

Sustainability Newsletter



WELCOME TO THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

The University Office of Sustainability focuses on integrating sustainability concepts and criteria into policy and planning, curriculum and research, building and operations, community outreach, and extracurricular activities.



M.Ed Candidate Gemma Romano, PhD Candidate Roopa Rakshit (not pictured), and Assistant Professor Lindsay Galway presented their sustainability-focused research in 2017 to The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, along with the Office of Research and Innovation and the University Sustainability Coordinator.

We also strive to act as an information hub on sustainability initiatives, teaching, and research at the University. This newsletter is intended to be one method to communicate sustainability happenings at the University to our community.

We would like to acknowledge and bring attention to sustainability initiatives that have been around long before the Office of Sustainability came along. These initiatives have been spearheaded by various champions in the University, from faculty, staff, and students.

The Office of Sustainability is part of the University's commitment to providing support for these sorts of initiatives, and to be a central body for connecting to the sustainability movement.

We look forward to publishing more newsletters to keep you informed about sustainability at Lakehead University.

**HAVE SUSTAINABILITY RELATED RESEARCH,
INITIATIVES, OR NEWS YOU WANT TO SHARE?
CONTACT US AT:**

coordinator.sustainability@lakeheadu.ca

Sustainability Coordinator

MESSAGE FROM THE SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR

In 2014 the Centre for Place and Sustainability Studies conducted the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) developed by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). The assessment provided a snapshot of how the university was performing with regard to sustainability. It was led by Dr. David Greenwood, and spearheaded by MEd student Ledah McKellar with the help of a number of research assistants. It became evident that advancing the broad and diverse areas of sustainability at the university would be vastly strengthened with the centralised support of a Coordinator. Thus one of the primary recommendations that came out of the assessment was the hiring of a Sustainability Coordinator. A Sustainability Executive Advisory Committee was formed and a successful NOHFC application resulted in the university having the funds to hire a Sustainability Research Coordinator for one year. This position has evolved into the current Sustainability Coordinator position.

The main goal of the Sustainability Coordinator position is to nurture a culture of sustainability at the university in all of its functions and operations. The Coordinator works collaboratively with all levels of employees at the university including senior administration, faculty, staff, and students, to plan, develop, and facilitate existing and new sustainability efforts.

Having been involved in the STARS assessment and excited by the potential in the position, Ledah McKellar assumed the role of Sustainability Coordinator. Being engaged with the STARS process connected McKellar with various departments and people at the university and demonstrated to her the array

of sustainability projects already in place. McKellar has a BA from McGill University, majoring in African Studies, which gave her the opportunity to study in South Africa and Zambia. She also has a BEd and an MEd from Lakehead University. For her MEd, she conducted a thesis on “Exploring Women’s Experiences with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome: Implications for Education, Self-Perception, and Medicalization.” During her time as a student, she worked as the Sustainability Foods Coordinator for the Lakehead University Student Union (LUSU).



Originally hailing from Toronto, McKellar has found “her woods” in Thunder Bay. She is an avid outdoorsperson, with a love for canoeing,

angling, and backcountry camping. McKellar has a deep passion for spending time in the boreal forest and on inland lakes. It is in those spaces she finds renewal, and the reminder that sustainability, though challenging, is worth working for. Embodying personal sustainability can sometimes be a challenge in our fast-paced society. McKellar, along with other members of the LUSSC, is currently providing sustainability tours on the Thunder Bay campus as a way for the university community to connect to the place around them and to slow down. For more information, you can contact her at sustainability.coordinator@lakeheadu.ca

Overview of Sustainability

OVERVIEW OF SUSTAINABILITY AT LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY



Sustainability is a diverse, global movement in society, economics, environment, and in higher education. At Lakehead University, sustainability is considered in a pluralistic and inclusive way, encompassing human and ecological health, social justice and equity, Indigenous rights, secure livelihoods, workplace wellbeing, and leadership for vibrant and resilient communities. It is a complex term as its meaning can differ from place to place and from person to person.

Lakehead University aspires to make sustainability a shared priority in all sectors of university life. In the spring of 2016, the Office of Sustainability, along with the Sustainability Executive Advisory Committee, launched a sustainability governance framework for the University.

The Executive Advisory Committee is composed of the Provost and President Academic, the Vice-President of Finance and Administration, the Vice-President of External Relations, the Vice-President of Research and Innovation, the Principal (Lakehead Orillia), the University Sustainability Coordinator, and LUSU, along with other members appointed by the Provost.

