

# MOVING WITH STORMS

Climate and Nature Emergency  
Catalyst Program  
*(not your typical) Report*

2022/23



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2023

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Cover photo: Vanessa Andreotti, COP27, 2022

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**PWIAS Climate and Nature  
Emergency Catalyst Program  
(*not your typical*) Report**

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# **Climate and Nature Emergency Catalyst Program**





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# Program Overview







**T**he Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies (PWIAS) is located on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the hənq̓minəm' speaking x̣ẉməθḳẉəỵəm (Musqueam) First Nation. PWIAS acknowledges its responsibility to recognize the self-governance and support the aspirations of Indigenous Peoples.

PWIAS has a mandate to provide a platform for associated scholars, fellows and partners to engage in research that bridges and transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries and that explores innovative ways of thinking, knowing, and collaborating to address the biggest challenges of our time.

In recognition of the fact that human-induced climate destabilization and destruction of biodiversity are arguably setting humanity on a course of premature extinction, in 2022/2023 PWIAS adopted the Climate and Nature Emergency (CNE) as the focal theme of all its activities. We chose the word emergency (in the singular) to underscore that, in the same way that humans are not separate from nature, climate and nature are also inseparable from the living metabolism of the planet we are part of.

The CNE Catalyst Program emphasized the role of higher education institutions as change catalysts in society. The program positioned PWIAS as a hub to incubate, connect, and integrate inter- and transdisciplinary collaborations that engage with the urgency, scale, and complexity of the CNE. Together, we considered the pressing need for new approaches to problems and coordinated efforts to address climate change, climate justice, and biodiversity loss both locally and globally.

We chose the phrase “**Moving With Storms**” as the title of this report to emphasize the importance of intellectual, emotional and relational flexibility, agility, resilience and stamina in the face of the most complex, difficult, uncomfortable and frustrating dimensions of the CNE.

Since the program took the contextually bold step of recognizing both colonialism and capitalism as central causes and drivers of the CNE, participants were supported to expand their cognitive and emotional capacity to sit with difficult issues and to avoid deflection from distressing topics. However, rather than taking a moralizing approach to convince people to examine the CNE exclusively through critiques of colonialism and capitalism, we approached the CNE as an *educational inquiry*, where different perspectives and approaches were also welcome.

Throughout the program, participants were *invited* to consider how unsustainable economic growth, overconsumption, land occupation, cultural subjugation, labour exploitation, racial discrimination, as well as other forms of historical, systemic and ongoing social and ecological violence have brought us to where we are today, but they were not required to adopt any particular view or approach.

This report presents an overview of what we have done and what we have learned from this educational inquiry and experiment. We hope the ideas and reflections shared in this publication will reach other spaces at UBC and other institutions that are organizing and coordinating inter- and transdisciplinary efforts toward addressing the urgent global challenges of our times.





“[The common framing of the CNE problem]—as one of consumer choices and carbon footprints, individual emissions and carbon taxes, collective action problems, and market solutions—fails to consider any structural drivers of climate change as rooted in our economic form of life. It assumes that one can separate the climate crisis from its material basis in how the global economy functions, in how goods are produced and distributed today, and for whom. It ignores the vast differences in power between those who have to drive to work to make money to pay for their food, rent, phone bill, mortgage, insurance, health care, and children, and those who live off the rising value of their assets, returns on capital, and financial investments. In particular, such framing disregards how capitalist firms are structurally compelled by competition to maximize profit for their shareholders no matter the consequences for the planet.”

**Jacob Blumenfeld in *Climate barbarism: Adapting to a wrong world*.<sup>1</sup>**

“There are two systematic tipping points that are of concern. In terms of climate change, the ecological tipping point concerns how the inaction of societies to mitigate their contributions to atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases threatens to have irreversible and dangerous effects. The relational tipping point concerns the inaction of societies to establish or maintain relational qualities connecting societal institutions together for the sake of coordinated action. Such inaction eventually makes it impossible to carry out swift responses to urgent problems without perpetrating injustices...While many people are concerned about crossing the ecological tipping point, the relational tipping point got crossed long ago thanks to systems of colonialism, capitalism, and industrialization.” **Kyle Whyte in *Too late for Indigenous climate justice: Ecological and relational tipping points*.<sup>2</sup>**

“Telling the truth means examining who we are on a fundamental level. Who our ancestors were/are. How we relate to the Indigenous lands we occupy and refuse to give back. This is what it means to know who you are. Telling the truth means staring in the face of our allegiances to white supremacy, to settler supremacy, to capitalism. It means looking at how we reproduce the worlds that target particular peoples, ways of knowing, and more-than-human communities for casual extinction, including our own selves. Telling the truth means refusing innocence even and especially when it feels like a life-line. When it feels like breathing. When it feels like safety. Because the changes we need to make to our lives, selves, and worlds are radical, fundamental, and unavoidable. They cannot be metaphorical.” **Esme Murdock in *On Telling the Truth Unflinchingly: Climate Catastrophe and Colonialism*.<sup>3</sup>**

“[Rights of Nature] flip the paradigm from all of this property law into all the laws that we know to be true; that we are in service to nature, and that we must help her protect herself. We’re protecting our children. We’re protecting all the things that we know in our blood memory that have to be protected, not just for ourselves. These battles are not just for tribal peoples on their ancestral lands. ... Nature has its own rights and will inevitably heal herself, and hopefully take humans along on this ride. And by recognizing these Rights of Nature, we’re including ourselves in her journey as a living entity, because as humans, if we breathe, we’re part of the four winds, we’re part of the Thunder Nation...” **Casey Camp-Horinek in *Indigenize the Law: Tribal Rights of Nature Movements*.**<sup>4</sup>



Casey Camp-Horinek (middle) and Water-protectors protesting at COP27. Photo by Elvis Huni Kui.

# Our year-in-review

The 2022/2023 PWIAS CNE Catalyst Program offered unique opportunities for inter- and transdisciplinary collaborations to address the urgency, scale and complexity of climate and biodiversity crises and movements for climate justice. We connected scholars, students, artists, disciplines, sectors, and communities to activate new ways of knowing and acting together in these challenging socio-ecological times. The program introduced new dimensions to the original PWIAS program structure, including:

- 1** Grounding the program in four guiding principles that emphasized both intellectual and relational rigour. These principles were embedded in participant selection, funding allocation, adjudication and expenditure, and other decision-making processes related to the operationalization of the program
- 2** A collaborative multidisciplinary leadership structure in which the leadership team was collectively responsible for ensuring sustained engagement with the guiding principles
- 3** Multiple cohorts in addition to the traditional cohort of scholars, including undergraduate and graduate students, emeriti/ae, artists and staff from UBC units whose work related to the CNE
- 4** A strong commitment to supporting and amplifying Indigenous perspectives and priorities across all initiatives
- 5** Funding for cohort, cross-sectoral, and community collaborations
- 6** Artistic immersion sessions for expanding cognitive, affective, and creative capacity and stamina to face the CNE
- 7** Support for critically-informed collective inquiry through a course, public-facing events and media engagement

- 8 A series of Connections lunches for cross-cohort networking and community building
- 9 UBC and external partnerships that leveraged impact and exposure—including collaborations with the Emeritus College, UBC Public Scholars Initiative, French Consulate, Musagetes Foundation, Belkin Gallery, UBC Sustainability Hub, UBC Climate Hub, Centre for Climate Justice, Centre for First Nations Governance and Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre
- 10 Support for critical interventions in a global decision-making event (COP27) and a continental knowledge mobilization effort (European Commission)

The program’s ethos encouraged difficult conversations and new approaches to regenerative inquiry and collaboration across disciplines, positionalities, and generations. Participants were offered opportunities to expand their capacity to navigate the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity that characterize “wicked challenges” like the CNE. This educational orientation highlighted the fact that the university, and ourselves, as scholars, students, artists, and staff, are also implicated in the processes that create climate destabilization and what the UN has called the “biodiversity apocalypse”, which are threatening the continuity of our own survival, and which have already created massive social and ecological destruction.

Our approach to collective inquiry, academic research, education, and collaboration emphasized multiple accountabilities and the fact that we cannot be part of the solution if we don’t recognize the extent and magnitude of the problem and our active participation in creating it. The Catalyst Program also recognized that the most common problem-posing, problem-solving, coordination, and accountability approaches to the CNE are inadequate to address the global challenges at hand. Participants were encouraged to consider Indigenous views that frame the CNE not as a technical or informational problem, but as a relational challenge rooted in and driven by colonialism, which resonates with the analysis of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of 2022.<sup>5</sup> The program also amplified Indigenous critiques of greenwashing and false solutions to the CNE that aim to exploit the CNE for profit, which are rarely engaged with in academic discussions of the CNE.





We also approached leadership as a form of regenerative collective inquiry grounded in complexity, resilience and intergenerational responsibility. As anticipated with approaches to innovation focused on inquiry and experimentation, not everything went as planned. As program designers and leaders, we faced our own failures and mistakes as important sites of learning and unlearning and we encouraged all participants and our PWIAS staff to do the same. With every bump on the road, we gained more experience and developed new questions. In this publication, we share some of our reflections about this process as a way to encourage others to engage in this form of collective, collaborative, self-reflexive inquiry.



This publication showcases the work of the multiple cohorts and funding recipients who were part of the 2022/2023 PWIAS Catalyst Program. Our review emphasizes the importance of critically-engaged, creative, and community-oriented approaches to inter- and transdisciplinary work and the CNE.



All of this could not have happened without the unwavering dedication of the PWIAS staff. We are extremely grateful for their work and enduring commitment to making this program a success during challenging times.



We offer this publication to inspire future academic initiatives to think beyond the box in their design of future programs and to rigorously and substantially confront the naturalization of harmful practices in higher education, including practices that reproduce exploitative economies, and ethnocentric, paternalistic, and extractive engagements with historically and systemically marginalized communities.

As educators, we affirm our social and ecological responsibilities to incoming generations who will need the courage, discernment, humility and stamina to “stay with the trouble” and to move with storms, when things get even harder, in the long haul of the CNE.

**Dr. Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti, PWIAS Interim Director**

*Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti*

**ON BEHALF OF THE PWIAS CATALYST PROGRAM LEADERSHIP TEAM:  
Dr. Rafi Arefin, Dr. Sharon Stein, Dr. Hannah Wittman, and Dr. Will Valley**

# Guiding Principles





**T**he PWIAS CNE Catalyst Program was grounded in four guiding principles: ethical collaborations, intellectual depth, reparative redistribution, and engagement with the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan. Through the program, we sought to foster creative and critical collaborations across multiple perspectives, and we offered the set of principles as a compass that could orient our shared work toward socially and ecologically accountable directions. We approached the principles as an important experiment in our program and encouraged participants to approach them through inquiry. As expected, different participants interpreted the principles differently and showed different levels of commitment to them. This offered important lessons about the ambivalent nature of language and the complexities, tensions, and paradoxes that arise when negotiating conflicting diagnoses of problems and theories of change, even when our thematic area is the same. Here we offer a brief summary of the principles and a few of the questions that we asked program participants to consider in relation to each.

**ETHICAL COLLABORATIONS:** Transdisciplinary, intergenerational, and community relationship-building grounded on trust, respect, reciprocity, consent, and accountability.

Transdisciplinary inquiry fosters engagements across different disciplines, communities, and sectors of society in response to a shared problem of concern. In our program, we encouraged participants to recognize that it takes considerable time and commitment to build ethical collaborations, especially between academic researchers and systemically marginalized communities. We highlighted the fact that historically, and still today, research relationships between the academy and marginalized communities have tended to be extractive and exploitative. Academia also carries a history of damage-centred research, which often imposes “solutions” on these communities in paternalistic ways that reproduce the western savior complex. We observed that weaving collaborations that are instead grounded in trust, respect, reciprocity, accountability, and consent<sup>6</sup> can take years, which can conflict with academic deadlines and output expectations. Despite these pressures, we emphasized the importance of prioritizing the quality of collective learning and the integrity of relationships, rather than the expediency of measurable outcomes. We also noted that terms like trust, respect, reciprocity, accountability, and consent often mean different things to different communities. With these in mind, we invited program participants to consider several questions, including:

- Who decides the research agenda (what questions are asked, where “forward” is, how collaborations unfold, and to what end)? In whose name? For whose benefit? At what cost? At whose expense?
- How can we interrupt common patterns through which academic researchers are considered the only (or primary) experts and knowledge producers?
- How can we seek to ensure that collaborators with less systemic power can have their perspectives recognized, including when they voice critical concerns, and when they engage with passive forms of resistance and/or active forms of refusal?



**INTELLECTUAL DEPTH:** (self)Critical and relational rigour in moving beyond common patterns of simplistic solutions, paternalistic forms of engagement and ethnocentric ideals of sustainability, justice, and change.

Critical and relational rigour require attending to the politics of knowledge and accountabilities to multiple human and other-than-human communities. This entails challenging hierarchies of knowledge within and beyond academia. This principle encouraged program participants to practice self-reflexivity, including the ability to step back from their social-cultural-economic positions in order to interrupt tendencies toward universalism and ethnocentrism, and to step back from their disciplines to observe how they are contributing to social and ecological harm. We emphasized that imagining beyond simplistic solutions is not just about interrupting the dominance of a single story of progress, development and civilization, and a single knowledge system but also recognizing the complex nature of problems associated with the CNE and the socio-historical systems that have led to it. We encouraged program participants to consider how they might undertake collective inquiry and action across multiple knowledge communities in their efforts to respond to these problems, emphasizing the ethical, procedural and logistical challenges of this kind of coordination. Questions that we invited program participants to consider included:

- What is your theory of change? Which communities will benefit most from the change you have imagined? Which communities might be negatively impacted or bear the costs of this change?
- What might become possible if, rather than trying to arrive at definitive answers to shared questions, we held space for responses offered from multiple different perspectives?
- What are the limits and biases of your problem posing, problem solving, coordination, and accountability approaches?

**REPARATIVE REDISTRIBUTION:** Allocation of resources prioritizing populations most affected by the CNE and precarity, and research areas of greatest urgency and impact, guided by principles of reparation.

The principle of reparative redistribution is premised on the fact that existing modern social and institutional structures are a product of centuries of extraction, exploitation, expropriation, and dispossession, which have resulted in the unequal distribution of resources and power across different communities. This principle encouraged participants to examine why colonialism, capitalism, and western supremacy are usually not presented as the causes and the drivers of the CNE in most solution-focused initiatives. The principle also draws attention to the fact that the communities that contributed the least to the CNE are the most negatively affected by it. These communities hold significant knowledge about the changing climate and environment, yet they often have the fewest economic resources and the least institutional and systemic power to shape climate responses. We believed this principle had the potential to catalyze justice-oriented approaches to climate research and action. However, we quickly observed that interpretations of justice varied significantly and that participants also had conflicting perspectives on the role of justice in climate research and action. Questions that we invited program participants to consider included:

- In what ways does your work take into account the disproportionate impact of the CNE on systemically disadvantaged communities and/or systemically advantaged communities' disproportionate responsibility for causing the CNE?
- How can your work be more accountable to systemically marginalized communities, even if it is not conducted in direct collaboration with them? (e.g., How might these communities use your research findings to make a case for restitution for past harms?)
- What strategies exist for enacting reparative redistribution in climate action and research and what are the guiding assumptions, possibilities, and limitations of each strategy? How can these practices inform the ways that you allocate your research funding?

