As Dean of FES, I am enormously proud of the amount, quality, and impact of our research. We are highly research-intensive, and the interdisciplinary character of our research means that we combine innovative methods and complex theoretical frameworks to investigate the pressing issues of our times: how to protect and achieve healthy, sustainable and equitable communities and economies, environmental conservation and species diversity, renewable and resilient energy systems, and more just ways of living together. In the face of the challenges of climate change, growing poverty, and persistent conflict, we produce evidence-based solutions and illuminating analyses of how to solve problems.

Our research is intertwined with the teaching of graduate and undergraduate students. Our classes train the next generation of researchers through hands-on research activities, bringing students to research locations around the world, and instruction by prominent and active researchers. This report is just a sample of the ways in which FES faculty, students, alumni, donors and community partners made positive change through our research efforts during the 2016 calendar year. I hope you enjoy it, and join us in supporting and celebrating the excellence of research at FES.

Noël Sturgeon, Dean FES.
Storying Climate Change: Narrative, Imagination, Justice, Resilience

Catriona Sandilands
2016 Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Fellow

Stories are crucial elements of our responses to climate change. On one hand, our collective understandings and imaginations are shaped by dominant, inherited narrative conventions; as so many public climate stories rely on strongly apocalyptic tropes, many people are uncertain how to respond to them in their everyday lives. On the other hand, stories help us make shared emotional and relational sense of the complexity of large-scale ecological and social transformation. Recent works of climate-related fiction, poetry, and memoir that reflect a range of literary possibilities thus present a powerful, alternative cultural repertoire. Indigenous and other communities in which stories are integral to ecological understanding lead the way.

“Stories, writing, and storytelling are a crucial ground in which to cultivate creative, collaborative, just, and meaningful responses to environmental issues.”

Storying Climate Change aims to extend this vital eco-cultural activity by bringing together members of the Trudeau community with (other) experts, activists, and creative writers for a lively, interdisciplinary conversation about climate change as a process in need of public story, especially as that story unfolds in the midst of issues of social justice and decolonization. After extensive community consultation, the first stage of the project will be a workshop involving Trudeau and other experts, writers, and activists to talk about creating (new/old) climate change stories (March 2018); the second stage will be the collaborative production of a published collection of essays, stories, poems, and memoirs that reflect (and converse among) different perspectives on climate justice; and the third stage will be the presentation of the collectively-produced stories for broader public conversation.

Although the project has national and international implications, it is also strongly located in place, specifically, Galiano Island, BC, which is a powerful microcosm of larger climate justice concerns. At the same time as issues of drought, fire, species change, extreme weather, sea level rise, food security, and economic and social sustainability are part of larger climate change politics, they are also deeply local: specifically, they are intertwined with particular relations of colonialism, dispossession, settlement, and property; legacies of resource extraction and continued economic, social, and ecological precarity; and diverse, often conflicting interests in attempts to enact environmental and social justice agendas at the community level. The stories that emerge from the workshop will thus be dense, rooted, and complicated; their subsequent presentation and discussion in other local forums is intended to elicit other, equally complicated public responses.
The MES program at York enabled Amy to extend her hands-on work as an organic farmer into the theoretical and research realm. The program’s valuing of interdisciplinary studies and its openness towards a student’s practical experience allowed her to customize her studies in a way that was practical and meaningful for her work outside of academia. Prior to the program, she farmed full-time for four years, focusing on organic Asian vegetable production. Her farm business was based in Toronto and she grew produce for sale at local farmers markets. In addition to technical farm production, she is also passionate about traditional food knowledge, exploring the relationship between culture and agriculture, and gaining a deeper understanding of food justice challenges. As a result, she explored all of these topics, and the links between the social, economical, and ecological aspects of our local food system during her MES program. Her final research on, “Broadening towards a student’s practical experience allowed her the ‘World Crops’ Discourse: Exploring Ecological to customize her studies in a way that was practical and Cultural Gaps in ‘World Crops’ Research for and meaningful for her work outside of academia. the Greater Toronto Area” was included in FES’ Outstanding Graduate Research Paper Series. It explored gaps in current research on local, “ethnic” vegetable production; identified the various barriers facing new farmers, especially newcomer farmers and farmers of colour; and documented opportunities and barriers that impact Toronto’s Chinese communities and their engagement with the local food movement.

