



Environmental Flourishing and Climate Action Plan: In the Faculty and Beyond



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

Faculty of
Education



Land Acknowledgement

The Faculty of Education is located on the traditional lands of Indigenous Peoples. In Thunder Bay, we are located on the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation, Signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850. In Orillia, we are located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg. The Anishinaabeg include the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatomi nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy. We acknowledge the history that many nations hold in the areas around our campuses, and are committed to a relationship with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples based on the principles of mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and collaboration in the spirit of reconciliation. We support Indigenous sovereignty as climate action and recognize Indigenous leaders who have fought to preserve culture through the protection of Land, water, climate, and earth systems by way of Aki-based ways of being.



Introduction

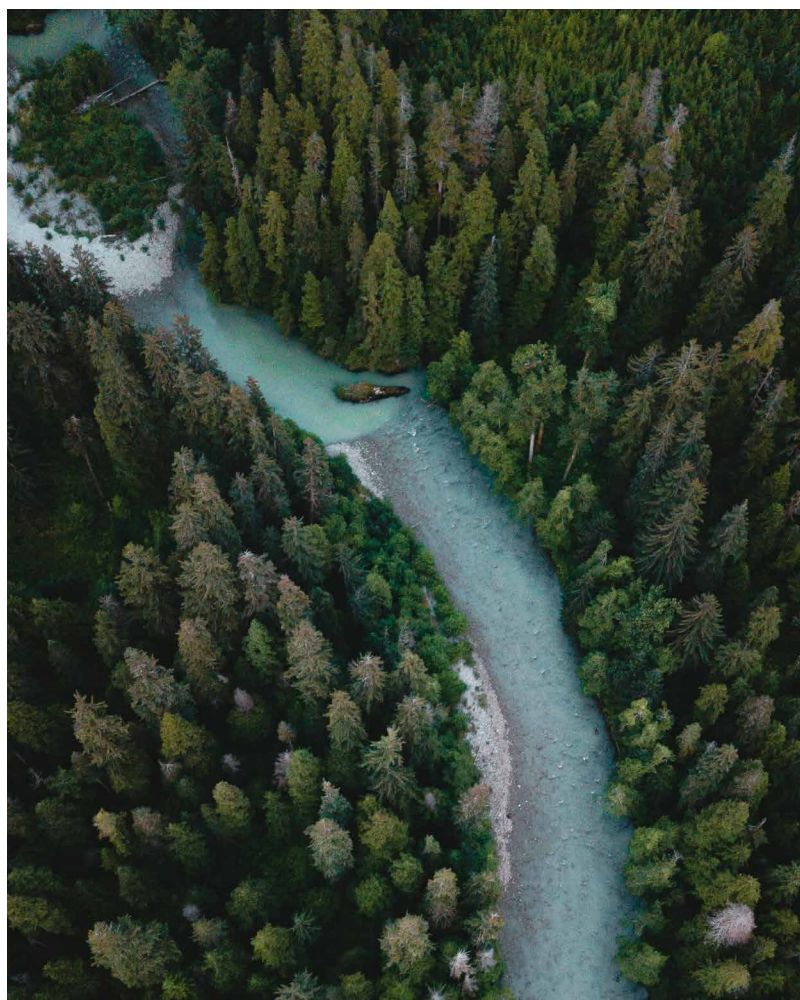
Universities are key actors in driving societal responses to socio-environmental crises and challenges. Specifically, faculties of education are uniquely positioned to lay foundations for environmental learning and justice, politics of sustainability, and climate action within K-12 and higher education systems.

The Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE) outlined this role in their *Statement of Commitment on the Climate Emergency* (2019) in which they identified the responsibility faculties of education have in increasing and improving environmental and sustainability education: “We recognize the power of education to transform practice. Faculties, Colleges, Schools, and Departments of Education have a major role in the education, research, policy formation, practices and information exchange necessary” (p. 4). The ACDE’s policy framework, the *Accord on Education for a Sustainable Future* (2022) further outlines the social and ethical responsibility of faculties of education and guiding principles.