## ENGAGEMENT WITH THE UBC INDIGENOUS STRATEGIC PLAN:

Deepening understanding of settler responsibilities and supporting the aspirations of Indigenous scholars and communities.

While this principle is specific to UBC's Indigenous Strategic Plan (ISP), it reflects a wider social shift in which non-Indigenous people are increasingly expected to confront their complicity in colonialism, and to uphold their responsibilities to Indigenous Peoples and lands, both locally and globally. We encouraged program participants to engage with the ISP with a view to not only challenge colonial frames of references, practices, policies, funding, and governance structures that continue to shape most responses to the CNE; but also to support Indigenous resurgence and Indigenous-led and Indigenous-focused climate action and research. Although not every PWIAS-related project engaged the ISP, we nonetheless invited all program participants to consider the implications of the ISP for their work. Questions that we invited program participants to consider included:

- How are Indigenous communities impacted by the problem or question your work seeks to address? How might Indigenous communities be impacted by your work? How might Indigenous communities see the problem you are approaching differently?
- Does your approach to research uphold Indigenous Peoples' rights, sovereignty, and jurisdiction, particularly the Indigenous Peoples on whose territories you conduct your work?
- Are there ways that your research project can support/fund/amplify the work Indigenous academics and/or Indigenous communities are already doing?
- What kind of preparation could help us interrupt colonial patterns of relationship building, resource distribution, and knowledge production in climate action and research?

A more comprehensive list of questions related to the 4 guiding principles can be found here: [blogs.ubc.ca/movingwithstorms/down4gpquestions](https://blogs.ubc.ca/movingwithstorms/down4gpquestions)

# Program Cohorts







**T**here were six CNE Catalyst Program cohorts: scholars, undergraduate students, postgraduate students, Emeritus College, artists, and staff working in units focused on the CNE. Each cohort had a separate selection process, all of which were grounded on the guiding principles of the program. The cohort of scholars received funding for research and teaching buy-outs, while other cohorts had access to different types of competitive and non-competitive funding. The scholars cohort met once a week for around 30 weeks (during term time). The other cohorts negotiated different (less intensive) meeting and action schedules. All cohorts met together once a month for the Connections lunches, where funding recipients and partners were also invited. All cohorts were invited to submit projects to a funding pool for collaborative projects that was exclusively available to CNE Catalyst program participants.

# CNE Catalyst Scholars Cohort

The CNE Catalyst Scholars program received 35 applications from UBC faculty. Through an adjudication process guided by the four guiding principles, 12 scholars were selected to join the Scholars Cohort. Over the course of the year, the CNE Catalyst Scholars were invited into a collective inquiry aimed at building connections, cultivating relationships, and initiating inter- and transdisciplinary collaborations that engaged with the urgency, scale and complexity of the CNE. This ambitious remit was supported through a \$45,000 research award for each scholar and access to an additional Catalyst seed funding pool for scholar-initiated projects.

The scholars met for four hours every Wednesday during two terms (lunches were provided). Their program of activities was collectively decided, with support from the program lead Dr. Rafi Arefin, and included peer presentations, guest lectures, discussions, collaborative research planning, and three retreats led by facilitator Olive Dempsey (at the beginning, middle and end of the program). This format built lasting relationships between scholars and fostered accountability to each other and the larger program, while also presenting its own challenges. Scholars wrestled with questions of community engagement, reparations, social and environmental justice, and colonialism. They also considered the degrees to which their own disciplines and practices were complicit in the CNE and how different types of collaboration and/or different ways of approaching challenges could advance critical and ethical scholarship and engagement.



### CNE CATALYST SCHOLARS:

- **Dr. Derek Gladwin**, *Education*: Energy literacy and transitions
- **Dr. Ayasha Guerin**, *Arts*: Race, resilience, ocean ecologies
- **Dr. Bethany Hastie**, *Law*: Labour laws and climate justice
- **Dr. Danielle Ignace**, *Forestry*: Indigenous forestry, community-driven solutions
- **Dr. Michele Koppes**, *Geography*: Climate-landscape-water-human interactions
- **Dr. Parisa Mehrkhodavandi**, *Chemistry*: Biodegradable and bio-based, high-value plastic products
- **Dr. Srinivas Murthy**, *Medicine*: Climate change, children’s global health
- **Dr. Ethan Raker**, *Sociology*: Climate-related disasters, demography, inequalities
- **Dr. Rachel Scholes**, *Engineering*: Toxic chemicals, water, environmental health
- **Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa**, *Indigenous Studies*: Indigenous struggles, knowledge justice, sustainability
- **Dr. Jocelyn Stacey**, *Law*: Emergencies, environmental justice, Indigenous jurisdiction
- **Dr. Michelle Tseng**, *Botany*: Climate change, insects, plankton, communities

“The scholars cohort provided a unique space to develop and design collaborative learning across disciplines, which in turn cultivated effective ways to maneuver the paradoxes of complexity in the climate and nature emergency. As part of the scholars cohort, I was able to genuinely engage in transdisciplinary forms of learning. This process brought on difficult conversations about dismantling and then rewriting disciplinary identity, and invited collaborations with other scholars with diverse epistemologies to co-create new research pathways. Because of the discomfort of questioning our disciplinary identities, this experience provided space for both personal and professional change. Allowing researchers such as myself a space to explore and fail, without the high stakes risk of promotion and tenure, expanded opportunities for deep learning that ultimately transformed how we go about teaching and research with our colleagues and students. As a researcher in environmental education, learning how to be present and deal with complexity might be one of the most valuable experiences I could learn as a scholar and teacher.”

**Dr. Derek Gladwin, CNE Catalyst Scholars Cohort**

“I was drawn to the CNE Catalyst program as it provided a unique space to engage in deep dialogue between critical and reflexive practices, the use of creative arts, Indigenous knowledges, and the natural sciences to address the climate and nature emergency. The scholars cohort created space for confrontation and sitting with discomfort, for developing capacity to engage with complexity and to cultivate humility, for acknowledging what exceeds rationality, for collaboration and trust building, for experimentation, and for productive failure. The collaborative space created by the cohort became an opportunity to nurture trusting relations between scientists, social scientists, artists, Elders and knowledge keepers, community leaders, planners, and activists, and to learn from one another about the myriad ways of thinking, being, and doing work in true service of communities. It also fostered reciprocity: if one showed up with a curious mind and listened with care, others responded in kind, and together we could explore how to build the collective stamina needed to address questions of healing our relationship with the land and with each other amidst transformational change. Engaging deeply with the Catalyst community of thinkers has helped me ground my scholarship in new ways beyond traditional scientific, colonial approaches, and unlearn the disciplinary, scholarly, and relational practice that pervade the academy and that have largely created the intertwined ecological and societal crises we find ourselves in.”

**Dr. Michele Koppes, CNE Catalyst Scholars Cohort**



# CNE Catalyst Fellows Cohorts

There were two cohorts of CNE Catalyst Fellows, an undergraduate and a graduate cohort. The undergraduate fellows cohort, supported by Dr. Sharon Stein, was brought together through a partnership with the UBC Climate Hub, which is a student-led university-wide initiative that aims to connect and empower university and community stakeholders to take bold climate action for a just future. The graduate fellows cohort, supported by Dr. Will Valley, was brought together through a partnership with the UBC Public Scholars Initiative, which supports selected UBC doctoral students to have a tangible impact on the public good through collaborative, action-oriented, and/or creative forms of scholarship. Fellows in both the undergraduate and graduate cohorts received a small research stipend (\$3,000) to be used in a climate action or climate reflection mini-project during the second term of the program. Many of these projects were conducted in collaboration with community partners.

During their first term together, both student fellow cohorts went through the course “Facing Human Wrongs (FHW)” (see pages 49–51), which aimed to expand capacities and dispositions to navigate the complexities and paradoxes of the CNE. Willow Cioppa from the CNE Catalyst Artist cohort joined the undergraduate cohort as a facilitator for the FHW course. The cohorts also met for monthly lunches to build relationships, mobilize collaborations, and exchange ideas about their mini-projects. During their time together, the student cohorts collectively wrestled with the unique challenges and responsibilities incoming generations face in relation to the CNE, and deepened their inquiry around the complexities of engaging with shared challenges from different social positions, disciplinary perspectives, and lived experiences.

## CNE CATALYST GRADUATE FELLOWS COHORT

- **Fiona Beaty:** Ocean, Salish Sea, adaptation
- **Rivkah Gardner-Frolick:** Air, impacts, justice
- **Michelle Hak Hepburn:** Anthropology, peoples and forests
- **Dana James:** Agroecology, land and food justice
- **Preetish Kakoty:** Disasters, risk and recovery
- **Grace Nosek:** Law and climate justice
- **Saori Ogura:** Adaptation, art and agrobiodiversity
- **Verónica Relaño Écija:** Ocean, conservation, communication
- **Dino Siwek:** Colonialism in climate mitigation
- **Karl Zimmermann:** Water, science and society

## CNE CATALYST UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS COHORT

- **Josianne Assignon:** Art creation, culture and community
- **Sagorika Haque:** Global South, eco feminisms and political education
- **Harper Johnston:** Ecosystems, interdependence, resilience
- **Preet Kang:** Psychology, human action and reaction
- **Kajal Mishra:** Climate action and just transitions
- **Jacob Power:** Land and food systems, conservation governance
- **José Reyerros Sánchez:** Circular economy and collective impact
- **Jack Suchodolski:** Settler responsibility and reparative redistribution
- **Charlotte Taylor:** Climate change and climate storytelling
- **Jennie Zhou:** Climate justice and environmental policy



“As a CNE Catalyst Undergraduate Fellow, I have worked collaboratively with fellow student cohort members, artist cohort members, scholars, and Campus Synergy Group members. Through collaborative research collectives, interdisciplinary research inquiries, and creative multimedia publications, I, and other student cohort members, have conducted cross- and trans-disciplinary climate justice art, activism, and academic research. These opportunities for collaboration are made possible through the four guiding principles, which provide essential grounding in justice-based approaches to transformative systems change.” **Charlotte Taylor, CNE Catalyst Undergraduate Fellow**

“Our generation is inheriting the responsibility of responding to a climate crisis abound with layered complexity, nuance, and dominant social systems built on centuries of colonial violence. We also carry the grief of an uncertain future, as will the generations after us. Learning to navigate this crisis, processing this grief, expanding our relational capacities, and building the emotional stamina to sustain difficult conversations required for what will be a lifetime of work, are teachings that are difficult to access at the undergraduate level. Yet, they are critical for our generation to learn if we are to respond to the climate crisis in ways that address its relational complexity. Having a space to be supported by an intergenerational, transdisciplinary community, and a network of supportive mentors who did not deny or deflect from the severity and complexity of the CNE challenges has been essential to this process of learning and unlearning. The mentorship I have received through the Catalyst Program has been one of the most beneficial and influential aspects of my five-year degree. I will carry the teachings of this program with me far into the future. It is my utmost hope that incoming students will have access to a similar community and to the teachings created for the Catalyst Program.” **Jacob Power, CNE Catalyst Undergraduate Fellow**

“The graduate cohort of PWIAS Catalyst Program offered an important space to exchange knowledge and experiences with peers working to tackle the climate emergency from many different perspectives. It was an opportunity to dive deeper into the intersecting complexity of the climate crisis, with all its social repercussions. Despite being something that all of us are/will be experiencing, we had/have different roles in promoting and investing in the ways of being that led to the climate crisis and are/will be experiencing it very differently depending on factors such as our positionality, geographical location, and the privileges that unfold from it. Therefore, one of the core gifts of this process was to have an appropriate container to sit with honesty and humility with my own complicity in all the harm that is being done to many human and other-than-human beings. Sitting with and facing the pain of this process, and learning how to hold space for that collectively is, from my experience, something that may open opportunities to rewire the way we have been conditioned to think, to hope and to imagine, so that we can approach social and environmental challenges, including the collapses that have already happened and the ones to come, with more maturity and responsibility.” **Dino Siwek, CNE Catalyst Graduate Fellow**

# CNE Catalyst Emeritus College Cohort

Approved in 2018 by the Board of Governors and the Senate, the Emeritus College is a new force at UBC. The College builds on the success of the UBC Association of Professors Emeriti/ae and is a resource that supports faculty members as they transition into retirement. It enables UBC Emeriti/ae to continue their vital contributions to the University. Interdisciplinary projects are especially encouraged among a group of scholars who come from every discipline on campus.

The UBC Emeritus College, in partnership with PWIAS, assembled a cohort of nine UBC Emeriti/ae (ECC) to participate in the CNE Catalyst Program. The distinctive advantage of Emeritus status is that persons so designated by the UBC Senate come from all UBC faculties, in which they have enjoyed successful academic careers, but they have rarely, if ever, worked closely together.

All nine cohort members were acquainted with some of each other's research in the field of environmental change, but the siloed nature of UBC's campus environment had, until recently, provided few incentives for transdisciplinary interaction. This, then, was a unique opportunity for UBC's emeriti/ae to explore alternative models of research than those that prevail in their individual departments.



The objectives of the CNE Catalyst Emeritus College Cohort were:

To explore and share transdisciplinary approaches to understanding the CNE: what is the nature of this emergency? And how should we respond to it?

To demonstrate both the progress in understanding the CNE that has been achieved at local, regional and national scales, and our collective failure to protect our landscapes, seascapes and urbanscapes at global scale from unnecessary harm during this time of rapid climate change

To use their academic freedom to express views on matters of societal urgency insofar as their senior status is evidence of their life-time experience

To enhance the visibility of, and intellectual exchange between, PWIAS and the UBC Emeritus College

To these ends, the cohort met approximately twice monthly to share research experience, engage with guest lecturers on the CNE, and, as individuals, attended the monthly Connections lunches with members of the other Catalyst Program cohorts.

## CNE CATALYST EMERITUS COLLEGE COHORT:

- **Dr. Jo-ann Archibald:** Education, Indigenous knowledge systems
- **Dr. Hadi Dowlatabadi:** Mathematics, humans, technology and the environment
- **Dr. Penny Gurstein:** Applied science, equitable community planning
- **Dr. Ralph Matthews:** Sociology, resilient communities
- **Dr. William Rees:** Community and regional planning, human ecologies, ecological economics
- **Dr. Olav Slaymaker (PWIAS lead):** Geography, global environmental change in mountainous landscapes
- **Dr. Douw Steyn:** Earth, ocean and atmospheric science, air pollution meteorology
- **Dr. Frank Tester:** Social work, family studies, Canada's arctic
- **Dr. Graeme Wynn:** Geography, human-environment interactions, environmental histories



During the program, the Emeritus College Cohort engaged with the general membership of the UBC Emeritus College by contributing to the College's programming with talks and academic panels open to the public. The cohort launched a popular guest lecture series on the CNE, which included the following talks and academic panels:

### TALKS:

"Political obstacles and opportunities for Canadian climate policy", Dr. Kathryn Harrison (Political Science, UBC)

"Health, equity, and collaboration as catalysts for regional climate adaptation in BC", Dr. Craig Brown (Climate Change and Health Lead, Vancouver Coastal Health)

"Advancing climate solutions in a politically polarizing world", Dr. Andrew Weaver (Earth and Ocean Sciences, UVic)

"Tipping points: Climate change, history, and the north", Dr. Nancy Langston (Environmental History, Michigan Technical University)

"Future energy - how climate change, sustainability, and geopolitical stability is transforming the path forward", Dr. David Wilkinson (Biological and Chemical Engineering, UBC)

### ACADEMIC PANELS:

Dr. Nicholas Coops (Forestry, UBC) and Dr. Lori Daniels (Forest and Conservation Sciences, UBC). Moderated by Olav Slaymaker.