Syrus Marcus Ware is a Vanier scholar, artist, and activist in his third year of doctoral studies. He is working with Professor Jin Haritaworn and is part of the research team for Marvellous Grounds. His work is focused on the disjuncture between progressive policy frameworks and funding structures for equity-seeking populations and the ability to use those frameworks in a way that improves the life and work chances of those who need them most. His research contributes to the following areas: critical race theory, disability studies, museum studies, contemporary art practice and environmental studies. Syrus brings these areas of research into conversation by considering their relevance to racialized artists with disabilities working within the contemporary art milieu. Syrus’ proposed research seeks to address the existing limitations in the field of disability arts by exploring the development of a contemporary disability arts movement alongside both the institutional infrastructures that fund and present this work as well as the lived experiences of disabled artists of colour. He is interested in investigating disability and race within the Canadian arts community as this has been under researched. Additionally, the work challenges the expectation that a conversation about disability is always already one about the body/mind, or access to services or programs designed to support the functioning of that body/mind. Instead, we should consider the creative practices and lived experiences of a group of artists who experience disability and racialization as part of their lives. This work will elucidate the ways in which the social processes that produce race and disability are tangibly created through artistic practices.
Devon Calder, MES

For his major research, Devon developed the first stage of a decision-making tool to identify ideal locations to implement sewer wastewater heat recovery systems. Sewer wastewater heat is a stable source of low carbon renewable energy that is a proven alternative fuel for building space and domestic water heating. In Canada, burning natural gas for space and water heating are major sources of commercial and residential carbon dioxide emissions. Switching to low carbon energy sources has become an imperative of our age. However, the lack of data regarding energy demand and renewable resource supply at a local spatial scale remains a barrier to planning and increasing local distributed renewable energy adoption. Using Guelph, Ontario as a case study in his Major Paper, which was included in FES’ Outstanding Graduate Research Paper Series, Devon showed how Canadian cities could estimate the volume of recoverable sewer wastewater heat across their sewer networks and match ideal locations of heat supply with energy demand using minimum data inputs. The MES program supported the exploration and discovery that led him to the perfect research problem for his interests. The flexibility and self-directed style of the program allowed him to find his true calling. After graduating, Devon started working as a heat-pump researcher at The Atmospheric Fund in Toronto.

Andrew Winchur, MES

In dialogue with the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, Andrew’s Major Paper, which was included in FES’ Outstanding Graduate Research Paper Series, examined the ways in which leftist revolutionary projects have traditionally been compromised by a “logic of distinction”—that is, political and cultural behaviour embodying, however subconsciously, ideologies of social domination. He then attempted to offer an effective anarchist response to this political problem, by identifying and discussing historical examples of direct action groups that have realized true political equality. FES proved to be an ideal environment for this intellectual exploration. Classes such as “Popular Education for Social Change” allowed him to experience first-hand the complicated relationship between action and revolutionary ideals, while the Plan of Study structure of the MES program allowed his analysis of culture and social hierarchy to evolve organically, in response to many different research methodologies and intellectual paradigms.

Murat Ucoglu, PhD

Murat Ucoglu is a recipient of an Ontario Trillium Scholarship to support outstanding international graduate students. His doctoral research examines the socio-spatial and politico-economic processes of housing accumulation of debt, people are articulated into the market in Istanbul and Toronto, with the focus on the processes of profit-making in housing. By doing so, research will show whether components of economic and spatial planning components of housing markets could differ from economic and spatial planning outcomes. This research is essentially focusing on the political economy of the housing market in two cities. His work includes a socio-spatial and politico-economic perspective on housing in Istanbul and Toronto, with the focus on the political economy of housing. As an FES student, the quality of faculty members and supervision of his research in the housing market (together with the City Institute at York) enabled him to conduct the work with an interdisciplinary perspective.
Jessica Lukawiecki, MES

Jessica has focused her graduate studies on leading a research project at the David Suzuki Foundation. In collaboration with the Council of Canadians and with advisors including the Assembly of First Nations, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, she has published a report that investigates the state of First Nations drinking water in Ontario documenting the progress made on the federal government’s commitment to ending First Nations Drinking Water Advisories (DWAs) across the country within five years.

Many First Nations continue to experience chronic water issues, even when their neighboring municipalities enjoy access to clean, safe and reliable drinking water. In Ontario alone, there were 81 DWAs in place in 44 First Nations as of November 2016. The province claims the highest number of First Nation DWAs in the country.

The current Liberal government made a campaign promise to resolve all long-term First Nations DWAs within five years, and at the David Suzuki Foundation the research team wanted to monitor what progress has been made on this issue. Data were compiled from interviews, meetings, conferences, reports and media releases in order to assess some of the progress and challenges that First Nations experience in attaining clean and safe drinking water.