The Ontario College of Teachers revised program accreditation guidelines (Regulation 347/02) enacts this responsibility and requires that a program of professional education include knowledge of the Ontario context in which elementary and secondary schools operate, including environmental learning, ecojustice, and climate action:

The inclusion of content regarding environmental learning, ecojustice, and climate action underscores the urgency of education’s critical responsibilities to address, mitigate, and adapt to the ongoing impacts of the climate crisis, and work towards equitable, accessible, inclusive, and just communities. The integration of this learning across all subjects and grades provides students with opportunities to think critically about their roles and responsibilities in, and contributions to, the interconnected and interdependent world. (*OCT Accreditation Resource Guide*, p. 48)

The Faculty of Education at Lakehead developed *Flourishing as a Faculty* to articulate the Faculty’s values and grapple with our responsibility within a world facing multiple crises. This plan, *Environmental Flourishing and Climate Action Plan in the Faculty and Beyond: An Action Plan*, responds to these calls to action by outlining steps toward integrating climate and environmental flourishing into our practices, teaching, research, and community engagement. Both *Flourishing as a Faculty* and this *Environmental Flourishing and Climate Action Plan in the Faculty and Beyond* align with and work to advance *Lakehead’s Sustainability Plan*. This plan has been developed by the following faculty, staff, and students (listed alphabetically): Paul Berger, Joan Chambers, George Drazenovich, Ellen Field, Jillian Fraser, Allison Gardiner, Ann Kajender, Ledah McKellar, Jacob Kearey-Moreland, Jason Kennedy, Maria Lalla, Devon Lee, Claire Morris, Teresa Ruberto, and Christina Summers, in consultation with members of the Faculty of Education.



LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

We value honesty, cooperation, caring and respect in interpersonal relationships. We value people putting themselves outside of their comfort zones to lead in increasing environmental flourishing.

Actions	Strategies	Timeline	Accountability
Prioritize environmental sustainability and climate action in the Faculty of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We see leadership as imperative at all levels of governance: Dean, staff, faculty, and students. We will lead and support environmental and climate action initiatives. We will encourage faculty, when applicable, to highlight the infusion of climate change and environmental sustainability content on their annual reports. We will ask the Dean to pay specific attention to this section while complying with collective agreements. We will encourage contract lecturers to highlight their progress on climate change and environmental sustainability content infusion when applying for positions. When offering food in the Faculty of Education, we will order or provide plant-based foods as the default, and choose the “china service” to avoid disposables. We will consider culture and dietary restrictions and we recognize that sustainably harvested food, including game, may be the most sustainable option. We will encourage Lakehead to create a Campus Food Charter that recommends practices for sustainable, equitable, healthy and pedagogically sound food policies on campus. 	Ongoing	<p>Everyone</p> <p>Dean Faculty</p> <p>Contract Lecturers</p> <p>Everyone</p> <p>EFCA Committee</p>
Establish a Faculty Council Standing Committee on Environmental Flourishing and Climate Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will create a Faculty Council Standing Committee on Environmental Flourishing and Climate Action [EFCA] to focus on the updating and implementation of this plan. This Committee will consult with students, staff, faculty, and relevant units. It will meet regularly. We will encourage ESTA and ESTA-O—the Education Student Teacher Associations—and the Education Graduate Student Association to create an Environmental position or sub-committee and to provide a representative to the proposed Faculty Council EFCA Standing Committee. 	<p>Starting in 2024/2025</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>EFCA Committee</p> <p>EFCA Committee ESTA & ESTA-O</p>
Embed environmental sustainability into Faculty of Education roles and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will share relevant climate and sustainability matters with each other via the FacEd listserve, including information on local climate strikes and other events. We will promote the Climate Caucus listserv that connects people across Lakehead University who want to share climate-related information. 	Ongoing	<p>EFCA Committee</p> <p>EFCA Committee</p>