Dr. Jessica Dempsey (Geography, UBC) and Dr. Rashid Sumaila (Institute for Oceans and Fisheries, and School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, UBC), and guests.

Dr. Robert Clifford (Law, UBC) and Dr. Jocelyn Stacey (Catalyst Scholar and Law, UBC). Moderated by Dr. Jo-ann Archibald

The recorded videos are available on the **Emeritus College YouTube channel**



The Emeritus College Cohort also participated in the UBC 2050 Vision process by providing input to the planning team, the UBC Board of Governors, the UBC Senate and to UBC's Senior Administrators on perceived limitations of the draft UBC strategic vision.

The letter submitted to the UBC 2050 Campus Vision strategy (reproduced here in full) issues a strong warning of the dangers of "business-as-usual" during this current unprecedented time of social and ecological turmoil.

**TO:** Madeleine Zammar, Engagement, UBC Campus and Community Planning

**CC:** Interim President and Vice-Chancellor Deborah Buszard, Provost and Vice-President Academic Gage Averill, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President Moura Quayle, Associate Vice-President Michael White, Director, Planning and Design Gerry McGeough, Acting Associate Registrar Amandeep Breen, UBC Board of Governors Secretariat, Associate Vice-President, Enrolment Services and Registrar Rella Ng, UBC Properties Trust, Principal of the UBC Emeritus College, Anne Junker, Interim Director of the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies, Vanessa Andreotti

**FROM:** All members of the Emeritus College Cohort (ECC), PWIAS Catalyst Program, Climate and Nature Emergency

**RE: Input to UBC Campus 2050 Draft Vision Plan**

We write as members of the UBC Emeritus College Cohort, PWIAS Catalyst Program "Climate and Nature Emergency" to provide input to the UBC Campus Vision 2050 planning process.

We note that the series of UBC Climate Action Plans: 2010, 2020 and 2030, that have already been released, are comprehensive and representative of such plans released by universities worldwide. We also note that the draft UBC Campus Vision 2050 explicitly addresses Climate Mitigation and Adaptation as the last

of the “BIG IDEA(s)” listed. It is gratifying to see Climate Change identified as one of the big challenges to be addressed in contemplating the future.

In our view, however, the Climate Mitigation and Adaptation strategies in the vision are inadequate because they focus almost exclusively on achieving the GHG emissions reductions as mandated by the various UBC Climate Action Plans. This narrow focus on GHG emissions reduction is framed in ways that undergird a “business pretty much as usual” commitment to growth and ignores the now common understanding that already unavoidable climate changes will result in deep and wide-ranging disruptions to just about every aspect of global society over the coming decades. These include, but are not limited to: changes in financial markets and availability of funds for physical infrastructure development; changes in mobility of students and faculty related to restrictions in international travel; and changes in energy sources.

Further, deliberations on the Climate and Nature Emergency among the elders who comprise the Emeritus College cohort (all of whom have engaged with these issues through distinguished academic careers) have repeatedly driven home the point that “the crisis” we face is multifaceted – or that there are many concerns beyond GHG emissions and the long-continuing consequences of their accumulation. Among these issues we list: the limits to growth; social and environmental justice; and the destabilizing effects of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. The world as we know it is unsustainable; we are in a state of overshoot, consuming more resources than Earth can regenerate and polluting beyond nature’s assimilative capacity. This will force a series of major adaptations, and almost certainly lead to reduced standards of living in Canada and other countries of the so-called Global North. Prevailing economic systems, dependent on continuing economic growth, are likely to be challenged and much remediated, both in response to overshoot and a growing clamour for justice. More or less radical constraints on consumption, and significant processes of wealth redistribution, vertically (within societies) and geographically (among and within nations), will mean more austere (as in spartan) material circumstances for many. Coupled with the long tail of pandemic-induced adjustments (from the embrace of “remote work,” to the reinforcement of work-life balance concerns) and the facilitating effects of rapidly evolving communications technology, all of this suggests the probability of a coming storm of transformation in individual aspirations and the ways in which lives are lived.



These disruptions will have direct consequences for UBC, yet they are conspicuously absent from the Vision 2050 planning document. We recognize that introducing them compounds uncertainty and makes planning extremely difficult. Still we believe, in 2023, that a 30-year vision assuming “business as usual” ignores the real changes in global society that are bound to confront us, and would urge the development of a framework of indicators and processes measuring environmental and socio-economic impacts attributable to UBC Vancouver campus that would be monitored throughout the period to 2050.

We are aware of a concurrent initiative to envisage possible futures for UBC as an academic institution (rather than as a physical site). Preliminary as this may be, possibilities being considered in the academic visioning process do attempt to recognize some of the concerns identified above, and as they do so, they will probably bring into play arrangements that fit poorly with the Campus 2050 vision plan. We urge you to ensure that the UBC Campus Vision 2050 is robust in relation to the disruptions that are surely coming. And we would welcome the opportunity to offer further input as the planning process unfolds.

Respectfully submitted,

- Jo-ann Archibald, Educational Studies
- Hadi Dowlatabadi, Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability
- Penny Gurstein, School of Community and Regional Planning
- Ralph Matthews, Sociology
- William Rees, School of Community and Regional Planning
- Olav Slaymaker, Geography
- Douw Steyn, Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences
- Frank Tester, Social Work and Community Development
- Graeme Wynn, Geography



Moving forward, the Emeritus College Cohort plans to generate OpEd pieces in the public media and continue to support local, regional, national and global initiatives relevant to ameliorating impacts of environmental change.

“Emeriti/ae are definitely not used to this kind of activity. I note that the nine individuals who make up this cohort are superb communicators of their scholarship, who have built up a sense of mutual confidence, which is exciting from my perspective. They are not univocal (it would be hard to imagine such gifted individuals coming to identical conclusions); however, they have all listened to one another’s insights and that experience alone would have provided fundamental validation of this program. Future plans are still in flux, but the intervention in the UBC 2050 Vision guarantees continued cooperation. For this experience, we express our collective gratitude to PWIAS and regret that some aspects of our collaboration will be impossible to maintain in the absence of such an institution.” **Dr. Olav Slaymaker, CNE Catalyst Emeritus College Cohort Lead**





# CNE Catalyst Artist Cohort and Digital Residency

The artist cohort and digital residency was supported through a partnership with the Musagetes Foundation and was led and facilitated by artist Dani d’Emilia. The artists were brought together with the shared understanding that genuinely different futures depend less on the accuracy of visions and ideas that are projected ahead than on the quality of relations that are woven in the present. They collectively developed an inquiry around how art can support us to develop the stamina and resiliency for the slow and challenging work of confronting the difficult ethical and practical complexities of repairing relations as we collectively face the CNE. The cohort also aimed to challenge the common assumption that the role of arts in the CNE is to support other disciplines (like science) to better communicate problems and solutions.

During this residency, the 12 catalyst artists, who are active in the arts sector in Canada and internationally, collaboratively reflected on how art can help us to “stay with the trouble” and face the complexities of our current times: to not turn our back to the turmoil of difficult things, while remaining grounded and attentive to what it means to be human within a wider web of relations. In the first part of the digital residency the artists took the course “Facing Human Wrongs” (see pages 49–51). In the second part of the digital residency, drawing from their multi-disciplinary practices, which included theatre, dance, music, visual arts, filmmaking, and writing, the artists worked towards activating different modes of feeling, thinking, relating and acting as forces of social change that could open up not-yet-imaginable possibilities for co-existence in the future.

The artists primarily met virtually, but also organized an in-person residency in May 2023, which included a final artistic immersion session open to the public.

**CNE CATALYST ARTISTS:** Dani d’Emilia (PWIAS lead), Naser Al Sughaiyer, Azul Carolina Duque, Cliff Berrien, Sidi Chen, Willow Cioppa, Reed Jackson, Dr. Melanie Kloetzel, Dr. Andréa Monteiro, Cadence Planthara, Dr. Kimberly Skye Richards, Alysha Seriani



“The guiding principles were a fundamental part of what made the experience very different from any other interdisciplinary cohorts I have been in, both within UBC and beyond. The intellectual depth principle was an important guideline to come back to when I noticed we were falling for the typical ethnocentric ‘solutions’ or other superficial ways to relate with the climate and nature emergency. As an artist it was very important to have the space to unlearn and experiment alongside other artists in an interdisciplinary, intergenerational and intercultural way while engaging with the climate and nature emergency. The amount of time we had together allowed us to build the relationships necessary to do uncomfortable and deep work around our responsibility as settlers and our complicity in harm.” **Azul Carolina Duque, CNE Catalyst Artists Cohort**



# CNE Catalyst Campus Synergy Group

The Campus Synergy Group was composed of staff leaders from 10 UBC operational units committed to taking bold and diverse actions to address the CNE. The cohort met monthly (lunch provided) to cross-fertilize experiences and to activate new pathways for transformative change through increased visibility, accountability and action in CNE work at UBC. Building on diverse networks on and off campus, the Campus Synergy Group provided support to UBC campus units and leadership on how to “walk the talk” on the CNE, and connected community-driven climate and biodiversity efforts with university researchers and students to extend the capacity for action.

- **Linda Nowlan** (PWIAS lead), UBC Sustainability Hub
- **Dr. Hannah Wittman** (PWIAS lead), Land and Food Systems
- **Vicky Baker**, Interdepartmental Climate Action Team (ICAT)
- **Camil Dumont**, Centre for Sustainable Food Systems
- **Dean Gregory**, Building Operations
- **Dr. Susan Grossman**, Centre for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL)
- **Dr. Tara Moreau**, Botanical Garden
- **Dr. Sara Nelson**, Centre for Climate Justice
- **Derek Tan**, Beaty Biodiversity Museum
- **Kevin Ward**, First Nations House of Learning (FNHL)
- **Meghan Wise**, UBC Climate Hub



“As a staff participant from the UBC Climate Hub in the Campus Synergy Group, I valued the interdisciplinary and cross-faculty nature of the cohort. The scope of the cohort allowed for thought-provoking discussions around shifting, mobilizing, deepening, and reflecting on past, current and future campus and community engagement from multiple perspectives, skill sets and knowledges. I think it is important to continually prioritize and invest in building relations across faculty, students, other staff and community members as we explore pathways for mobilizing collaborative, decolonial and climate justice-based action and engagements.” **Meghan Wise, UBC Climate Hub Coordinator, CNE Catalyst Campus Synergy Group member**

“Including a Campus Synergy cohort for the CNE initiative was rewarding and affirming. Staff operational decisions about campus land, facilities, and core systems critically influence UBC’s response to the climate and nature emergencies. During the time we had together, we shared resources on climate grief, anxiety and wellbeing, collaborated on projects such as a celebration of the UN Year of Millets and a proposal for an experiential multi-sensory campus sustainability and climate tour, as well as the staff implementation of plans such as the Climate Emergency Task Force report. We found unexpected connections on climate change, art and museums, and learned about the challenges of implementing little known plans such as UBC’s Public Realm Plan. We collaborated with members of the PWIAS faculty cohort and held discussions with the BC First Nations Leadership Council to learn about their Climate Strategy and Action Plan. Two graduate student summer research internships resulted from these talks: one cataloging UBC’s Indigenous -climate research partnerships, and the other on analysis of transportation and low carbon transportation legislation, policies, programs and funding opportunities for First Nations in BC. Finally we brainstormed how to continue our collaborations and identified 28 priorities to advance UBC’s response to the climate and nature emergency. The next step is to pick two key priorities and keep going!” **Linda Nowlan, Senior Director, UBC Sustainability Hub, and CNE Catalyst Campus Synergy Group lead**

# Collaboration Funding





**T**he CNE Catalyst Collaboration Fund offered seed funding for relevant, rigorous, and responsible collaborative research and knowledge translation and mobilization about the CNE. We launched three collaborative project funding calls: two open to all UBC and UBCO faculty and emeriti/ae and one specifically to CNE Catalyst Program participants. The criteria for the funding calls included demonstrating how researchers were reflecting on and addressing the four guiding principles of the PWIAS CNE Catalyst Program. Over \$380,000 was distributed to 38 projects across multiple disciplines.

In the list of projects on the next pages a straight underline indicates that the funding recipient was a PWIAS CNE Catalyst Program participant, and a wavy underline indicates that the funding recipient identifies as Indigenous.

- 1 A community-based, inter- and trans-disciplinary approach to indoor heat and air pollution**, Dr. Liv Yoon, Dr. Erica Bennet, Dr. Bieke Gils, Dr. Sarah Koch, Dr. Andrea Bundon, Dr. Carolyn McEwen, Verena Rossa-Roccor
- 2 Advancing anticolonial methods in laboratory research**, Dr. Rafi Arefin, Dr. Danielle Ignace, Dr. Michele Koppes, Dr. Parisa Mehrkhodavandi, Dr. Michelle Tseng, Dr. Jocelyn Stacey, Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa
- 3 Agricultural work, health, and extreme heat policy project**, Dr. Ethan Raker, Dr. Bethany Hastie
- 4 asha আশা: a transnational arts, education, research, and community organizing collective**, Jennie Zhou, Sagorika Haque, Verónica Relaño Écija, Grace Nosek, Xenia Rajoyana Chowdhury
- 5 Assessing effects of changing rainfall patterns on Costa Rican biodiversity with a sentinel system**, Dr. Diane Srivastava, Sarah Ravoth, Agostina Bordunale, Jennifer Stynoski, Calixto Moraga, Petrona Rios, Edd Hammill, José Mario Moraga Rios
- 6 Biodegradable Buddhist cultural prayer flags and scarfs**, Dr. Parisa Mehrkhodavandi, Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa, Dr. Rachel Scholes, Dr. Michelle Tseng
- 7 Building a responsive research network**, Dr. Jocelyn Stacey, Dr. Michelle Tseng, Dr. Derek Gladwin, Dr. Michele Koppes, Dr. Parisa Mehrkhodavandi, Dr. Ethan Raker, Dr. Srinivas Murthy, Dr. Rachel Scholes, Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa
- 8 Caring for the land: Indigenous land defenders, guardians, seed keepers and love**, Dr. Tabitha Robin Martens, Stephanie Lin
- 9 Causal impacts of human-trail use on spatio-temporal patterns of grizzly bear detections in the South Chilcotin Mountains (SCM) Provincial Park, BC**, Dr. Sumeet Gulati