Lakehead's University's comprehensive approach to sustainability reflects its participation in AASHE (the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education) and its completion in 2014 of the STARS assessment, led by the Centre for Place and Sustainability Studies under the direction of Dr. David Greenwood.

Overview of Sustainability



The Lakehead University Sustainability Stewardship Council (LUSCC) is a place where faculty, staff, students, and community representatives come together to help shape Lakehead's unique approach to sustainability-related matters across the institution. The LUSCC is currently made up of three Working Groups, which are organized around three of the major STARS categories: Academics, Engagement, and Operations. See Lakehead's STARS report: stars.aashe.org/institutions/lakehead-university-on/report/2014-11-12/

Last year, the LUSCC devoted much of its efforts to developing a Sustainability Action Plan that impacts all sectors of the University on both campuses.

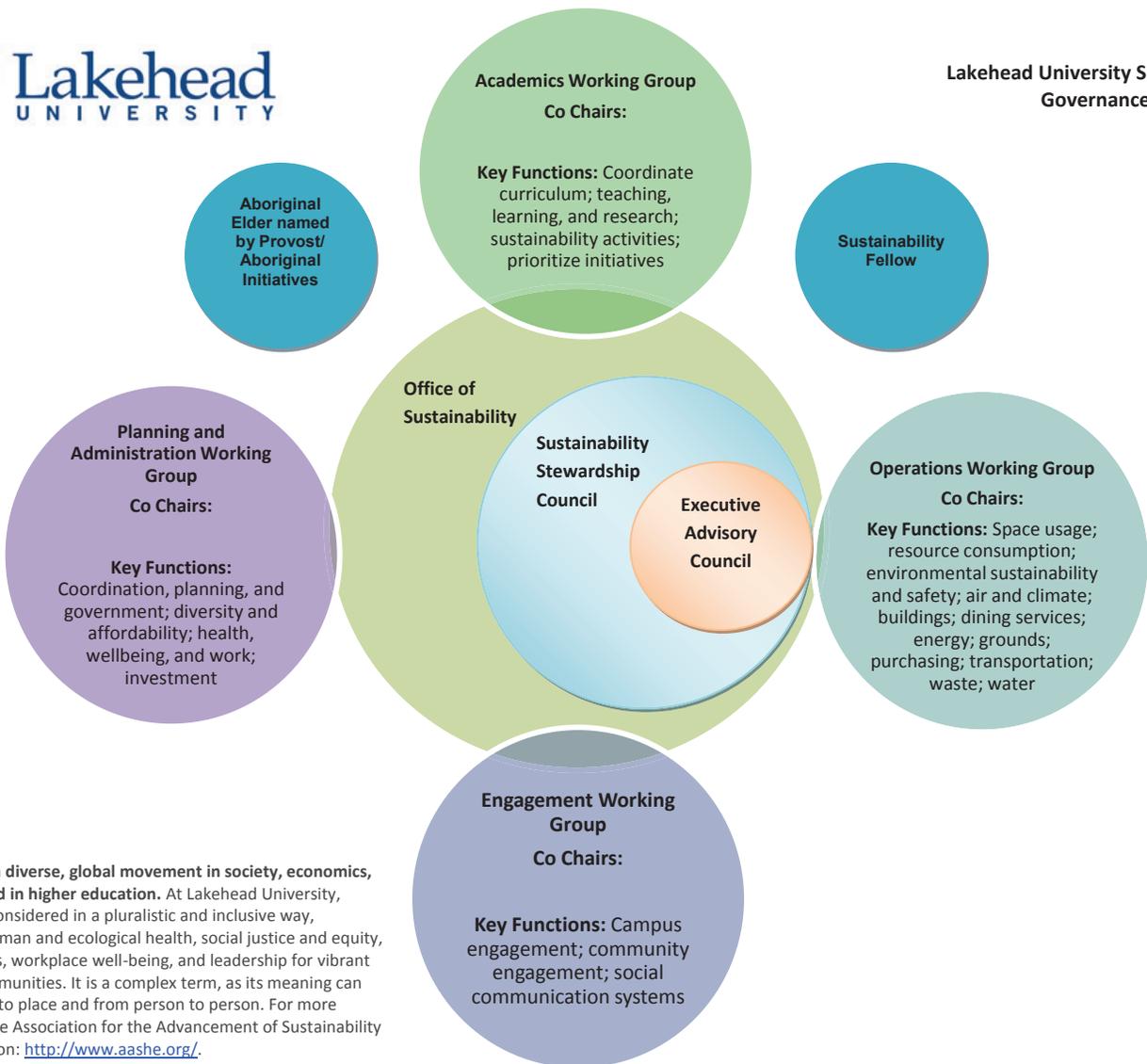
The power to create a more sustainable Lakehead lies in our collective willingness to authentically engage with the issues and with each other, and in our commitment to translate our ongoing dialogue into meaningful actions. The Sustainability Action Plan for the University is a bold vision with goals for both campuses ranging from increasing our sourcing of local food in cafeterias to enhancing sustainability learning opportunities to including sustainability content in courses in every Faculty. The Plan is currently under review and a Town Hall is being organized to present it to the community to solicit feedback. Please stay tuned to our website for updates.