Advocate for environmental sustainability and climate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will create and advocate for teaching spaces that reflect environmental and climate responsibility, including participating in committees and consultations for a new build in Orillia. We will support sustainability initiatives on our campuses, including the Lakehead Farm Pilot Project and permanent farmland protection, and Climate Justice Lakehead, among others. We will work in collaboration with the University's Sustainability Stewardship Council and the Office of Sustainability. 	Ongoing	Dean/Chairs EFCA Committee Everyone EFCA Committee/ University Sustainability Stewardship Council/ Office of Sustainability
Strengthen capacity for environmental and climate action across education systems and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will investigate identifying environmentally-focused associate teachers and schools and will endeavour to place students who express interest in placements with these teachers or in these schools. We will seek out community partners who engage in environmental education for alternative placements. 	Starting in 2024/25	EFCA Committee Placement officers EFCA Committee Placement officers

RESEARCH

We value faculty and student research projects on environmental flourishing.

Actions	Strategies	Timeline	Accountability
Provide supports for research in environmental sustainability & climate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will prioritize creating a Dean's Fund that awards seed money to faculty or students for research on environmental flourishing or climate action related to education or to the Faculty of Education or its programs. 	Starting in 2024/2025	Dean
Promote research in environmental sustainability & climate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will publicize faculty and student research related to environmental flourishing on the Faculty website, in the newsletter, and through LU Communications. We will highlight research conducted on our environmental and climate-focused courses on the Faculty of Education website to inspire incoming students. We will connect with campus recruitment to ensure these aspects of our program are highlighted in recruitment efforts. 	Ongoing Starting in 2024/2025	EFCA Committee EFCA Committee
Foster community research partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will compile and maintain a list of potential community partners who might benefit from access to researchers interested in environmental flourishing. 	Starting in 2024/25	EFCA Committee

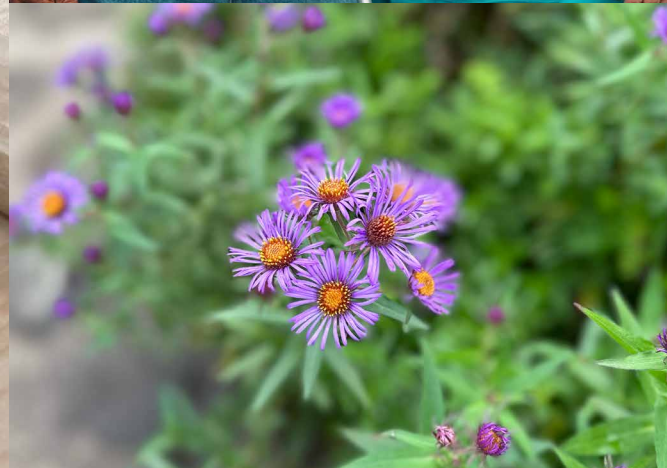
TEACHING & LEARNING

We will encourage teacher candidates to see themselves as change agents—that their role is to join the school system and critically analyse its protocols and procedures, advocating and acting for change for local and global environmental flourishing.

We will encourage a culture of learning in the faculty, whereby it is expected that people will make mistakes as they increase climate change and environmental sustainability content in their courses—and will learn from them.