Based on her research, she also came up with a number of recommendations for addressing some of the major barriers to progress when it comes to resolving First Nations DWAs. These include working with First Nations to streamline and simplify the process for capital investments in water infrastructure; supporting First Nations-led approaches to drinking water that recognize the leadership of First Nations; and increasing federal transparency and reporting of budget spending and progress toward ending long-term DWAs in First Nations.

John Caffery, MES

John is exploring the intersections of art, activism, and education within 2SLGBTQ communities and how to best engage youth in social justice.

His work examines the historical and contemporary methods and practices 2SLGBTQ communities have developed to resist injustice from an intersectional framework. The research and results were incorporated into a 30-week anti-oppression training and leadership development program for 2SLGBTQ youth.

As a community worker with Supporting Our Youth (SOY) and a community development program for 2SLGBTQ youth, John has been exposed to the oppressions faced by those communities. In response, he implemented a new program: H.E.A.T (Human Rights Equity Access Team). This program empowers 2SLGBTQ (two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer) youth to be speakers and ambassadors who identify ways to make environments safer for 2SLGBTQ youth and their peers.

Stephen Sangiuliano, MES

Stephen is breaking ground with his research on marine spatial planning (MSP) for tidal current turbines (TCTs), working under the supervision of FES Professor Mark Winfield. MSP is a more recent field of planning in comparison to more mature terrestrial land use planning. The purpose of MSP, essentially, is to spatially allocate different uses of any given marine environment in order to avoid interindustry conflicts and the effects that such spatial uses may individually and cumulatively have on natural ecosystem processes. TCTs are a relatively new renewable energy technology that employ the lateral movement of the tides to turn a rotor, turning kinetic energy into electricity that is transferred to onshore electrical grids via subsea power cables and substations. TCTs are advantageous in relation to other renewable energy technologies due to their predictability, reliability and ability to provide base-load power with minimal energy storage capacity.

H.E.A.T. has now been running for six years, and he wanted to use his time at York University to research areas for innovation in the program and critically reflect on the upcoming challenges of coordinating a social justice education and training program in a community-based health centre environment. There are tools for anti-oppression education that have been developed, including his final project, which is an educational poster series that celebrates and honours 2SLGBTQ activism that will be distributed in the youth sector and education system.

With source files from YFile
The Indigenous Environmental Justice Project

Led by York professor and Canadian Research Chair, Deborah McGregor, the York-based Indigenous Environmental Justice (IEJ) Project began in 2015 in pursuit of developing a more “grassroots” or community-oriented understanding of environmental justice. The project, which strives to conceptualize environmental justice from an Indigenous knowledge perspective, hopes to become a resource for activists, community members, students and scholars in the coming years.

2016 Symposium on Indigenous Environmental Justice

On May 26, Osgoode Hall Law School in partnership with the Faculty of Environmental Studies hosted the 2016 Symposium on Indigenous Environmental Justice to address the harmful effects of environmental injustice and racism towards Indigenous peoples and communities, as well as people of colour. The Symposium was part of a larger ongoing project titled “Indigenous Environmental (In)Justice - Theory and Practice” that seeks to better understand environmental justice (EJ) based on the knowledge and experience of Indigenous peoples. This research is more than simply the inclusion of Indigenous peoples, knowledge, voices and perspectives into existing EJ frameworks; it seeks instead to develop a distinctive framework that is informed by Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), laws, concepts of justice and the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples.

The event brought together academics, community members, and youth from across North America. Special guest speakers included Josephine Mandamin, a First Nations elder who has “walked the equivalent of half the earth’s circumference” to build awareness about pollution, laws, fracking, and the selling of water. In February 2016, Mandamin received the Lieutenant Governor’s Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation at a ceremony held at Queen’s Park. Mandamin is one of seven recipients of the award for volunteer contributions to the conservation of community heritage over a period of more than 25 years.

FES Speaker Series on Indigenous Environmental Justice

This year’s series aims to form a critical link between theory and practice by reflecting upon the lived experience of grassroots activists and leaders in the Indigenous environmental justice movement. In keeping with place-based objectives of Indigenous protocols, invited speakers will primarily be from the Great Lakes area in Southern Ontario.

