products. Overall, circularity and reusing products are most important – and that is how we are bringing Grant BLVD to the next level. Our goal is to encourage our shoppers to bring their garments back to us, to extend their life and give them a new purpose.

Grant BLVD stands out against its competitors with its diverse and queer female staff, partnerships with communities in Philadelphia and their efforts of giving to non-profit organizations. The larger challenge for humans is to overcome our current consumer behavior. With consistency and endurance, we must demand more from our consumers, regulating purchases, and recognizing purchasing power while acting on it. For a more in-depth conversation with Kimberly about consumers and consumption, head over to the Green Dreamer Podcast.

Q: Do you have any advice for someone who loves fashion but is feeling disillusioned with the fashion industry as a whole?

A: Much of the disillusionment comes from brands claiming they are sustainable but not being ethical. It continues into the history of fashion in America and the cotton industry. These “sustainable” brands negatively affect Black and Brown communities through their manufacturing efforts and low-fair wages. It comes down to conducting research, and to stop shopping with brands that truly only benefit the top 5%. We must police ourselves and our consumption.

It’s a tricky balance! Kimberly is constantly trying to figure out how to strike the balance between advocacy and sales. Determining how to strike the balance of being aware of the real things happening in our neighborhoods and country while still recognizing that Grant BLVD is telling a story about fashion.



Grant BLVD is using ethically and sustainably sourced fashion to tell a story about pleasure.

Q: Do you believe that one day sustainable fashion will be affordable for the average person?

A: Well, we have gotten comfortable in this society where things cost more than we think they should and vice versa. I know that I am investing in my pieces, spending more because what I am wearing reflects my values which is not supporting slave labor or destroying the planet. Embracing our value as consumers, I believe, is the next step for the system to start recalibrating itself.

In the next 10 years, Kimberly hopes to see Grant BLVD break into new markets, build upon a talented team, and develop strategic partnerships with smaller brands. Overall, Kimberly is excited about educating people around various backgrounds about the intersections of sustainability and justice, sustainability and democracy, sustainability and equity and sustainability, and the survival of us as a whole.

Q: What barriers did you face as you founded Grant BLVD and built upon the brand?

A: As a woman, I was presented with those barriers. And a teacher for the last 15 years, I was constantly approached with the questions of: what do you know about fashion? For me, it was about countering narratives about what my talent was. I constantly remind myself that I am capable of. I was really careful about my tribe of people, and investing my time in people who encourage me and have faith in me.

Q: We're all in this fight and we are here for the gradual change of how people live their lives sustainability. What do you have to say to someone with the "I want to change now" mentality?

A: As Americans, we are addicted to convenience and ease. It is challenging to overcome that mindset. But one word that I believe can help us is legacy. To remind ourselves of our legacy, what we leave behind, and the power that we have to influence others.

It is about "making sacrifices as a leader and businesswoman" to make change. It was truly beautiful to be in a space with like-minded people pushing for change. During this conversation, we empowered each other and learned from each other's experiences.

REMAIN EMPOWERED AND LEARN MORE FROM KIMBERLY

[Join GRANT BLVD community.](#)

[Shop with Grant BLVD.](#)

[Connect with Kimberly.](#)

[Remain inspired by Kimberly through Instagram.](#)

[Listen to School for Disruptors podcast.](#)

[Watch 13th on Netflix.](#)

BUCHA LEATHER AND SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION WITH ECOCHAMPION ZIMRI HINSHAW

This story of sustainability offers Temple community members insight into real-life experience of student entrepreneurs' experience implementing corporate social responsibility principles and building a triple bottom business from the ground up.

Bucha Leather provides true alternatives and solutions to the unsustainable leather industry. Through a zero waste product lifecycle, the biodegradable material goes right back to the soil as a nutrient rather than taking up space in a landfill. Not to mention its only byproduct is delicious kombucha!

Bucha Leather provides sustainable leather alternatives, 100 percent biodegradable product that is animal-free, with zero plastic additives while having high strength and durability. Hear from Zimri Hinshaw, Bucha Leather Chief Executive Officer, more about Bucha Leathers commitment to sustainable production

Check out the blog post about Zimri [here](#).



SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION WITH BUCHA LEATHER INC.

ECOCHAMPION PROFILE

Zimri T. Hinshaw is a Temple College of Liberal Arts Economics major with a minor in Business from FOX. He is the Founder and CEO of Bucha Leather Inc., which creates premium animal-free leather made out of bacterial nanocellulose.



Temple Sustainability: Could you briefly describe what sustainability means to you?