- 10** **Climate displacement, Indigenous priorities, and Federal policy: Post-Lytton community engagement in the Fraser Canyon and Canada’s UNDRIP action plan**, Dr. Alexei Kojevnikov, Sarah Kamal, Jordan Spinks, Dr. Renisa Mawani, Dr. Shandin Pete, Dr. Jocelyn Stacey
- 11** **Climate justice study collective**, Dr. Sara Nelson, Jack Suchodolski, Charlotte Taylor, Dr. Jocelyn Stacey, Dr. Tara Mahoney, Dr. Jessica Dempsey, Dr. Taco Niet, Dr. Gastón Gordillo, Dr. Rafi Arefin, Dr. Lorien Nesbitt, Annika Ord
- 12** **Climate stories**, Verónica Relaño Écija, Daniel Pauly
- 13** **Differential impacts of metaphor on climate doomism and eco-anxiety in English and French**, Dr. Elise Stickles, Caitlin Johnstone, Celeste Browning
- 14** **Envisioning Secwépemc foodland conservation areas**, Dr. Dana James, Dr. Hannah Wittman, Dawn Morrison, Monica Shore, Becca Jo Dower, Steven Teed
- 15** **Green rights and warrior lawyers virtual academy and inspirathon**, Dr. Stepan Wood, Dr. Robert Clifford, Dr. Lynda M Collins, Dr. Avi Lewis, Dr. Jason MacLean, Dr. Sharon Mascher, Dr. Jacinta Ruru, Dr. Calvin Sandborn, Dr. Sara Seck, Dr. Kirby Manià, Dr. Cormac Cullinan, Steven Donziger, Mumta Ito, Dr. Marjan Minnesma, Antonio Oposa Jr, Dr. Brian Preston, Dr. Chima Williams, Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson
- 16** **Growing millet together! Global cultivation stories for climate-resilient communities**, Saori Ogura, Tara Moreau, Derek Tan, Axel Diederichsen, Kenneth Wilson, Emmanuel Hove, Mayalmit Lepcha, Toru Sakawa, Saiko Ohshimizu, Masako Uchimura
- 17** **Housing justice in a climate emergency: A research and advocacy partnership**, Dr. Naomi Klein, Dr. Rafi Arefin
- 18** **Indigenous just transition: Strengthening global north/south relations**, Dino Siwek

- 19 Indigenous youth building and exchanging strategies for climate advocacy**, Dr. Cash Ahenakew, Mateus Tremembe, Luan Tremembe, Elvis Huni Kui, Taily Terena, Ibis Marisol Garcia Apahueno
- 20 Makers' Lab: Art/research collaborations and solutions for the climate crisis**, Dr. Leila Harris, Kendra Fanconi, Dr. Shannon Walsh
- 21 Nurturing decolonial relationalities between North and South**, Azul Carolina Duque, Reed Jackson, Dr. Julia Ulehla, Nadia Pitaguary, Rosa Pitaguary, Francilene Pitaguary, Karen Chief Moon, Keith Chief Moon
- 22 Reconciliation through university ecology education**, Dr. Michelle Tseng, Dr. Laura Parfrey, Dr. Chris Harley, Dr. Rachel Wilson, Dr. Jill Jankowski
- 23 Responses to climate and nature emergency in Indigenous Asia and beyond, an online lecture series**, Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa, Dr. Michele Koppes, Dr. Danielle Ignace, Dr. Rachel Scholes, Dr. Derek Gladwin, Dr. Ethan Raker, Dr. Aynur Kadir, Dr. Ayaka Yoshimizu, Dr. Kalzang Dorjee Bhutia
- 24 Sharing land protectors' stories**, José Reyerós Sánchez, Jacob Power, Dr. Juanita Sundberg, Danielle Khan Da Silva, Catherine Yrissari, David Ontaneda
- 25 Socio-ecological perspectives of National Park of Isla de Espiritu Santo**, Verónica Relano Écija
- 26 Solving sustainability challenges at the food-climate-biodiversity nexus**, Dr. William Cheung, Dr. Ingo Wehrtmann, Dr. Christian Birkel, Dr. Jorge Jimenez
- 27 Sustainable tools for just transitions**, Dr. Kimberly Skye Richards, Dr. Laura Levin, Juma Pariri
- 28 Supporting Sherpa Song Project and community consultation in Khumbu**, Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa, Dr. Michele Koppes, Declan Taylor, Dr. Ayasha Guerin, Dr. Derek Gladwin

- 29** **Systems Beings Lab**, Dr. Derek Gladwin, Dr. Michelle Koppes,  
Dr. Naoko Ellis
- 30** **The critically engaged voices research collaborative**, Charlotte Taylor, Camilla Cardoso, Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa, Dr. Shannon Waters, Chief Ninawa Huni Kui
- 31** **The Liberated Planet Studio**, Dr. Ayasha Guerin, Azul Carolina Duque, Reed Jackson, Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa, Dr. Manuel Pina Baldoquin, Dr. Astrida Neimanis, Patty Chang, Marco Esccer, Mayfield Brooks, Paris Cyan, Amrit Trewn, Romi Morrison.
- 32** **UBC Journal for Climate Justice**, Jack Suchodolski, Charlotte Taylor, Sara Nelson, Meghan Wise
- 33** **Unintended consequences: An open environmental health and justice resource**, Dr. Greg Garrard
- 34** **Variable selection in natural resources analyses**, Dr. Bianca Eskelson, Liam Gilson, Dr. Melissa McHale, Dr. Naomi Schwartz, Dr. Natalia Nolde, Celine Boivenu, Mathieu Fortin
- 35** **Wading symposium and Shinnecock oyster harvest film**,  
Dr. Ayasha Guerin, Azul Carolina Duque
- 36** **With trees: The new? Material! Relations. Project**, Dr. Orlando Rojas, Dr. Hélène Day Fraser, Brenda Crabtree, Connie Watts, Stephanie Rebick, Aubyn O'Grady, Dr. Nicole Klenk, Dr. Mimi Gellman
- 37** **Worldwide voices for water partnerships**, Karl Zimmermann, Jacob Power, Chris Spencer, Dr. Avi Lewis
- 38** **Reimagining global climate science**, Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa  
(match funding for successful SSHRC Connections grant)

# Highlights and Activities



It is impossible to represent the vast array of activities that were initiated through the CNE Catalyst Program as we had more than 50 events led by program participants. In this section, we highlight program features that supported critical, artistic, inter-disciplinary and inter-generational engagements, the artist project “Liberated Planet Studio”, key events and partnerships, critical interventions at COP27 and efforts to amplify Indigenous voices and to support Indigenous aspirations that were part of the CNE Catalyst Program.





## EVENTS

# Connections lunches

The CNE Catalyst Program Connections lunches offered an opportunity for all cohorts, funding recipients and partners to get to know each other, network and build community. The lunches exceeded our expectations in terms of attendance (we ran out of food twice!). We encouraged attendees to sit at tables with representatives from the different cohorts in order to maximize opportunities for exchange.

Different cohorts took turns hosting the lunches and proposed questions to be discussed at the tables and other exercises and activities to encourage cross-disciplinary and cross-generational engagement. The Connections lunches were a highly successful experiment that reflected how, especially in a post-pandemic context, sharing a meal is still a highly effective relational technology.

Questions formulated and presented by CNE Catalyst Student Fellows and Artists included:

- 1** How has the climate crisis and its interconnections impacted your life? How have these impacts informed, shaped, or complicated your work and values?
- 2** What have been the institutional barriers or complexities you have faced in navigating your climate work? In what ways can community and spaces like this - perhaps even at your table - help map ways forward?
- 3** What has your (un)learning about this theme looked like throughout your academic/professional careers? What do you think people should learn or unlearn in order to be able to show up meaningfully to climate work?



- 4 Grief, volatility, alienation, and fatigue are all well-documented hallmarks of our collective global, local, trans-local, and interpersonal present moment. What could more just climate futures look like if we were to honour our deep interconnections with each other, the land, and all the world's living beings? How could we begin that groundwork here and now today?
- 5 How can we interrupt do-good solutionism? What influences (eg: societal, interpersonal, psychological, etc.) might contribute to our desire for immediate, over-simplified answers to complex crises? How can we show up in our movements of justice if 'the ways we respond to crisis are part of the crisis'?
- 6 How might your work/discipline intersect with colonial systems of violence? What is your relationship to the land/"environment" like? What does it mean to you personally, and how might this be shaped by your positionality (e.g. white-settler, racialized-settler, Indigenous, etc.)?
- 7 How can you challenge and leverage your role at the university to catalyze meaningful change for climate action at UBC and beyond?
- 8 What are some of the pleasures of petrocultures that you enjoy? What are some of the characteristics of petro-modernity that you will miss or are reluctant to let go?
- 9 What feels like it is moving quickly or accelerating? What feels like it moving slowly or decelerating? How do these feelings show up in your behaviours, emotional states, or imagination?
- 10 At the level of your field/area of work: What ideas or processes feel like they are moving quickly or accelerating? What is moving slowly or decelerating? At the collective level (e.g., among your peers, colleagues, or in community), what feelings are circulating? What behaviours and ideas are emerging in response? At the individual level, what approaches do you engage with to stay grounded within these distinct moments of fast and slow?

## EVENTS

# Artistic immersion sessions

Artists who were part of the CNE Catalyst Digital Residency shared multidisciplinary practices for nurturing intellectual and relational stamina in the work of addressing the complexities of the CNE.

Participants were invited to actively explore how they could work from their individual and collective bodies to re-ignite our sense of connectedness and responsibility towards each other and the planet.

These seven sessions were designed to address one central question: What kinds of intellectual and embodied practices can help us hold difficult and painful realities without feeling immobilized or overwhelmed by uncertainty and discomfort?

## IMMERSION SESSIONS:

Rhythm, Resonance & Responsibility led by Azul Carolina Duque and Cliff Berrien, September 2022

Co-sensing with Radical Tenderness led by Dani d'Emilia, October 2022

Writing and Storytelling for World-Ending and World-Building led by Willow Cioppa, November 2022

DE-COMPOSE: Embodied Image (Un)making With Our Cellular Devices led by Alysha Seriani and Reed Jackson, January 2023

Transition Anxiety and the Art/Work of Harm Reduction led by Kimberly Skye Richards, March 2023

Connections: Imprint, Synchronization, and Attunement led by Sidi Chen, April 2023

Metabolising Human Wrongs, presented by all the artists, May 2023 residency





Rhythm, Resonance & Responsibility led by Azul Carolina Duque and Cliff Berrien, September 2022.



Transition Anxiety and the Art/Work of Harm Reduction led by Kimberly Skye Richards, March 2023.



## ONLINE COURSE

# Facing Human Wrongs

Facing Human Wrongs is a targeted open online course (TOOC) licensed under creative commons that can be taken for credit through the Faculty of Land and Food Systems and the Department of Educational Studies at UBC. The course invites participants to temporarily suspend conditioned desires for hope, solutions and futurity in order to develop the kinds of dispositions and capabilities that enable them to sit with the depth, magnitude, and complexities of the challenges we are facing within and around us, without turning away. The course was a requirement for the artist cohort, and graduate and undergraduate fellows of the CNE Catalyst Program.

The design of the course is grounded in depth (decolonial psychoanalytic systems/complexity) pedagogy and organized around four denials: the denial of systemic complicity in harm, of unsustainability, of entanglement, and of the magnitude and depth of the challenges we will need to face together. The course offers six un/learning bundles (units) with eight invitations each, including a mini-lecture, choices of texts and documentaries, cognitive, affective and relational exercises, a forest/city walk, engagements with artistic practices and pop culture, and land/body recalibrations. Participants were encouraged to experience 75% of each unlearning bundle before they engaged in bi-weekly tutorials for sharing and processing their responses to the pedagogical invitations.

The course objectives included equipping participants to:

- 1** Think deeper about global challenges and better relate to people who come from different backgrounds and belief systems
- 2** Become more aware of how they are part of both the problem and the solutions to global issues
- 3** Explore different possibilities for being and relating not grounded on shared meaning, identity or conviction

- 4 Expand their frames of reference, recognizing the contributions from different knowledge systems
- 5 Interrupt patterns of entitlement coming from social, economic and/or racial privilege
- 6 Respond in generative ways to teachings (knowledge exchange) that do not resonate with them
- 7 Open up possibilities for thinking, relating and being beyond what is authorized within modern knowledge systems
- 8 Re-ignite their sense of connectedness and responsibility towards each other and the planet
- 9 Open their social and ecological imaginations, to weave different futures
- 10 Develop stamina and resiliency for the slow and challenging work that needs to be done in the long term

The course focused on supporting participants to deepen their capacity to navigate complexity, uncertainty, volatility and ambiguity (VUCA) and to address wicked challenges without feeling overwhelmed or immobilized. It offered tools that supported the development of psychodynamic self-assessment, as well as diffractive, diachronic, analectic, and abductive reasoning, which are essential capabilities and dispositions for participants to be able to hold the weight of the stacked multiple moving layers of complexity of the CNE.

The original version of Facing Human Wrongs is available at [facinghumanwrongs.net](http://facinghumanwrongs.net).

“Struggling with nihilism is an uphill battle for my generation. Nihilism had drained my emotions and motivations to a level of deep hopelessness that echoed how my peers felt. Hopelessness towards myself, my work and the efforts and work of others had moved me out of climate justice and climate change work. The world, to me, had been confirmed to end as the communities in Pakistan faced the hopelessness-inducing impacts of climate change when one third of the nation flooded. These were lands close to where my family and I have lived.

Rather than denying the painful dimensions of the CNE, this course involved a confrontation with the end of the world as we know it in a way that eradicated nihilism for me. With the end of nihilism, climate change and its impacts still persist, but I am better equipped to see and to feel and digest how my body and my communities receive these events and how they are impacted by them. I feel I am better able to hold space for and process climate anxiety and also act from a space of discernment with what is viable in terms of climate justice.

The content moved me. It also made our cohort feel extremely angry, sad, frustrated with the whole range of emotions. We held each other as we grieved and processed the realities of the world. But it liberated me too. This is the one course where I understood what Paulo Freire meant by education’s ability to liberate you. It feels unreal to say I took this course as an elective in my last year of undergrad studies. This course has impacted me more than any other experiences of my undergrad program. After a long while, I am not numb and I hope for our youth to experience the same or else, the climate nihilism will end our worlds before that end even unfolds for them.” **Preet Kang, CNE Catalyst Undergraduate Student Fellow**

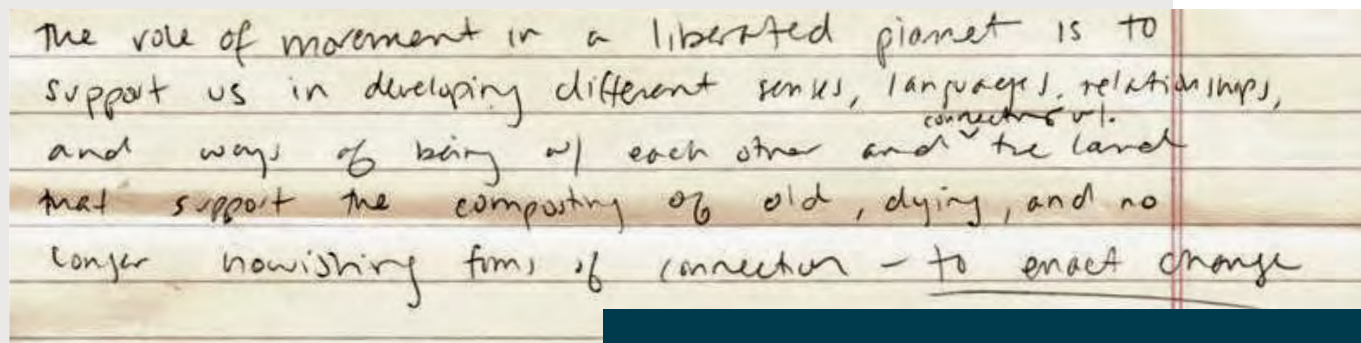
## ARTIST PROJECT

# Liberated Planet Studio

In January 2023, Dr. Ayasha Guerin, interdisciplinary artist, curator, and professor of Black Diaspora Studies at the UBC Department of English Language and Literatures, launched the Liberated Planet Studio project (LPS). Dr. Guerin states that LPS is “a curated program with artists, activists and academic collaborators at The Dance Centre to catalyze dialogue about our common inheritances: colonialism and climate change – and to ask: “What would a liberated planet look like? And how might we achieve this together?”