- The sea is our bread: Interrupting Green Neoliberalism in Mexico
  Featuring Isabel Altamirano - Jimenez
  November 30, 2016

- Environmental Racism in Canada’s Chemical Valley
  Featuring Vanessa Gray
  February 15, 2017

- Violence on the Land, Violence on our Bodies: Supporting Indigenous Feminist Land/Body Defenders
  Featuring the Native Youth Sexual Health Network
  March 22, 2017

- Great Lakes Canoe Journey - Mobilizing Indigenous Knowledge and First Nations Communities by Birch Bark Canoes
  Featuring Sylvia Plain
  January 25, 2017

- Longhouse to Greenhouse: an Emerging Food System at Six Nations
  Featuring Adrianne Lickers
  April 12, 2017
Song for the Beloved: Memory and renewal at the margins of justice

An interactive installation and performance

Song for the Beloved memorializes the lives of those who have died at the hands of the state or armed strong men and creates a space for participants to think about ways of fighting racialized human disposability. It developed out of Professor Honor Ford-Smith’s SSHRC funded research project on “Memory, Urban Violence and Performance” and grew through a collaboration with Professor Andrea Davis (CERLAC) on “Youth and Community Development in Canada and Jamaica: A Transnational Approach to Youth Violence.” A collective undertaking, inspired by work with the Hannah Town Cultural Group in Kingston, Jamaica, the installation was conceived and directed by Ford-Smith with contributions from FES PhD candidate Camille Turner, MES alumna Anique Jordan, visual artist Kara Springer and performer-scholar Nicosia Shakes.

During the performance, participants are immersed in an environment of sonic sculpture, symbolic action and visual images from Jamaican urban popular culture. They identify someone who has died as a result of violence and create a memorial for them. They then place their contribution among the others on the table of memory. Meditating on the images of past losses and struggles, they write a dedication that articulates what can be taken from these to repair the violence done and to create justice in the present.

Song for Beloved was featured at the X Encuentro of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics in Santiago de Chile. Angela Davis, American activist and Professor Emerita at the University of California Santa Cruz, participated in the creation of the memorial (see photo below). The piece was first staged at Liberty Hall, the Marcus Garvey Museum in Jamaica and versions will be presented at several sites including University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Wisconsin, Madison among others.
Marvellous Grounds!
SSHRC-Funded Blog Online Special Issue

Professor Jin Haritaworn, along with students and alumni celebrated the first online special issue of Marvellous Grounds!, a blog funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Insight Development Grant and an Early Researcher Award.

Supported by FES and York University’s Centre for Feminist Research, the blog is a collective effort involving Haritaworn, and grad students Alvis Choi, Ghaida Moussa and Syrus Marcus Ware. It is co-edited by former and current MES students Rio Rodriguez and Amandeep Kaur Panag, and features many contributors from the queer and trans black, Indigenous and people of colour (QTBIPOC) community in and beyond Toronto.

Project coordinator and principal investigator Haritaworn won a York University Research Leader Award for their work on the project. The special issue is titled “QTBIPOC SPACE – Remapping Belonging in Toronto” and features two digital maps that serve as an archive of QTBIPOC stories in Toronto, with contribution from Monica Forrester, Anna Malla, Aemilius Ramirez, and Syrus Marcus Ware. One of these maps is interactive, inviting QTBIPOC in the city to contribute their stories of joy, rage, grief, and other memories.

QTBIPOC SPACE also includes: an interview with Amber Sandy on First Story Toronto, an app that explores the Aboriginal history of Toronto; an essay by Gloria Swain on BLMTO Tent City; an interview with Syrus Marcus Ware on the Church Street Mural project; and, artwork and photography by Fatin Chowdhury, Raven Davis, Fonna Seidu, and Zahra Siddiqui.

Jay Pitter
Author, placemaker, and senior engagement professional Jay Pitter (MES 2012) co-edited Subdivided City-Building in an Age of Hyper-Diversity, an anthology published by Coach House Press in 2016. Exploring topics from transit equity and trust-based policing to holistic mental health, dignified affordable housing and inclusive municipal governance, the book animates the expertise and lived experiences of a diverse range of city-builders. The book’s intent is to spark productive, and sometimes uncomfortable, city-building conversations.

John Lounds
John Lounds (MES 1981), President and CEO of Nature Conservancy Canada was the 2016 winner of the Canadian Museum of Nature’s Inspiration Award for his advocacy efforts protecting ecologically significant lands and encouraging all Canadians to value our natural assets.