[illegible]

Support curricular innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will encourage instructors to infuse climate change and environmental sustainability content throughout our programs as appropriate, providing professional development and support for faculty members as needed. We will encourage instructors to build opportunities for activism into their courses. We will encourage every instructor to take their class outside for a whole class or part of a class at least once, no matter the subject, season or weather. We will encourage instructors to include nature appreciation when outside and in other ways. We will encourage instructors in relevant BEd and MEd courses to include specific instruction on Kwauk and Casey's "Skills for a Green Transformation" - Figure 1 - including integrative thinking, systems thinking and disruptive thinking. We will encourage instructors to ask students to envision the world (through the subject they're teaching, if they like) as it may be in 2050, 2100 and 2500. This will help to build what Kwauk & Casey called "imaginative thinking" and "anticipatory" or "future" thinking. We will encourage every instructor to integrate Aki-based understandings of the world into their courses. We will encourage every instructor to have at least one assignment with an environmental theme or connection. We will encourage cross-curricular environmental education assignments or components to break down siloing. We will encourage active transportation and local field trips, which can often provide powerful and lasting environmental education experiences. We will encourage instructors to disrupt having students stationary for most of the time in most of their classes. We encourage instructors to be explicit with teacher candidates about why they are doing this. We will encourage instructors to highlight solutions and progress on climate change and other environmental problems in our courses to inspire and to spark the imagination and visioning of the myriad possibilities for tackling the big local and global challenges we're facing—integrating a sense of “collective hope” where possible and appropriate (Kelsey, 2016) We will encourage instructors to have students identify locally relevant issues and design and implement solutions-oriented action projects so that they can learn not only about, but also from, action. We will encourage the instructors of relevant BEd courses to include information on union protection to help teachers break away from “policing themselves.” Knowing that once they are permanent they have an extraordinary level of job protection could help them become change agents. We will encourage the instructors of relevant courses to include “sustainable happiness” (O'Brien, 2013) research in their courses that suggests connection to others, learning, being active, becoming aware of the world, giving, and having a sense of meaning make people happy, while accumulating stuff does not make people happy. We will encourage instructors to teach teacher candidates about trauma-informed pedagogy and to provide opportunities for them to explore their own emotional history and beliefs about emotions, encouraging faculty to discuss emotions and accept emotions as part of all classrooms. This responds to Yuval Noah Harrari’s suggestion that students need to be prepared for volatility and change: “<i>the most important things to emphasize in education are things like emotional intelligence and mental stability....the one thing they will need for sure, is the ability to reinvent themselves repeatedly.</i>” 	Ongoing	EFCA Committee Instructors EFCA Committee Instructors EFCA Committee Instructors EFCA Committee Instructors EFCA Committee Instructors Instructors BEd Chairs Instructors BEd Chairs Instructors Instructors Instructors Instructors Instructors Instructors Instructors
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<p>Support professional development for climate change and environmental education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will include an “integrating climate change” session during Welcome Days. • We will run Lunch and Learn sessions, highlighting people’s work in implementing climate change and environmental sustainability content infusion. • We will run a Lunch and Learn session on David Orr’s “What is Education For?” • We will invite the existing groups of instructors teaching the same courses to work together on exploring how climate change and environmental sustainability might be integrated into their courses. • We will explore using time at the start of Faculty Council meetings for professional development related to infusing climate change and environmental sustainability content throughout our programs. • The Dean’s Office will support hiring Elders and knowledge keepers to take classes onto the Land. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Dean EFCA Committee</p> <p>EFCA Committee</p> <p>EFCA Committee</p> <p>EFCA Committee Assistant Dean</p> <p>Dean EFCA Committee</p> <p>Dean</p>
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COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

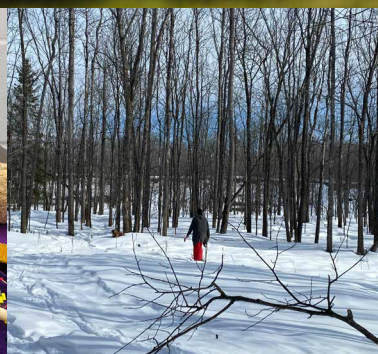
We value engaging with community to further climate- and sustainability-related actions.