In collaboration with artists from the CNE Catalyst Artists Cohort, the studio was designed as a space for eco-somatic practices that centre the worldviews of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC). LPS was created to provide free studio hours and programming, breaking financial and access barriers for artists and activists who are interested in ecological research at the intersections of environmental and social justice.

The project used somatic inquiry to bring awareness to social habits, limits, and differences and to the importance of spaces where people can start to relearn how to relate, communicate and share space while still facing the effects of a global pandemic. Speaking to the principle of ethical collaborations, LPS emphasized that every body has creative potential and that everybody’s participation will be needed to confront both the climate crisis and the crisis of settler-colonialism. The studio was open for drop-in collaborations and experiments with text and movement in January–April, 2023.



Quote from Liberated Planet Studio participant, Hannah Holtzclaw.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: “Mooring possibilities” with Paris Cian, “Body, a trace of memory” with Marco Esccer, “Soanaciones” with Azul Carolina Duque, “Danzanacion Tolteca” with Beatriz Pimentel, and “How do we live I’m the midst of dying” with Pasang Yangjee Sherpa.

“The name for the project was inspired by an interview I often teach with, between Dr. Robin D.G. Kelley and Dr. George Yancy, who, while discussing the possibilities for reparations and decolonization, argue that such work requires the abolition of all forms of planetary oppression and violence. While reparations carry their own contradictions, “reparative redistribution,” is one of the PWIAS Catalyst Program principles reflected in the Liberated Planet Studio objective to break financial barriers to entry with free studio bookings and weekly programming. By platforming and compensating historically marginalized workshop leaders and participants, LPS has intended to widen and diversify participation in climate politics and somatics discourses too.” **Dr. Ayasha Guerin, CNE Catalyst Scholar**



## EVENTS

# Artists within the Anthropocene

The three-part series “Artists within the Anthropocene” was a partnership between PWIAS and the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery addressing artistic practices and pedagogies in times of ongoing social and ecological collapse. Each event featured artists whose work addresses the CNE. Artists came from a wide variety of disciplines and contexts, such as sound, performance, photography, dance, film, and poetry, including political, curatorial, artistic, and scholarly activism. The events happened on April 21 (on the occasion of Earth Day), May 26 and June 23. Presenting artists included: Sandra Semchuck, Kayah George, Gudrun Lock, Dr. Ayasha Guerin (Liberated Planet Studio), Dr. Dylan Robinson, artists from the CNE Catalyst Artist Cohort and artists involved in the project “Score: Indigenous resurgence in art - how can the musical be a tool for decolonization?”.



“How can artists help us move past our collective fatigue and grief, and galvanize action? The Anthropocene is an epoch where there are more trees growing in farms than in the wild, where more rock and soil is moved by bulldozers and mining than all ‘natural’ processes combined and where the climate is tipping out of control due to the burning of oil, gas and coal. Industrial capitalism is irreversibly altering the natural cycles of the biosphere, nature is now a product of culture. It is no longer just asteroid impacts and volcanic eruptions that herald mass extinctions, it is us, the 20% of the world that is consuming 80% of its resources. In the age of the Anthropocene there is no distinction between natural history and human history, between culture and nature. We are woven together, entwined in each other’s fates. We are in a moment of radical vulnerability. The future is not what it used to be. This series was an opportunity for reflecting on the role of art and activism at a time when it might seem that neither are powerful enough tools to transform the world anymore - and yet transform it we must.”

**Shelly Rosenblum, PhD, Curator of Academic Programs, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and Wall Associate.**

## EVENTS

# On the Frontlines of Injustice: An Urgent Conversation on Gender and the Climate Crisis

Led by CNE Catalyst Undergraduate Fellow Sagorika Haque, this event was organized in partnership with the UBC Global Lounge. It brought together academics and community organizers from Bangladesh and Nepal, countries that are disproportionately vulnerable to climate destabilization, to discuss policy, advocacy, and legal pathways towards more just futures. Participants from Nepal included Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa, Dr Nazneen Islam Khan, and director and decades-long COP negotiator, Dr Mizan Khan, from the International Center for Climate Change and Development. Mahfuza Mala, a climate activist, ecofeminist, and intergenerational community organizer, represented Naripokkho, a Bangladesh-based renowned women's organization working against violence and discrimination.

This international dialogue focused on problematizing the lack of visibility of the gendered impacts of climate crises in the mainstream climate agenda. The session invited critical considerations of the large gaps between academia and community organizing. The conversation emphasized how deeply climate justice is interconnected with racial, gender, economic, and other forms of social injustices. Scholars and activists explored together how participatory approaches could be used to involve the most disproportionately affected groups in the design and implementation of policies and climate interventions.

On the topic of gendered violence and the CNE, Sagorika also developed and facilitated other events, including the panel *The Costs of Growth: A Transnational Dialogue on Fast Fashion, Care Work, and Labour Rights*, which complicated dominant narratives of development, sustainability, and hierarchies around labor and worth.

## EVENTS

# Climate Stories from UBC

Climate Stories was a gathering collaboratively organized by the Public Scholars Initiative, PWIAS, UBC Sustainability Hub, UBC Climate Hub, and the Centre for Climate Justice. The event featured UBC doctoral students and UBC faculty talking about how their research addresses the CNE. The list of speakers included Severn Cullis Suzuki, Avi Lewis, Max Cohen, Fiona Beaty, Amanda Johnson, Grace Nosek, Paroma Wagle, Verónica Relaño Écija, and Sarah Dickson Hoyle.

One of the highlights of the event was the screening of a short version of the 2021 documentary *Terra Libre*, followed by a discussion with Chief Ninawa Huni Kui, Hereditary Chief of the Huni Kui Indigenous People of the Amazon, Hereditary Chief Gidansda of the Haida Nation, and film director Gert-Peter Bruch. The Q&A was moderated by Dr. Vanessa Andreotti, PWIAS Interim Director. A screening of the documentary *Terra Libre* in French was also organized at the VIFF Centre, in partnership with the Consulate General of France in Vancouver. The Q&A of the French-language event was moderated by Antoine Bourges, filmmaker and Associate Professor at the Department of Theatre and Film at UBC. The full-length documentary was available on the VIFF Connect streaming site for the month of October 2022.



Haida Hereditary Chief Gidansda, Gert-Peter Bruch, Chief Ninawa Huni Kui, Vanessa Andreotti, Severn Suzuki. Photo by Jacob Power (IG: @jpowerphotography).

## EVENTS

# Night of Ideas

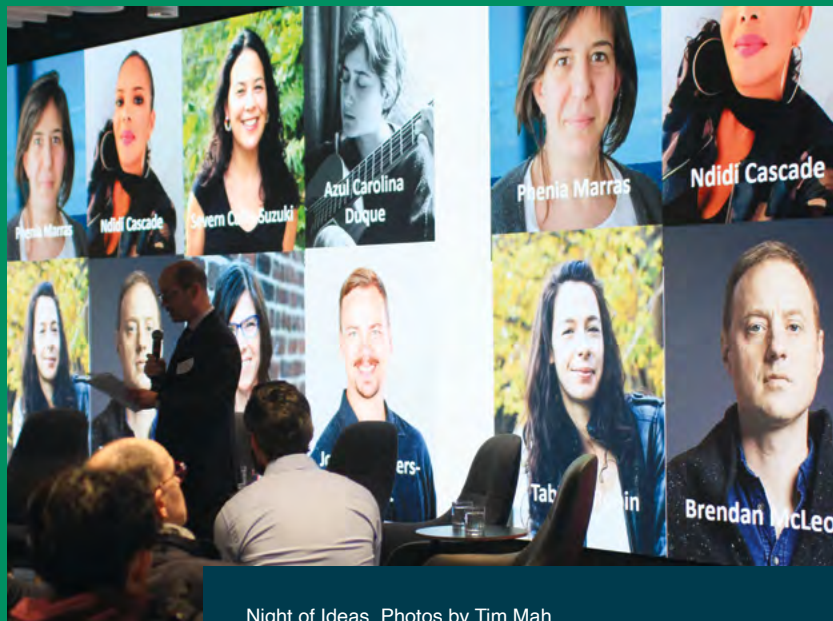
The Night of Ideas is a trans-local event that takes place every year in 200 cities and 100 countries around the world. A highly popular ‘world-wide festival of thought’, the event is initiated by French cultural institutions and organized with international partners. The Night of Ideas 2023 in Vancouver was a partnership between PWIAS and the French consulate in Vancouver.

The Night of Ideas 2023 was the 8th edition of the event and happened at the BCIT Downtown Tech Collider on February 1, 2023. The global theme was the question: “More?”. Invited artists and speakers engaged with this question from a temporal view that questioned the fast-paced orientation of modern societies. The event emphasized that while we live in an age of urgency (climate change, capitalism, food insecurity) and acceleration (lifestyle, transportation, networks), this poses a paradox: could slowness be an antidote to the urgencies of performance, over-consumption, exponential economic growth, programmed obsolescence and accelerated global warming? The event was open to the public and attracted more than 100 participants.

**PRESENTERS INCLUDED:** Phenia Marras, marine protected areas and biodiversity strategies, French Biodiversity Agency; Ndidu Cascade, hip hop artist and educator; Severn Cullis-Suzuki, environment and culture activist, David Suzuki Foundation; Azul Carolina Duque, Colombian-born multidisciplinary artist, PWIAS Catalyst Artist; Dr. Tabitha Robin Martens, professor, Indigenous food systems; Brendan McLeod, writer, theatre creator and musician, Andrea Reimer, professor, public policy, former Vancouver city councillor; John Desnoyers-Stewart, interdisciplinary artist-researcher, SFU Interactive Arts and Technology.



“Over the last years, the cultural and scientific cooperation service of the French Embassy in Canada based in Vancouver and PWIAS have regularly partnered together to organize talks and debates on high impact subjects. Recently, thanks to different features including the Connections lunches, the partnership has been reinforced, leading to the joint organization of the screening of documentary *Terra Libre* in October 2022 and the organization of the Night of Ideas in February 2023, which is an event that happens across the world. The Night of Ideas in Vancouver was an evening of creative thinking where various performing artists and speakers participated and interacted with the audience in a very innovative format.” **Geraldine Dantelle, Attachée de coopération scientifique et universitaire pour l’Ouest canadien, Vincent Zonca, Attaché de coopération et d’action culturelle pour l’Ouest canadien, Ambassade de France au Canada / Consulat général à Vancouver**



Night of Ideas. Photos by Tim Mah.

## EVENTS

# National Conference on Sustainability in Engineering

CNE Catalyst Undergraduate Fellow Jacob Power led the curriculum and event design of the National Conference on Sustainability in Engineering (February 23-29, 2023) with a focus on decolonizing STEM for the climate crisis. With mentorship from Dr. Sharon Stein and Dr. Will Valley, the conference called to attention the ways in which Western engineering design practices perpetuate colonial harm, and asked students to reflect on how they can advocate for decolonial practices in their education and careers.

Recognizing a large gap in the undergraduate engineering curriculum across universities, Jacob, in collaboration with CNE Catalyst Undergraduate Fellow Kajal Mishra, positioned the climate crisis as a symptom of colonialism and racial capitalism, highlighting the need for engineering students, educators, and professionals to confront the profession's colonial past and present in order to engage with the climate crisis.

With over 150 undergraduate engineering students from across Canada in attendance, the conference took a major step in challenging harmful and dominant sustainability narratives that exist in the engineering profession, and advocated for wide-spread changes to the undergraduate engineering curriculum at UBC and beyond. The conference also featured talks from CNE Catalyst Scholars Dr. Derek Gladwin and Dr. Rachel Scholes.



CNE Catalyst Undergraduate Fellows Kaja Mishra and Jacob Power. Photo supplied by Jacob Power (IG: @jpowerphotography).

## EVENTS

# From Universities to the UN: Navigating Colonial Institutions at the End of the World as We Know It

This conference took place April 11, 2023 and was organized by Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa and Dr. Sharon Stein. The event featured a panel with Dr. Bernard Perley, Chief Ninawa Huni Kui, and Dr. Pasang Dolma Sherpa.

Conference speakers reflected on possibilities for navigating colonial institutions in ways that question the presumed benevolence and continuity of those institutions, while also mobilizing and redistributing their resources to reduce harm and support the creation and revitalization of other possibilities for collective existence. Attendees were invited to consider what “cracks” have emerged within these institutions that might allow us to, in the words of conference co-organizer Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa, “find new ways of living together in the midst of dying.”



Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa, Dr. Bernard Perley,  
and Dr. Pasang Dolma Sherpa.