lakeheadu.ca/about/sustainability

Sustainability Governance



Lakehead University Sustainability
Governance Framework
January 2018



Sustainability is a diverse, global movement in society, economics, environment, and in higher education. At Lakehead University, sustainability is considered in a pluralistic and inclusive way, encompassing human and ecological health, social justice and equity, secure livelihoods, workplace well-being, and leadership for vibrant and resilient communities. It is a complex term, as its meaning can differ from place to place and from person to person. For more discussion, see the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education: <http://www.aashe.org/>.

Ontario Master Naturalist Program

By Mallory Vanier

The Ontario Master Naturalist Program (OMNP) concluded another successful session this summer, taking place for the first time in Thunder Bay. Originating in Orillia in 2015, the Ontario Master Naturalist Program aims to increase participants' understanding and appreciation of local species and ecology through a mix of classroom sessions and in-field experiences.



Photo credit: Nicole Hamley

Program sessions cover a wide range of topics tailored to the local environment (Orillia or Thunder Bay) including flora, fauna, geology, and cultural history. Local experts are brought in to enhance the programming and provide more specialized knowledge. Participants who complete the week-long course and 30 hours of volunteer work at a nature-based organization will receive their certificate and Master Naturalist designation.

The Ontario Master Naturalist Program has been a flagship initiative at Lakehead Orillia, offering a unique educational experience not available anywhere else in Ontario. The program is designed to “start [participants] on the journey of learning, providing them with all the tools they need to develop their skills and knowledge,” according to Bob Bowles, program founder and renowned Orillia area naturalist. “In only four short years,” notes Bowles, “our program has expanded to be just as complete as some of the programs in the United States that have been running for over fifteen years.”

The Ontario Master Naturalist Program is open to members of the public (i.e., not restricted to current Lakehead University students), and was established by the University in conjunction with the organization, Ontario Nature. Since the program's inaugural year, more than 100 participants have successfully completed the program.

We look forward to seeing more graduates from this program in both Orillia and Thunder Bay in the future! If you are interested in future sessions of the Master Naturalist course, please visit the program page, lakeheadu.ca/about/Orillia-campus/community-programs/omnp, or contact the Coordinator of the Office of Community Programs, Dr. Linda Rodenburg, at lrodenu@lakeheadu.ca

Picturing Climate Change In Thunder Bay

By Mallory Vanier

PHOTOVOICE PROJECT

A collaborative project between Lakehead University and EarthCare Thunder Bay, the Photovoice Project aims to engage members of the community in the climate change discussion.

The project built on the recent work of Dr. Lindsay Galway (Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences), looking at narratives around community impacts and adaptations to climate change. Dr. Galway coordinated the interactive project along with Curniss McGoldrick, who was then the Climate Adaptation Coordinator for EarthCare. Ten participants from EarthCare's Climate Adaptation Working Group, representing different age groups and backgrounds, took part in the Photovoice Project.

To begin, the group developed a series of questions that would guide their photography in the weeks to come, including, "Why is climate change an issue in Thunder Bay?" and "What would give me hope for a resilient future in the face of climate change?" Dr. Galway was especially excited that the group had made "hope" a key part of their project; often the anxiety about the negative impacts of climate change overshadow opportunities for positive action in our communities.

After a two week break, participants reconvened and identified themes that connected their photos through group discussion and individual reflection. These themes included urgency, leadership, uncertainty, community, and opportunity. The group narrowed down the photos to those that best illustrated these themes, and developed the messaging and narrative for the final exhibit.

The final 15 selected photos have been displayed in several public venues including Lakehead University, City Hall, and the Victoriaville Mall in addition to being available on the project's website. The project website also features links to additional resources, which is intended to help members of the community engage in climate change discussions in a way that is meaningful and relevant to Thunder Bay.