Lawrence Gunther Euteneier
Radio and television host, motivational speaker and North America’s only blind professional angler, Lawrence Gunther Euteneier’s (MES 1994) documentary WHAT LIES BELOW was the closing gala production at 2016 Planet in Focus film festival. This deeply personal film explores ecological impact on fish populations of environmental spills from human sewage and oil extraction in various communities.
Shahab Shokrzadeh

Shahab Shokrzadeh joined the Sustainable Energy Initiative at FES in July 2016. He was awarded NSERC’s Energy Storage Network Postdoctoral Fellowship to work with Professor Mark Winfield. The primary focus of his research is on the assessment of policy frameworks at the federal and provincial levels in Canada and in other leading jurisdictions around the development and use of energy storage technologies, particularly in support of the large-scale integration of intermittent renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar PV energy, into energy systems. Shahab’s dissertation proposed repurposing the batteries of electric vehicles. It also investigated how electric mobility can meet the challenges of sustainability in transportation by displacing fossil fuels with new generation low-cost clean energy. His published works include several journal and conference articles on renewable energy and sustainable transportation. He has also presented the findings of his research at various academic and industry venues, and has been invited to referee for several scientific journals on energy policy and sustainability. Shahab is also a registered professional engineer in Canada.

Calvin Lakhan

Calvin Lakhan (an alumnus of the MES program) is currently an investigator on the “Waste Wiki” project at York University (supervised by Dr. Mark Winfield), a research project devoted to advancing understanding of waste management research and policy in Canada. Funded by partners in the waste management sector, the Waste Wiki’s goal is to improve the transparency, neutrality and empirical rigor of work currently being carried out in Canada’s waste management sector. The Waste Wiki works with more than 200 provincial municipalities and packaging companies to develop an open access data repository and data sharing system and is presently home to more than 5000+ studies on waste, offering data dashboards for provincial programs for a range of residential and industrial waste.

Calvin’s research can largely be divided into four areas: 1) Evaluating the efficacy of municipal policy instruments used to promote waste diversion, 2) Optimizing the recycling system to achieve increased diversion with minimized material management costs, 3) Examining the role of race and ethnicity as antecedents to recycling behavior and 4) Encouraging pro-environmental behavior among minority marginalized groups, with a special examination of access. Inequality manifests itself in impeded access to recycling/waste services.
NEW BOOKS BY FES RESEARCHERS

A Comparative Political Ecology of Exurbia: Planning, Environmental Management, and Landscape Change
Edited by Laura Taylor and Patrick Hurley; Springer
This book is about politics and planning outside of cities, where urban political economy and planning theories do not account for the resilience of places that are no longer rural and where local communities work hard to keep from ever becoming urban. By examining exurbia as a type of place that is no longer simply rural or only tied to the economies of global resources, the book explores how changing landscapes are planned and designed not to be urban, that is, to look, function, and feel different from cities and suburbs in spite of new home development and real estate speculation.

The Limits of Settler Colonial Reconciliation: Non-Indigenous People and the Responsibility to Engage
Editors Sarah Maddison, Tom Clark, Ravi de Costa; Springer Singapore
This book investigates whether and how reconciliation in Australia and other settler colonial societies might connect to the attitudes of non-Indigenous people in ways that promote a deeper engagement with Indigenous needs and aspirations. It explores concepts and practices of reconciliation, considering the structural and attitudinal limits to such efforts in settler colonial countries. Bringing together contributions by the world’s leading experts on settler colonialism and the politics of reconciliation, it complements current research approaches to the problems of responsibility and engagement between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

Environmental Management: Critical thinking and emerging practices
By Peter Mulvihill and Harris Ali; Routledge
The book offers a rigorous critique of conventional EM and explores alternative ideas, frameworks and approaches that are currently considered “fringe”, but which have the potential to transform the practice of EM. EM is situated and contextualized within the evolving and expanding realm of environment and sustainability literature. It argues that new approaches to EM need to be more flexible, imaginative and better equipped to address future environmental problems of a scale and severity previously unforeseen.

Governing Cities through Regions: Canadian and European Perspectives
Edited by Roger Keil, Julie-Anne Boudreau, Stefan Kipfer and Pierre Hamel; Wilfrid Laurier University Press
This book aims to broaden and deepen understanding of metropolitan governance through an innovative comparative project that engages with Anglo-American, French, and German literatures on the subject of regional governance. It expands the comparative angle from issues of economic competiveness and social cohesion to topical and relevant fields such as housing and transportation, and extends comparative work on municipal governance to the regional scale.

Visual Cultures of the Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia
By Abidin Kusno; Rowman & Littlefield International
The book explores how visual representations shaped and were shaped by how the ethnic Chinese confronted the period of economic dislocation and radical social change during Dutch colonialism and nationalist struggles in decolonized Indonesia (including the post-1965 and 1998 social environments). The book is a response to two paradoxical socio-political phenomena whose convergence is shaping the experience and conceptualization of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia.
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