Actions	Strategies	Timeline	Accountability
Improve communication about climate action and environmental flourishing across the Faculty of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will publicize existing environmentally-focused research and teaching partnerships in which faculty, staff, and students are involved. We will create a research landing page linked to the Faculty of Education website specifically focused on environmentally-focused research conducted by students and faculty. 	Ongoing	EFCA Committee
		2025/26	EFCA Committee
Embed opportunities for community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will raise student awareness of environmental issues in our communities and the various ways community organizations are responding. We will develop and support environmentally-focused service learning opportunities—for example, in <i>Democracy and Education</i>, connecting students with local organizations. We will publicize the MEd “Field Experience” course so that MEd students know they can get credit for environmentally-focused service learning. We will encourage more courses like the outdoor, experience-based and community-connected course led by Dr. Gary Plum in both the BEd and MEd programs. 	Ongoing	Instructors ESTA & ESTA-0 Instructors EFCA Committee Chairs EFCA Committee
Deepen connections between Faculty of Education and environmental flourishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will liaise with the Dean’s Advisory Council on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization (EDID) and Keewatinase Indigenous Education to ensure that diverse perspectives inform environmental flourishing. We will expand connections between environmental flourishing and climate action and the Faculty of Education’s and Lakehead’s Strategic Plans. 	Ongoing When under review	EDID Committee EFCA Committee
Strengthen outreach related to environmental flourishing and climate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will build and strengthen community partnerships to support environmental flourishing and climate action. We will support and deepen collaborations between the Faculty of Education and school boards to support environmental flourishing and climate action. We will advocate for improved environmental and climate policies in municipalities surrounding Lakehead campuses—including advocating for improved city cycling infrastructure. 	Ongoing	EFCA Committee Dean Chairs EFCA Committee EFCA Committee

OPERATIONS & FACILITIES

We will encourage the University to reduce the carbon footprint of the Faculty's physical plant as a whole, in line with international targets, while we work to reduce the carbon footprint of all operations that are within the Faculty's jurisdiction.

Actions	Strategies	Timeline	Accountability
Advocate for mitigation strategies to reduce ghg emissions of our programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will advocate for a ghg emissions audit to be conducted for the Faculty of Education and University that includes Scope 1, 2, & 3 emissions. We will continue to promote meetings on Zoom where feasible to avoid unnecessary travel, while acknowledging that digital mediation may be less than ideal in many circumstances. We will discourage excessive conference travel. 	Until completed	EFCA Committee
		Ongoing	EFCA Committee
			EFCA Committee
Develop supports for sustainable transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will advocate for EV charging at LU Orillia. We will advocate for covered and secure four-season bicycle parking and showers at both campuses to encourage cycling to work/school. We will factor in student commuting and emissions associated with these commutes, bundling classes where possible to reduce commuting. We will advocate for practicum placements, where feasible, to be at the closest school and, where possible, for students who live geographically close to one another to be placed at the same school to make carpooling more efficient. We will investigate the feasibility of running a bus from the Vaughan subway to Orillia to collect and deliver students in the morning and return them in the late afternoon. We acknowledge the possibility for GAs who attend classes in-person and are available to do GA work in-person to conduct relevant GA work from a distance, when possible, to reduce commuting. 	Until completed	EFCA Committee
		Ongoing	EFCA Committee
			Chairs EFCA Committee Placement Officers EFCA Committee Professional Experiences Coordinator EFCA Committee MEd Chair Faculty Instructors
Ensure our physical spaces reflect our environmental values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will encourage a culture of reporting environmental challenges to Physical Plant so things such as weatherstripping are quickly fixed. We will advocate for teaching spaces that are at the leading edge of sustainability (new construction to Passive house standard, real-time energy usage displays, etc.) We will create on-campus spaces for connection and reflection with the more-than-human world, including advocating for green space at or near Heritage Place (at least in line with an average school yard) to model outdoor education and nature connection pedagogy. We will add environmental sayings to the walls that reflect transformative change-making capacity. 	Ongoing	Everyone
			Dean EFCA Committee
			Dean EFCA Committee EFCA Committee Instructors



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