“Our panel of Indigenous speakers represented forest people, mountain people, and river people. The Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre (IRSHDC) generously provided the space and crucial support for the success of the event. As the conference co-organizer, I would like to acknowledge the generosity of the Centre and also the significance of the location for this conversation. Holding the event at IRSHDC allowed us to connect Indigenous conversations that are happening on x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy̓əm (Musqueam) land with those happening around the globe. Bringing these conversations together across Indigenous communities is crucial for building solidarities and expanding possibilities for collective survival in the age of the CNE.” **Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa, Catalyst Scholar**





## EVENTS

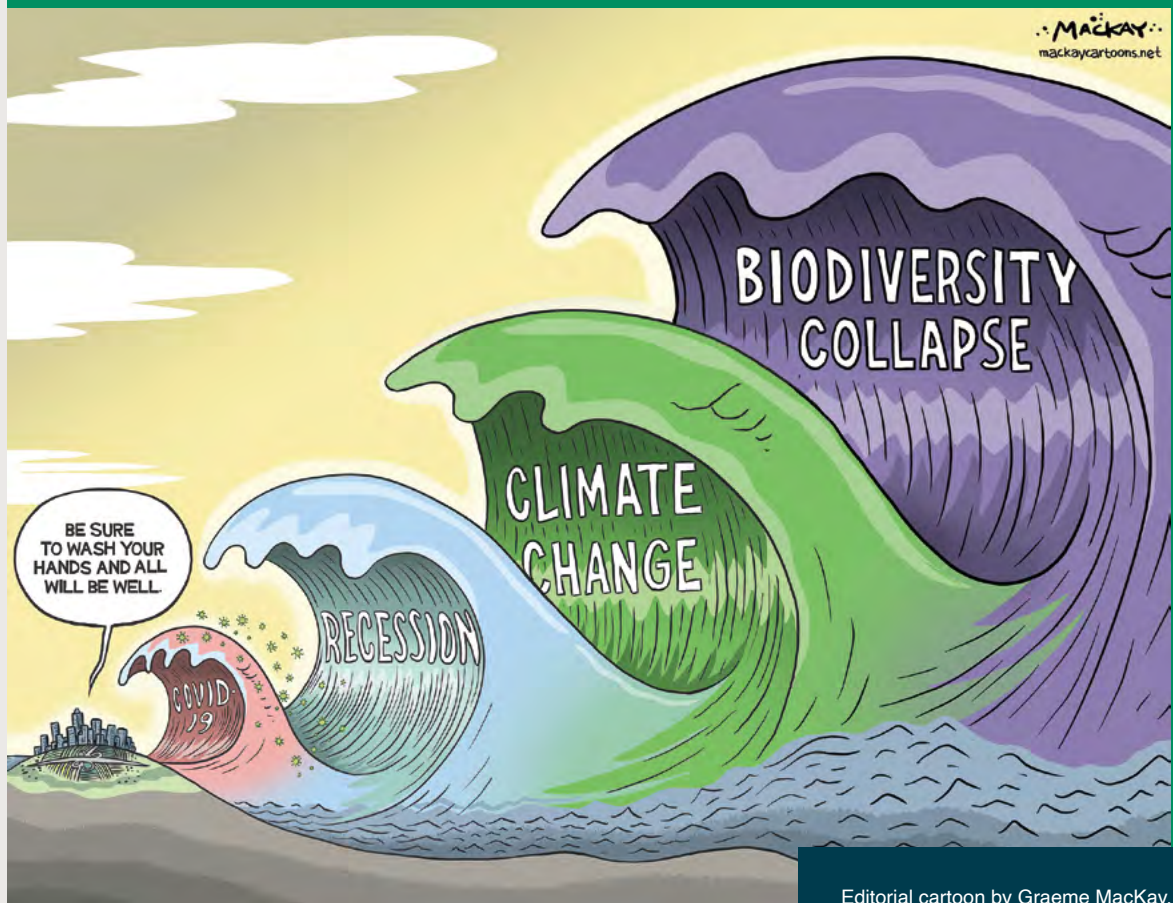
# Re-grounding Humanity in the Anthropocene – Tackling the Cultural Drivers of the Planetary Emergency

PWIAS Interim Director, Dr. Vanessa Andreotti was a panellist in the European Commission’s Knowledge for Sustainability Talk: “Re-grounding Humanity in the Anthropocene – Tackling the Cultural Drivers of the Planetary Emergency” on April 20, 2023. This series invites colleagues from EU Institutions, bodies and agencies to take a broader, long-term perspective, beyond the immediate policy-making calendar and aims to offer disruptive and uncomfortable wisdom to make EU narratives and policies more robust.

The talk explored the ways in which societies, institutions and citizens relate to and value nature have played a key role in the interconnected biodiversity, climate change, natural resources and health crises we face. Speakers shared how we must reframe the relationships between humans and nature in order to holistically understand humans’ deep interconnection with other life forms and ecosystems and lead to new motivations to protect nature and accelerate the societal transformation we need to live well within the limits of the planet.

Are climate change and nature loss just symptoms of our relationship with nature and between ourselves? Do we need to look at some of our philosophical and psychological fundamentals, challenge our anthropocentrism and re-ground humanity to survive in the Anthropocene?

Talk participants also included Lorenzo Benini from the European Environment Agency (EEA), Unai Pascual, University of Bern, and Basque Centre for Climate Change, Julia Kim from the Gross National Happiness Centre in Bhutan, and Tom Oliver from Reading University.



Editorial cartoon by Graeme MacKay.

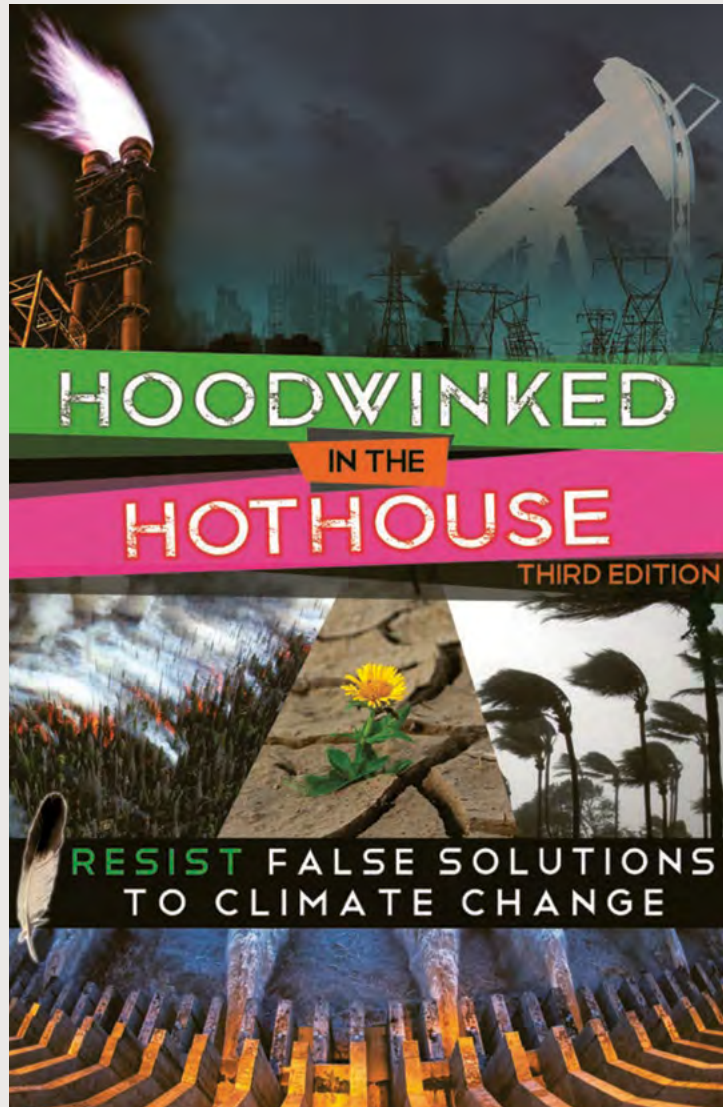
The recording of this session is available here: [webcast.ec.europa.eu/re-grounding-humanity-in-the-anthropocene-tackling-the-cultural-drivers-of-the-planetary-emergency](https://webcast.ec.europa.eu/re-grounding-humanity-in-the-anthropocene-tackling-the-cultural-drivers-of-the-planetary-emergency)

# Critically-engaged voices at COP27

Two PWIAS scholars, Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa (Scholars Cohort) and Chief Ninawa Huni Kui (International Indigenous Scholar), as well as PWIAS Interim Director Dr. Vanessa Andreotti participated in the Conference of the Parties, COP27, in Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt, in November 2022. Our small PWIAS/UBC delegation, with the added support of Dr. Shannon Waters, who was part of the UBC delegation, had the monumental mission of amplifying Indigenous voices from the frontlines of climate struggles in an effort to place Indigenous rights at the centre of the climate agenda.

Supported by Charlotte Taylor, CNE Catalyst Undergraduate Fellow, and through a partnership with the UBC Climate Hub, this initiative also documented IBPOC critically-engaged voices at COP27 in 10 videos recorded by Indigenous youth communicator Isaka Huni Kui, from the Huni Kui delegation, and shared subtitled versions on PWIAS and UBC student led social media.

Charlotte and CNE Catalyst Artist Azul Carolina Duque also developed educational resources for UBC students to delve deeper into the topics highlighted by Indigenous scholars and activists at COP27, such as greenwashing, false solutions to the CNE, (neo)colonialism in climate change adaptation and mitigation, critiques of carbon markets, nature-based solutions and the financialization of nature, and the violation of Indigenous rights in the implementation of energy transitions (including off-shore wind farms and the mining of lithium, copper, graphite, nickel, manganese, cobalt, silver, and aluminum in Indigenous territories). The educational resources featured the reports of the Indigenous Environmental Network, and highlighted the publication “Hoodwinked in the Hothouse”.



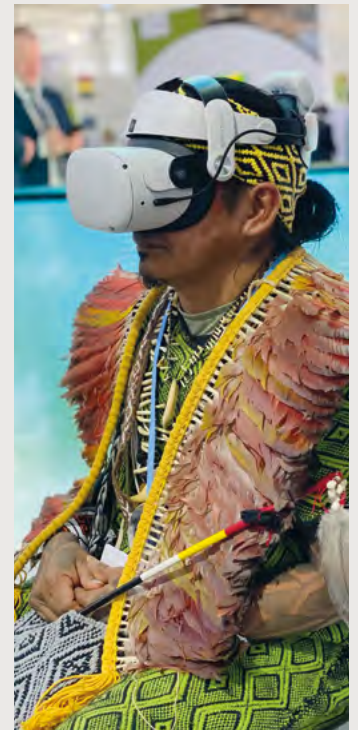
At COP27, our delegation had a busy speaking schedule, including several events at the Indigenous Peoples’ Pavillion, a featured panel on Indigenous Voices in the IPCC report<sup>5</sup> organized by the U.S. Centre, and multiple interviews with news agencies around the world. We also collaborated on OpEds for *The Conversation*, *University Affairs* and *Grassroots International*. The OpEd “Views from COP27: How the climate conference could confront colonialism by centring Indigenous rights” was featured as one of three top read articles in *The Conversation* in November 2022 (see pages 75–79).





THIS PAGE: Pay for loss and damage protest at COP27;  
OPPOSITE PAGE: Huni Kui and PWIAS/UBC delegation  
at COP27. Photos by Elvis Huni Kui.





## CRITICAL INTERVENTIONS

# Amplifying Indigenous voices and supporting Indigenous aspirations

Besides highlighting engagement with the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan as one of our program guiding principles, the CNE Catalyst Program was committed to amplifying Indigenous voices and supporting Indigenous aspirations throughout the year. We funded collaborations that were Indigenous-led and hosted events whose agendas were defined and driven by Indigenous Peoples. We also centred Indigenous worldviews in our reporting of activities, in newsletters and in this publication.



TOP: Roundtable with the Centre for First Nations' Governance: Darcy Gray, Attie (pug), Dr. Sharon Stein, Amsey Maracle, Steve Evans, Pawa Haiyupis, Dr. Vanessa Andreotti, Satsan; BOTTOM: Meeting with Allard International Justice and Human Rights Clinic at PWIAS in November, 2022 – Ben Risk, Brittney MacBean, Paul Johnson, Dr. Nicole Barrett, Chief Ninawa Huni Kui, Dr. Lisa Taylor, Camilla Cardoso and Romina Tantaleán.



## INDIGENOUS-LED COLLABORATIONS INCLUDED:

A roundtable on Education for Inherent First Nations' Rights and Planetary Responsibility organized in partnership with the Centre for First Nations' Governance (CFNG), led by Satsan, one of the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs of the Frog Clan, and CFNG's educational team, including Pawa Haiyupis, Amsey Maracle and Darcy Gray

The Allard International Justice and Human Rights Clinic (UBC) continues to collaborate with the Huni Kui Nation on an international legal strategy for the protection of Indigenous, environmental and land rights in the Amazon region. The group has been working on a request for precautionary measures to be submitted to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to address human rights violations resulting from the Brazilian government's failure to recognize the Huni Kui territory as protected Indigenous territory, which has resulted in land grabbing and several violations of human and Indigenous rights

A screening of the documentary *Terra Libre* for the Haida Nation, including a panel about international Indigenous solidarity, moderated by Métis journalist Emilee Gilpin, with Chief Ninawa Huni Kui, Haida Hereditary Chief Gidansda and elected Haida Nation President Gaagwiis Jason Alsop

An inquiry circle and research and reparations planning session organized in partnership with the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre (IRSHDC) on the role of UBC in training the workforce implicated in Indigenous genocide in the areas of education, health, science, agriculture, nutrition, linguistics, law and history.

And many other Indigenous-led or co-led projects listed in the CNE Catalyst Program funded projects section (pages 37–41)

We conclude this section by spotlighting the perspectives of two of our CNE Catalyst Scholars who are heavily involved in global advocacy in relation to the CNE: Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa, who is one of the Indigenous authors of the sixth IPCC Assessment Report<sup>5</sup> and whose research examines how Indigenous perspectives and sciences are (mis)represented in the IPCC, and Chief Ninawa Huni Kui, who has been a fierce global advocate against the financialization of nature internationally.



Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa

“Indigenous perspectives on CNE liberate us from the myth of needing to rely on a singular, problem-oriented, Euro-Western science-based way of being and knowing. They teach us that our responses to CNE do not have to be extractive, exploitative, combative, or reactive. They show us that it is not only possible, but extremely important, that our responses are relational, wise, full of care, and in service of each other (in the human form or not). From Musqueam land to deep forest in the Amazon to high villages in the Himalaya, no one is immune. Indigenous peoples at the frontline of the CNE have been relentlessly alerting the public about the risks, causes, and consequences of the CNE through their ongoing struggles for survival. They have continued to shed light on what is at stake in this moment. It is vital that we pay attention to these Indigenous voices to sustain ourselves on this planet.” **Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa, CNE Catalyst Scholar**

“The climate catastrophe and biodiversity apocalypse are not technical, but relational problems created by a sense of separation from the land/planet imposed by colonialism. From this perspective, colonialism represents a cognitive, affective, relational and neuro-biological impairment based on illusions of separation and superiority that have damaged our relationships with our own selves, with each other, with other species and with the land/planet we are part of, with deadly consequences for all involved. This neurobiological impairment creates a dis-ease in our collective body, with symptoms of human greed, vanity, arrogance and indifference. These symptoms are driving the destruction of ecosystems that are essential for our survival, like the Amazon rainforest, and placing humanity on a path of premature extinction.

While Western society has developed advanced engineering sciences and technologies, which are often deployed for exploitation, extraction and expropriation, relational sciences and technologies of respect, reverence, reciprocity and responsibility have been neglected in Western societies. Indigenous Peoples have developed these relational sciences and technologies to an advanced state. We are now facing mass extinction in slow motion and the colonial ways of organizing, thinking, feeling, relating, hoping, imagining and being that have got us into this situation cannot alone get us out of it.

The future depends much less on the images we project ahead than on our capacity to repair relations and build relationships differently in the present. We will need to combine engineering and relational sciences and technologies if humanity is to have a future on this planet. Before we can do that, Western disciplines of science and technology will need to lose their ingrained ethnocentrism and universalism, and confront the harms they have caused and/or contributed to. Once that happens, Indigenous sciences and technologies can be integrated with Western sciences and technologies to coordinate efforts towards regeneration and the expansion of social-ecological accountabilities.” **Chief Ninawa Huni Kui, PWIAS International Indigenous Scholar**



Chief Ninawa Huni Kui. Photo by Elvis Huni Kui.