Zimri Hinshaw: Making our production as clean as humanly possible while keeping it inspired and values about circular production goals. Thinking back and always leaning on the values that we started the company with and always thinking about zero waste. What is our end of life for our product? How can we be biodegradable and recyclable? How do you balance that with a textile that needs to be durable and a long life time? Thinking about this strategically on a daily basis is what sustainability means to me with Bucha Leather.”

Temple Sustainability: Could you briefly describe what sustainability means to you?

Zimri Hinshaw: Making our production as clean as humanly possible while keeping it inspired and values about circular production goals. Thinking back and always leaning on the values that we started the company with and always thinking about zero waste. What is our end of life for our product? How can we be biodegradable and recyclable? How do you balance that with a textile that needs to be durable and a long life time? Thinking about this strategically on a daily basis is what sustainability means to me with Bucha Leather.”

Temple Sustainability: Is your research project a climate solution? How or why?

ZH: We are not looking for an alternative to leather. We are looking to replace traditional animal leather producers. Eliminating one of the worlds largest pollutants, shifting away from animal products is so important. Our product is widely appealing, the same appeal to people that adore real leather. You have to make what you are doing widely appealing and transcendent of conflict so that it’s the best solution period... bringing more change instead of more polarization. We love the vegan and the meat eaters and we want them ALL to buy our product!

Temple Sustainability: How does sustainability research affect change on campus? How can we build a culture of sustainability?

ZH: Involving students and campus organizations on campus, where you can see students actively working to solve these issues on campus, collaboration between organizations like Net Impact, to reach a wider net of students and build a larger community. When a student comes up and tells me, “I’ve seen every pitch you’ve done, every event you’ve been at, etc... because of all the clubs and orgs I’m in” that’s when I know there is a community forming around sustainability and entrepreneurship at Temple University. The question is, how do we make this more visible? How can a new student walking on campus or going through TUPortal or getting their student newsletter know about and be able to connect with this movement?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Are there any other products like Bucha Leather out there? Who are your competitors and how do you differentiate your product?
- Happy to see that you point out how faux and synthetic leather alternatives are unsustainable. Common misconception with products is that they are better for the environment when in reality they are just as bad. Do you find that these alternatives are popular or is the traditional leather industry still leading the way?
- You stated that Bucha Leather uses far less products to create than traditional leather. How many products does it take?
- Are your products to create the Bucha Leather locally sourced? I am curious where you get them.
- What products do you envision Bucha Leather producing in the near future?
- How did you discover Bucha Leather?
- Zimri, when did you personally find passion for the environment and sustainability issues?

WITHIN EVERY GLASS OF KOMBUCHA IS THE SOLUTION TO THE LEATHER INDUSTRY.

Bucha Leather is not an alternative to leather, is it replacing traditional animal leather products. The problem behind the leather industry and its alternatives lie in their unsustainable production, energy and waste. The global leather industry pollutes the earth with over four million tons of solid waste every year. Its competitors, synthetic and faux leather, use unsustainable products that take up to 500 years to decompose littering our earth in landfills.



Bucha Pillow: Animal-free with no plastic additives, high strength and durability, & a premium leather texture!

Bucha Leather provides the real solution to the leather industry. It is grown from strong bacterial nanocellulose and treated with all-natural waxes and dyes. It is animal-free with no plastic additives, has high strength and durability while boasting a premium leather texture. Bucha does not compromise on sustainability while meeting high-end industry and consumer standards. For their goal textile, Bucha implements five steps within their scientific and production process. This whole process takes 22 days, 15 days for growth, and 7 days for drying & treatment. Bucha has the fastest manufacturing time across the entire leather industry!

Bucha sells sheets of textiles directly to creators and designers and wholesale to manufacturers. They look for those trying to incorporate sustainable textiles into their final products.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLY-FOCUSED VENTURE.

Zimri, along with his team, have built a sustainable production system. Goals within this production system are focused on a full cycle of sustainability, creating zero waste and low impact on the earth. After the growth period is complete and treatments are applied, the material dries and is ready for its finish touches. Bucha products come full circle. After they are applied and come to its end of use, the textiles can be composted and recycled back into earth!

When working to achieve a long-term vision and maximum profitability, Zimri highlights the importance of making compromises and knowing how to scale back in the future. With Bucha's commitment to full cycle sustainability, highlighted as the triple bottom line, he touches on the importance of balancing people, planet and profit.

As Zimri builds this model, he is constantly thinking about Bucha's sustainable innovation. Asking himself, and his team: What is our end of life for our product? How can we be biodegradable and recyclable? How do we balance that with textiles that need to be durable and have a long life?



 tusustainability

 templecoowls

 TempleEcoOwls

<https://sustainability.temple.edu>