If you are interested in displaying or viewing the photo exhibit, or would like more information on the project, please visit the project website at: climatechangengetbay.com



Turning the world on its head

By Paul Berger

"As the world is rapidly warmed, climate destabilization is messing things up and turning things, as we and other species knew them, on their heads."

Visiting Scholar Spotlight

By Mallory Vanier

KELSEY JONES-CASEY

“What does climate change mean for people who live close to the land in Northwestern Ontario?” This is the question that Fulbright fellow and Minnesota native Kelsey Jones-Casey is seeking to answer through her “Boreal Heartbeat” project. Through a series of interviews she conducted across Northwestern Ontario, Jones-Casey is aiming to learn more about the impacts that climate change is having on the emotional and mental well-being of those who rely most on the boreal forest. From January to July 2017, she interviewed foragers, tourism operators, members of Indigenous communities, farmers, and others to see what (if any) climate/weather related changes they have observed, and how these changes have impacted them physically and emotionally. Changes observed by participants include seasonal changes (warmer winters, changes in winter ice cover), extreme or irregular weather events, and changes in abundance of plant species.



Marcelle Paulin and Brendan Grant, Pass Lake
(Photo credit: Kelsey Jones-Casey)

One of the most striking aspects of this project is the photos of each of the interviewees taken by Jones-Casey. Each photo features the interviewee(s) standing in front of their local boreal spaces, holding a chalkboard with their one or two-word emotional reaction to climate change (as shown in the photo below).



Duncan Michano, Biitgigong/Pic River First Nations
(Photo credit: Kelsey Jones-Casey)

The emotions expressed on these boards range from anxiety to fear to anger to hope. The participants' faces and reactions show the effects of climate change in our own backyard, and the impacts on our family, friends, and neighbours.

While the interview portion of the project is complete, Jones-Casey is still in the early stages of compiling and analyzing her data. She will be presenting some of these early findings as part of the Climate Change Forum at Lakehead University at the end of September.

Visit borealheartbeat.org for more information about the project, including interviews and preliminary findings.

Recent Publication

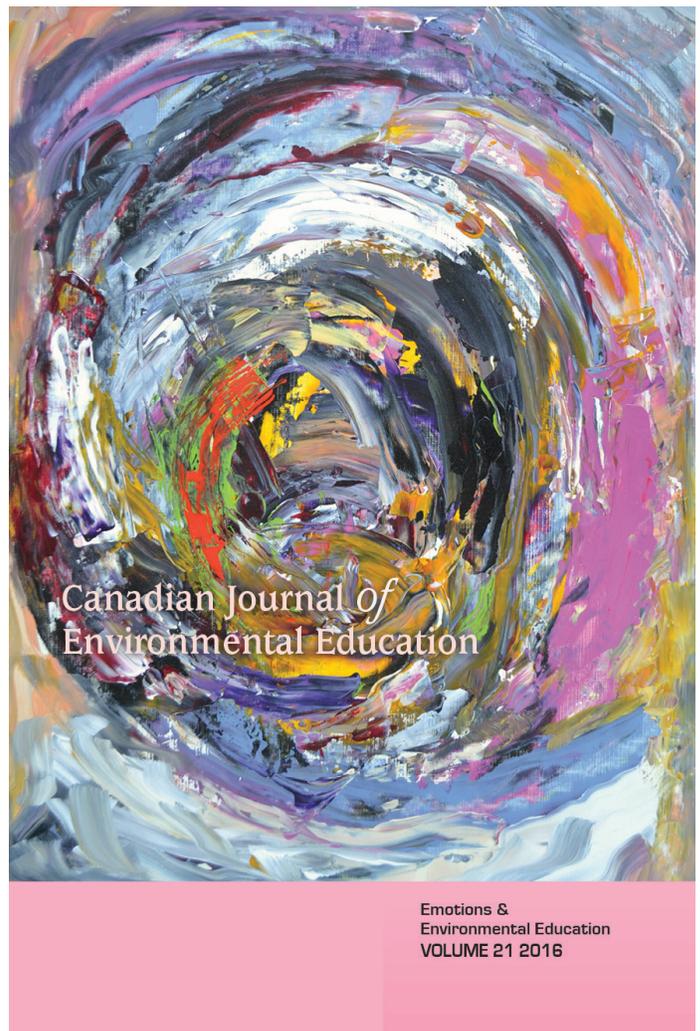
CANADIAN JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Lakehead University has been home to the Canadian Journal of Environmental Education since 2003. Founding editor Dr. Bob Jickling brought the journal to Lakehead when he joined the Faculty of Education and Dr. Connie Russell began sharing editorial duties with him shortly thereafter. After 12 years in the editor's chair, Dr. Russell decided it was time to pass the journal on. As of January 2017, the new team consists of editors Dr. Emily Root and Dr. Pat Maher (both at Cape Breton University) and associate editors Dr. Blair Niblett (Trent University) and Dr. Gregory Lowan-Trudeau (University of Calgary). The Lakehead connection remains strong, however; all four are Lakehead alumni!