# Views from COP27

How the climate conference  
could confront colonialism by  
centring Indigenous rights

**BY CHIEF NINAWA HUNI KUI WITH  
DR. VANESSA ANDREOTTI**

Originally published in "The Conversation" Nov. 9, 2022

**T**he Huni Kui Indigenous people are an integral part of the Amazon Rainforest. We don't differentiate between humans and nature. For us, there is only "nature" and humans are part of it. We have historically put our lives on the line to protect the Amazon biome and, like other Indigenous land- and water-protectors, many of our leaders have lost their lives in the fight against logging, mining and land grabbing. The Huni Kui also face the effects of pollution and climate destabilization.

As a hereditary Chief and elected President of the Huni Kui People of Acre, in the Amazon region in Brazil, I (Chief Ninawa Huni Kui) chose to participate at the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) because the Amazon is crying out for help and my people represent the voice of this biome. Sadly, as my co-author Vanessa Andreotti and I attended the meetings at the conference in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, it so far has confirmed my experiences at other COP conferences.

The vast majority of the discussions reproduce colonial patterns of unsustainable economic growth, ecological destruction and Indigenous dispossession that have been responsible for climate destabilization in the first place. Despite extensive participation of diverse peoples and communities this year, there are fewer critical perspectives at the table. The consensus seems to be that green multicultural capitalism, a carbon neutral and more "inclusive" version of capitalism, will prevent further climate catastrophe. However, we believe that COP27 could still be an important space to co-ordinate accountable climate action for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. To do so, organizers need to emphasize critical engagement with historical, systemic and on-going harm, centre Indigenous voices and rights, and do the difficult work of repairing and rebuilding relations.

## Deforestation largely benefits rich countries

In the Amazon today, temperatures are rising dangerously and atypical floods, droughts and heat domes risk food and water security. Meanwhile, land grabbers take advantage of the severe droughts by starting arson fires and destroying large areas of the Amazon rainforest to make way for large-scale agribusiness. These land grabs are aimed at producing exports to meet the demand of rich countries. All of this happens at the expense of the life of

the forest and the Indigenous Peoples who are part of it, and creates ripple effects around the world.

The Amazon biome, also called Amazonia, hosts the Earth's largest tropical forests and the second largest river in the world. However, over the past 40 years, these forests have been subjected to deforestation, warming and moisture stress. Today, the Amazon biome is close to a tipping point where the forest can turn from being a carbon sink to becoming a carbon source.

## False solutions and green capitalism

Most governments and multinational corporations funding and attending COP27 seem to want to turn the climate crisis into a business opportunity, to generate profit. This commodification and commercialization of nature is what has put us in a catastrophic situation. Most of the celebrated climate solutions, such as land-based carbon removal, biofuels and many forms of so-called green energy, are in fact forms of “CO2lonialism” — a term coined by the Indigenous Environmental Network. Indigenous Peoples are expected to pay the highest price for climate change mitigation, despite having the lowest levels of carbon emissions because of this CO2lonialism. At COP27, CO2lonialism is not the “elephant in the room,” it is “the room.”

The “green” solutions presented by government leaders and heads of corporations represent more violations of Indigenous rights and more impositions on Indigenous territories, without consultation and without consent. For example, take the case of wind farms on the Saami land in Norway and the mining of lithium, copper, nickel and cobalt for the energy transition of the Global North. Carbon trading and offsetting are also false solutions that enable and encourage the Global North to continue the same system of unsustainable growth and overconsumption that has destabilized the climate. Carbon trading and offsetting are mobilized by governments in the Global South to further dispossess Indigenous Peoples of their lands and livelihoods.

## Human extinction in slow motion

Even though Indigenous Peoples are most affected by climate change, there are very few spaces where they can tell a wide audience about the challenges posed by adapting to climate change and mitigating its effects. With climate destabilization and loss of biodiversity, we are facing mass extinction in slow motion, including the possibility of human extinction. Until we wake up to the magnitude of this threat, the world will continue to desire the same economic model that steals the future of generations to come.

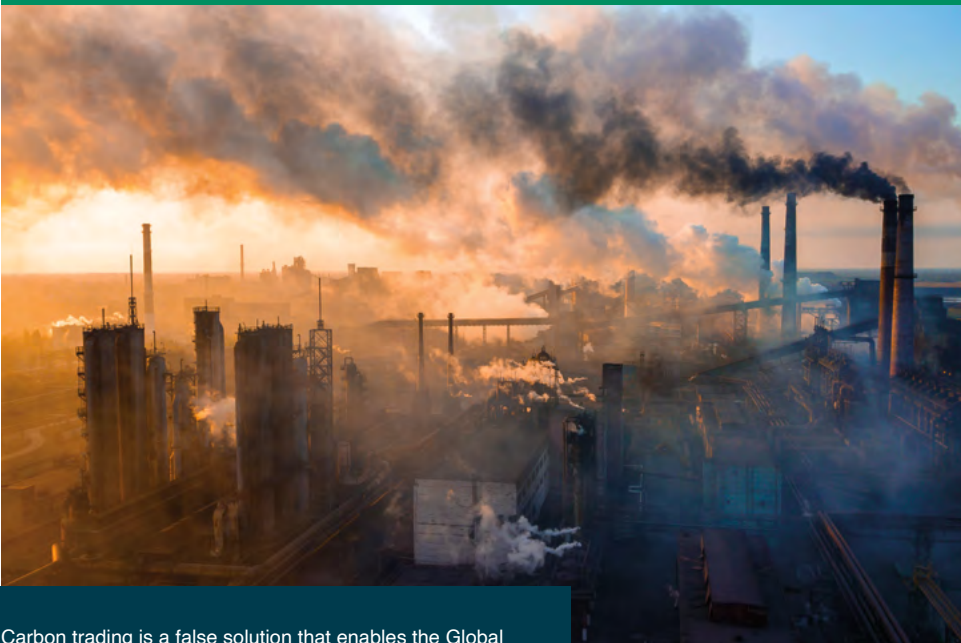
The genuine process of decarbonization is a profound process of reparation of our relationship with the Earth and our relationship with and between ourselves. We need to recognize the repeated mistakes we have made and work with humility towards a new form of coexistence, a new form of relationship with the planet. Without repairing relationships, we will not achieve the necessary coordination for local or global decarbonization. This is not an easy or painless process for those attached to the comforts and illusions of modern life.

A different future will not be possible without reverence, respect, reciprocity and responsibility towards the Earth and, on this issue, Indigenous Peoples have a lot to share. COP27 is still an important space for exchange of knowledge among Indigenous Peoples. It could also be a learning space for non-Indigenous people if Indigenous voices and rights were placed at the centre of climate destabilization discussions, and if reparations were on the table.





The world's largest rainforest — The Amazon — can turn from being a carbon sink to becoming a carbon source.



Carbon trading is a false solution that enables the Global North to continue with the polluting that has destabilized the climate.

# Reflections on Lessons Learned



# The CNE as a super-wicked challenge

Towards the end of the program, we learned the importance of better preparing participants to approach the CNE as a super-wicked-challenge *at the beginning* of programs like this. The extent to which modern systems of education tend to leave us unequipped and unprepared to approach the CNE as a super-wicked challenge, in both its technical and relational dimensions, became clearer as our program unfolded. Wicked challenges<sup>6</sup> are defined in the systems science literature as challenges that are hyper-complex and multi-layered. They represent an assemblage of interlocked problems, where every problem is a symptom of another problem and the solution for one problem creates problems in other layers. They also involve many unknowns and they have longer and uncertain timescales.<sup>6</sup> Super-wicked challenges<sup>7</sup> have extra characteristics, including the fact that time is running out, those who cause the problem also seek to provide a solution, the central authority needed to coordinate solutions is precarious, and inefficient or non-existent and responses are pushed into the future due to irrational discounting and ineffectiveness of existing paradigms and practices.<sup>7</sup>

Approaching the CNE as a super-wicked challenge requires capacities and dispositions that are rarely taught in our formal education systems. These include the ability not to be immobilized or overwhelmed by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA), both external and internal to the self. Wicked challenges require different problem posing, problem solving, coordination and accountability strategies. The capacity to hold the weight of multiple moving layers of complexity in tension, without the impulse to flatten these layers into a coherent, controllable and predictable whole is a prerequisite for approaching the CNE as a super-wicked challenge. This is counter-intuitive to those trained to universally apply linear logic, to expect seamless progress and to see themselves as neutral and reliable observers. Although this training can be effective when applied to technical regular problems, it inevitably leads to over-simplification and ineffectiveness when applied to wicked problems.



In terms of creation and application of theory, wicked challenges require an approach where hypotheses and experiments are responsibly grounded in the most relevant analytical frameworks, but these frameworks are also considered part of (and subject to) the inquiry and engaged with in a minimalist and self-critical way. In terms of methodology, wicked challenges require approaches that foreground uncertainty and that prioritize abductive rather than inductive or deductive reasoning, since a large amount of the variables are fuzzy or unknown. They also require a high level of self-reflexivity and psychodynamic self-assessment on the part of researchers, whose internal drivers, approaches and analytical frameworks, are also part of and subject to the inquiry. This is particularly important in the case of the CNE, where intergenerational stakes are very high and emotional investments are intense given the urgency of the matter. How different people experience the affective charge of the CNE inevitably affects the research decision-making process.

One of the exercises that was proposed this year for the development of psychodynamic awareness and capacity for self-assessment amongst program participants mapped different affective spaces that researchers could inhabit in their approach to the CNE. The exercise asked participants, who would be sitting in a circle, to symbolically place the CNE at the centre of the room and to participate in a guided experience of different cognitive and affective states. For each affective state, participants were invited to locate the affective charge in the landscape of their bodies and to perform an embodied symbolic gesture. Participants were asked to observe how different affective states could shift their approach to research problems and potential solutions. Below, we reproduce the invitation to embody different affective states to illustrate some of the educational difficulties of approaching the CNE as a super-wicked challenge within modern postsecondary institutions.

The first affective state presents a strong attachment to mastery, certainty and the futurity/continuity of what is perceived as progress in the present, and is therefore invested in (mostly technical and universal) solutions to the CNE. In this affective state, people are driven by the potential to achieve something meaningful for themselves and useful for the kind of society they imagine as ideal. Personal investments in this state are also influenced by the potential for increased merit, recognition and status in one's discipline or group in society.



The second affective state is also attached to mastery and certainty, but certainty of a different kind. In this state, people are invested in the conviction that the catastrophes announced by the CNE cannot be averted, that there is not much that can be done, and that humanity will surely not survive this challenge. Personal investments in this state are related to the comfort (and also sense of righteousness) of “knowing the end” that placates fears associated with instability, uncertainty, unpredictability and unknowability.

The third affective state is one of confusion, where certainties become precarious and unstable, also destabilizing one’s views of the world and sense of oneself, but where the desire for mastery and certainty is still strong. This is a state where complexities, paradoxes, contradictions and conflicting demands and perspectives become overwhelming and immobilizing, often evoking a sense of discomfort, irritability, frustration and “nausea”. Many who experience the unpleasantness of this state develop coping mechanisms that can manifest as escapist idealizations that placate complexity, uncertainty and instability.

The fourth affective state is one of pause and contemplation of both the CNE and one’s internal cognitive, affective and relational embodied landscape. In this state the relationship to the CNE as an object of research partially shifts, as the desire for mastery and certainty is replaced by a yearning for deeper understanding of both the CNE and of oneself. In the state of pause, people can see the limits of different paradigms without feeling compelled to find universal or totalizing answers or solutions as a means of placating discomfort. In this state, they are no longer immobilized by the vastness of uncertainty, unpredictability and unknowability, but they are also not quite ready to act yet, because they are taking time to sit at the limits of their understandings and contemplate ways to think, feel, imagine, relate and do differently.

The fifth affective state is one of epistemic curiosity, collective inquiry and flow of coordination. This state engages with the complexity of the CNE driven by a desire for the joy of collective epiphanies that may come from both the successes and failures of testing hypotheses and carrying out (social or technical) experiments. In this state, researchers and disciplines do not have to prove their worth and secure their place in hierarchies of knowledge-worth: each researcher and discipline is seen as both insufficient and indispensable to the task at hand, and supported to sit at the edge of their professional and disciplinary knowledge in order to remain open to being interpolated by different ways of knowing.

The sixth affective state is one of relational entanglement with the CNE. Modern formal education cannot train people to inhabit this affective state, which is associated with the advanced relational sciences and technologies held and practiced by Indigenous groups that Chief Ninawa has mentioned in the previous section. Those of us trained and over-socialized in modern systems can only have momentary glimpses of this state. In this affective space, as you are looking at the CNE, the CNE is looking back at you, not as an object of inquiry, but as a co-subject of inquiry. From this relational standpoint, the CNE is entangled with the same planetary metabolism that humanity is entangled with - it is both, at the same time, a separate entity and an entity that inhabits each one of us. Therefore, the temperatures and the waters rising around us reflect temperatures and waters rising within us. In this state, knowledge and collective epiphanies are not exclusive to the human intellect and the agency and coordination of (the rest of) nature is integral to the relational research process.



To conclude the exercise, participants were invited to talk about the implications of the insights gained from this exercise for research and training. The conversations in different groups took different turns. Participants talked about the kinds of affective states that are encouraged and rewarded in different disciplines, the positive and negative implications of approaching the CNE through the range of affective states they experienced, and the potential problems of approaching the CNE exclusively through states invested in mastery and certainty. Participants also delved into the kind of research training that might support incoming researchers to approach the CNE through pause, curiosity and relational entanglement, and the difficulties of justifying and implementing these approaches in modern postsecondary institutions. With student groups, the conversation touched the connection between climate grief and the unpleasantness of being stuck in the state of confusion without having the means and training to move into pause and curiosity.

While in modern institutions it is often assumed that research is a purely cognitive practice, the CNE challenges us to pay attention to the affective and relational dispositions that also shape the knowledge we create and mobilize. In this sense, relational entanglement is also about interrogating and expanding the ways we relate to knowledge, language, reality, time, place and self. The super-wicked nature of the CNE defies desires for mastery, certainty and universal answers that are reinforced in modern education. While disinvesting in these desires can result in an initial sense of deflation or defeat, exercises such as this one can support participants to “stay with the trouble,”<sup>8</sup> by de-centering their expectations, projections and idealizations in order to centre the challenge at hand in all its difficulty and complexity, without feeling immobilized or overwhelmed. This is necessary if we are to coordinate climate research and climate action across different communities and contexts with more humility, self-reflexivity, and a recognition of the partiality and provisionality of all analytical frameworks and approaches to problem-solving.

As an extra task, in order to practice the affective space of relational entanglement, participants were invited to perform two out of three short writing tasks *without anthropomorphizing nature* (sitting at the limits of what is possible to imagine) and observing their own responses to the task itself: a) a haiku representing the CNE as unfathomable “kin”; b) a short apology note to the CNE that recognized the lack of respect and responsibility on the part of most living humans, including oneself, and a list of commitments to reverse that trend; and/or c) a humorous poem that addressed the CNE as a teacher: a larger living entity trying to teach us to be less arrogant human beings and not shoot our own foot by destroying the ecological infrastructures that enable and sustain our existence.

#### HAIKU

Humanity’s dawn?  
Our chance to learn under duress?  
[to the CNE looking at us] What do YOU see?

#### APOLOGY NOTE

We messed up. We don’t know if we can fix it.  
I am deeply sorry for how immature and irresponsible we have been. I commit to not repeating mistakes already made. I commit to not turning away from the “shit”. I will learn to compost. I will try my very best until the end.