The last volume under Dr. Russell's editorship was Volume 21 (2016) and it is devoted to exploring the emotional dimensions of environmental education. Environmental educators have long known that knowledge alone is insufficient for cultivating nourishing natural and human communities; indeed, many of us seem very well aware of environmental problems yet continue to engage in destructive practices.

Clearly, we need more nuanced and holistic understandings if we are to successfully tackle the environmental and social justice problems we face. In this volume, authors attend to a wide variety of emotional aspects involved in environmental education work, including fear, anxiety, discomfort, frustration, anger, embarrassment, guilt, grief, despair, burn-out, yearning, nostalgia, empathy, awe, wonder, pride, humility, appreciation, gratitude, bliss, love, and hope.

You can access this volume and all back issues for free at: cjee.lakeheadu.ca



Faculty Spotlight

By Mallory Vanier

Dr. Florin Pendea

For students at the Lakehead Orillia of Lakehead University, Dr. Florin Pendea is a recognizable figure in the field of climate and sustainability. Dr. Pendea is an Associate Professor in the Geography and the Environment and Sustainability Sciences departments at Lakehead Orillia. He also sits on the Sustainability Stewardship Council. His research and teaching explore the concept of sustainability through the lens of historical ecology and climate change.



Dr. Pendea discussing field activities with collaborators and students. (Photo Credit: Anastasia Plechova)

To Dr. Pendea, the core of sustainability is the “wise use of resources.” Through his research in historical ecology, he explores how our connection to the land and perspectives about resources have changed over time. His sustainability-related work often sees him collaborating with archaeologists and anthropologists to better understand the human/environment interface (more specifically the relationship between humans and their surroundings throughout history, and the environmental impacts of this relationship). Dr. Pendea looks to use this historical context to frame the environmental impacts of our current actions and make students more aware of the effect that their behaviours and choices have on our collective success.

Currently, Dr. Pendea’s research, conducted with Sustainability Sciences professors Dr. Kurissery and Dr. Kanavillil, is focused on better understanding the role and movement of carbon in wetland ecosystems. “In order to make solid predictions as to the relationship between atmospheric carbon...and climate change,” Dr. Pendea notes, “we must first understand the way these critical gases get (re)cycled through ecosystem and soil processes.” This research will help to not only shed light on the complex natural systems and processes that surround us, but will also give us a deeper understanding of the impacts of our actions.

If you are interested in connecting with Dr. Pendea about his research or courses, he can be reached in person (OA 3026) or via email ifpendea@lakeheadu.ca for more information.

Climate Change Forum

The first Lakehead University Climate Change Forum was held on September 28 and 29 on the Thunder Bay campus. Led by Dr. Sudip Rakshit, Professor and Canada Research Chair in Bioenergy and Biorefining Processes, the well-attended forum was a place for students, staff, faculty, government agencies, and community members to learn more about climate change and the research that is being done in the region on climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Day one provided a space for people less familiar with climate change to learn the basics. The “What is Climate Change Anyway?” panel launched the Forum, tailored to busting climate change myths. A presentation on EarthCare Thunder Bay and Lakehead University’s Collaborative photovoice exhibit followed, after which there was a student/faculty debate on whether humans are rising to the challenge of tackling the climate change crisis, and a presentation by Sherilee Harper on climate change impacts on Indigenous peoples’ health. The evening ended with keynote speaker, Kelsey Jones-Casey, a visiting Fulbright Scholar, who presented her research on the emotional impacts of climate change in Northwestern Ontario.

Day two included four panel discussions that provided space for more in depth discussions on different areas of research on climate change: climate change impacts on lake superior and its watersheds; climate modelling and data use; the bio-economy and climate mitigation; and community awareness perspectives.

The Lakehead University Climate Change Forum gratefully acknowledges the support of Lakehead University, the Centre for Research and Innovation in the Bio-Economy, the Government of Ontario, and the Government of Canada. (Support does not indicate endorsement on part of the Government of Ontario.)

For more information, please contact Dr. Sudip Rakshit at srakshit@lakeheadu.ca



Dr. Sudip Rakshit during the student/faculty debate. (Photo Credit: Kay Lee Photography)

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