#### POEM/REQUEST

You are mighty and smart. We are small and have grown foolish and selfish. Humility is scarce. Change is hard, painful and requires discipline. Some of us are getting on with it, but we are mostly not very good at it yet. We need more people to sense your depth and power, but please be gentle with your teachings.



# Difficult conversations and conundrums of practice

Dealing with paradoxes, competing interests and demands, interpersonal and intergroup conflicts and backlashes while you navigate a rocky institutional context amidst broader environmental and political turmoil is not for the faint of heart. Those of us who were part of the leadership team created our own collective educational inquiry around the design and delivery of the program, where we could deepen our understanding of pedagogy, institutional possibilities and politics, collaborations, and the facilitation of difficult processes and conversations. We supported each other to process the challenging and complex difficulties we were faced with, and in order to keep it real, we used “real talk”, which combined both candour and humour as an anchoring force of our collective educational inquiry. We have chosen four lessons to share, but instead of reporting on our own learning, we recreated experiences of inquiry, where we invite you to approach a difficult conversation and conundrum with us.

## 1 COMPLICITY IN SYSTEMIC HARM

This refers to the well documented fact - with multiple sources and ample evidence of verifiable objective data - that our clothes, our food, our technology, our financial systems, our academic knowledge production, our pharmaceutical drugs, our entertainment, our systems of ranking/merit, our waste management, and even our health care systems and pensions are subsidized and underwritten by historical and systemic ongoing processes and practices of expropriation, exploitation, and extraction that create dispossession, destitution, armed conflict, ecocides, and genocides across the globe. Like data on climate change, people generally don't want to look at the evidence of our systemic interdependence that points to our complicity in systemic harm. For example, in formal education, we are rarely exposed to questions like: What would be the price of an iPad if we paid a fair wage to all workers involved in its manufacture, and all invisibilized externalities: social and environmental



March 2023 UBC Divestment coalition protest. Students ask UBC to stop financing environmental destruction and colonial violence, and reinvest back into communities. Photo by Jacob Power (IG: @jpowerphotography).

(including health costs), past, present and future, direct and indirect, of a unit's production, transportation, disposal, and decomposition? Who pays the invisibilized costs of the technologies we cherish and what is our debt/responsibility towards them (remembering that both human and other-than-human beings are affected)?

Because we are not taught to process the complexity of our systemic independence, complicity in harm is usually associated with feelings of guilt, shame, and immobilization. Thus, most people tend to ignore or avoid the topic and insist on “positive” approaches to problems that make us feel and look good. However, if we do not have the capacity to face how we are implicated in the problems we want to address, our approaches and responses will be driven by our emotional demands for comfort, security, and validation, and limited by our inability to tolerate uncertainty, messiness and discomfort.

Here is an all-too-common conundrum that surfaces in climate emergency gatherings across the world that illustrates this problem: What would you do if, in a climate emergency gathering designed for world experts to cooperate with one another, half of the group believed climate change has its origins and is driven by capitalism, colonialism and white/western supremacy (i.e. people interested in talking about complicities in harm) while the other half believed colonialism was not that bad, that talking about white supremacy is itself a form of racism, and that a greener capitalism is the only realistic path to address the CNE? How would you support this group to work and learn together in generative ways, taking into account that moralizing approaches are not pedagogically effective in this context? How would you increase the group's capacity to tolerate discomfort and to be self-reflexive? How would you leverage awareness of systemic harm and recognition of complicity in harm away from guilt, shame and immobilization, towards the expansion of social and ecological accountabilities?

## **2 CHALLENGING INTERGENERATIONAL DYNAMICS**

Our undergraduate students were the ones pushing for difficult questions to be placed on the table from the outset - both figuratively, and literally on the tables of our Connections lunches. They proposed collective engagements with questions like: How does your academic discipline contribute to the exacerbation of climate change and biodiversity collapse (e.g. through conference

air-travel, supporting exploitation of and extraction from marginalized communities, or receiving funding from extractive industries)? The questions created a challenging dynamic (i.e. the conundrum).

We will represent this conundrum as an imagined conversation table. On one side of the table, we have a generation of undergraduate students who are part of a global student movement that has brought down statues of colonial figures and pushed universities to change their colonial names, that demands more culturally representative reading lists and pedagogies, that calls for more awareness and sensitivity in relation to issues of sexual and gender-based violence, and gender self-identification, and that feels short-changed by previous generations.

On the other side of the figurative table, there are those of us who grew up in the relative abundance of the post-World War II era with the promises of progress, development, ‘civilization,’ and exponential prosperity as wealth accumulation. On this side of the table, more often than not, many of us become defensive when younger generations accuse us and the systems and institutions we were socialized to cherish, of wrecking the planet and stealing their future. There are also generations “sandwiched” between the two generations mentioned who may feel caught between them, or feel more affinity with one side than the other. And, at times, as the Emeritus College Cohort submission letter demonstrates (see pages 27–29) different generations can also converge in their CNE analyses and calls for action.

As the impacts of the CNE erode the buffers of the global north and expose the magnitude of the threat of wider economic, ecological and social collapse in the future, incoming generations of students will have more leverage in pushing institutions to change and this intergenerational gap of experience, understanding, and expectations will likely become even more pronounced and challenging to address. How would you create relationally- and intellectually-rigorous pedagogical containers for difficult intergenerational conversations about the CNE where we can invite and support all generations to face the complexity of the current challenges and the challenges ahead of us without mutual accusations, and to learn together from the mistakes of the past in order to make only different mistakes in the future?



### 3 THE CURSE OF EXPECTATIONS

Given the urgency of the CNE, many participants had extremely high and topically divergent expectations of what was possible to achieve collectively in the short time of the program. Making these expectations visible so that they could be managed was indeed a recurrent challenge that remained unresolved. Many people really wanted to feel like a collaborative group and were pressing to do something significant and impactful together. However, the relationship building required for the possibility of expectations, aspirations and methodologies to converge and be integrated, taking into account disciplinary differences and different positionalities, demands much more structured and unstructured time and wider capacities than we had available.

Here is the conundrum: How many hours of quality contact time, of becoming familiar with each other, of serious (difficult) relationship building, and of learning and unlearning through conflicts together would be necessary for a small interdisciplinary group to come up with an impactful and socially and ecologically accountable collective project, through consensus, where everyone, without exception, felt genuinely heard, validated and satisfied with the values and ethical orientation, objectives, methodologies, protocols of engagement, expected outcomes and evaluation of the project? Consider all differences, including different social positionalities, political orientations, personalities, disciplines (disciplinary training, hierarchies of knowledge status, and understandings of rigour), generations, career stages, experience in collaborative projects, as well as differences in levels of engagement with marginalized communities and exposure to social/systemic critique. What would need to be in place if, instead of encouraging the group to follow the usual linear process of project planning and development, and instead of encouraging competitive excellence and self-satisfaction, you wanted to encourage the group to foreground complexity, emergence, humility, resilience, risk-taking and experimentation?

## 4 OUTCOME ORIENTATION VERSUS PROCESS ORIENTATION

Often in the first instance, disciplinary differences presented themselves in how participants framed their efforts working on the CNE. While many participants from STEM disciplines saw their contributions as outcome-oriented framed within a problem-based research model, participants based in the social sciences and humanities tended towards working through and designing process-oriented approaches. While this traditional and well-worn divide did show itself, as participants spent time together differences became more complex and nuanced.

There was often a shared acknowledgement that what each participant had been doing in their own discipline was valuable work, but it was simply insufficient (albeit indispensable) to face the enormity and complexity of the CNE. This was the point where what we expected to see from a disciplinary standpoint started to depart from traditional understandings of STEM as outcome-oriented and social sciences and humanities as process-oriented. Some of the social scientists and humanists in the program began to become more outcome-oriented when the process became uncomfortable or contentious, while some scholars from the STEM disciplines saw utility in staying with the process and putting aside the outcome-orientation.

What we started to observe was that when disciplines were brought together with the urgency of CNE, unexpected responses occurred. Later in the program, when paradoxes and tensions surfaced, participants fell less in strict disciplinary lines but more so in how comfortable or uncomfortable they felt at the edges of their disciplinary knowledge or in the zones where familiar, but ‘fuzzy’ theories, methods, and empirical studies did not provide universal certainties, but invited more inquiry, perhaps beyond the discipline’s ability.

Here is the conundrum: If the edges (rather than the core) of disciplines are the places where uncertainty, curiosity, and tentative experimentation become productive and sustainable drivers for interdisciplinary collaborations, and if we are socially conditioned to only feel comfortable when we experience certainty, how would you create the conditions for an interdisciplinary group to work from the edges of their disciplines and to become comfortable with discomfort? How would you design inter- and transdisciplinary programs that

encourage collective inquiry, not as a coming together of experts with mastery of specific areas of modern/colonial disciplines, but as an invitation to a place of uncertainty, curiosity, experimentation, and humility to create collaborations that can rise up to the challenges of the CNE?


## **LIFE-LONG AND LIFE-WIDE EDUCATIONAL INQUIRY**

There is no set formula or choreography to address the complex conundrums we shared in this section. What very quickly became clear to us was the importance of approaching the process as a continuous educational inquiry, which requires not only intellectual and relational rigour (as per our guiding principles), but also intellectual, affective and relational *stamina*. The practice of collaborative educational inquiry allowed us to name complexities, paradoxes, tensions and conundrums, to take risks and tentatively experiment with different strategies to address them, and to create a practice where we feel accountable to making public our collective learning from both failures and successes. We are writing a collaborative academic article about the lessons we were taught in this inquiry and experiment.

# Looking Ahead







# Beyond simplistic solutions

In a meeting about climate change in July 2022, UN secretary general Antonio Guterres warned that humanity must choose between “collective suicide or collective action.” Education has long been understood as a key means of enabling “collective action”, yet there are also competing perspectives about what responsible education might look like in the face of the CNE. Whereas previously many educators understood their primary responsibility as awareness-raising, increasingly our focus is shifting towards preparing young people to navigate a warming world.

In response to proliferating extreme weather events, as well as related growth in climate anxiety, policymakers and researchers from different disciplines have called for the renewal of hope in kindergarten to Grade 12 and postsecondary education. In particular, many suggest we should focus on solutions in order to counter the hopelessness of “climate doomism,” or the fatalistic sense that it is too late to stop climate catastrophe. While the sentiment is understandable, there are also reasons to question an educational orientation focused on promoting action for the sake of action, and hope for the sake of hope.

The desire for clear, simplistic and guaranteed solutions can discourage engagement with the complexities, uncertainties and paradoxes that are inherent to the CNE as a super-wicked challenge. It can also prevent us from changing the ways we relate to the land, to other species and to each other, which, according to many Indigenous analyses, is the root of the problem and a challenge that cannot be solved by western science or technology alone.

While the promises offered by hope-in-solutions may be well-intended, when students are taught to expect that major challenges will be easily solvable and then they confront the true complexity, depth and magnitude of those challenges, they lose motivation and feel disempowered, disillusioned, overwhelmed and alienated in ways that are difficult to recover from. Ironically, this is precisely the outcome that many educators are trying to avoid by promising hope and solutions.

Offering false hope and guaranteed solutions to young people may ultimately be a form of escapism that deflects responsibility for the difficult work that needs to be done in the present on the part of both students and educators if we want a genuinely different and wiser future. What might this work of educating for responsibility entail, and how might it avoid the traps of both doomism and solutionism, particularly in relation to questions of hope and futurity?

In the CNE Catalyst Program, we invited participants to relate differently to hope and to the future. Instead of placing hope in an idealized, imagined future, we encouraged participants to place hope in work we do in the present to repair relationships and approach the CNE as an ongoing collective inquiry. We also supported participants to develop cognitive, affective and relational dispositions and capabilities that are rarely activated in modern education and that could prepare us to collectively face whatever wicked problems might come our way.

Apart from the Facing Human Wrongs course, the CNE Catalyst Student Fellows and Artists completed an evaluation survey based on the “In Earth’s CARE” inventory of dispositions. The In Earth’s CARE educational framework was developed by the T5C Indigenous network in Brazil. It highlights dispositions that the network believes will be necessary for creating the transformative conditions for addressing the CNE in ways that can expand possibilities for cognitive, affective, relational, economic and ecological justice and wellbeing. The title “In Earth’s CARE” was chosen to encourage us to think about the invisibilized labour that the Earth does to take care of us, rather than the other way around.

The inventory articulates five dispositions for each dimension of justice/wellbeing and presents a list of 10 essential questions that can guide the design of programs focused on the CNE. CNE Catalyst Student Fellows and Artists were asked to consider the extent to which the program supported them to develop each disposition, which we present below, before reviewing the 10 questions:

## COGNITIVE JUSTICE/WELLBEING (TRANSFORMING OUR PATTERNS OF THINKING)

- 1** Deepening analyses of historical and systemic forms of violence
- 2** Critically examining problematic assumptions, desires and complicities in harm
- 3** Thinking in multiple layers, acknowledging tensions and paradoxes at the intersection of different histories, contexts, and worldviews
- 4** Responding in generative ways to teachings that challenge one's self image
- 5** Disinvesting from desires for universal knowledge, superiority, certainty, and control and making space for the unknown and the unknowable

## AFFECTIVE JUSTICE/WELLBEING (TRANSFORMING OUR PATTERNS OF FEELING)

- 1** Developing the capacity to be in discomfort and to accept uncertainty without feeling overwhelmed, irritated, or immobilized
- 2** Learning to access the unconscious and to sit with internal complexities, paradoxes, tensions, and contradictions
- 3** Identifying and starting to process and integrate individual and collective fears, traumas and insecurities
- 4** Learning to interrupt projections and idealizations in order to be present to what is presenting itself
- 5** Processing emotions and accessing and releasing pain without the need for narrative framings

## RELATIONAL JUSTICE/WELLBEING (TRANSFORMING OUR PATTERNS OF RELATIONSHIP BUILDING)

- 1** Learning to form genuine non-transactional relationships, without idealizations
- 2** Exploring different possibilities for being and relating not grounded on shared meaning, identity, or conviction
- 3** Feeling part of a wider metabolism (planet/land) and collective body (group/community)
- 4** Experiencing the difficulties and complexities of ethical engagements and solidarity from a space of accountability
- 5** Learning through difficult events with humility, compassion, generosity and patience

## ECONOMIC JUSTICE/WELLBEING (TRANSFORMING OUR EXCHANGES)

- 1** Interrupting patterns of consumption (of stuff, knowledges, experiences, and relationships) as a mode of relating to the world
- 2** Interrupting patterns of entitlement coming from social, economic and/or racial privilege
- 3** Interrupting calculations (based on self-interest or utility maximization) in order to give and receive differently
- 4** Learning to practice economies based on abundance, reciprocity and redistribution
- 5** Decentering oneself and centering collective needs (doing what is needed rather than what one wants to do)



## ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE/WELLBEING (TRANSFORMING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CYCLES OF THE WIDER METABOLISM OF THE PLANET)

- 1** Learning to age, to grieve, to heal, to live and to die well
- 2** Mobilizing regeneration from a space where humans are not separated from “nature”
- 3** Reflecting on the challenges of coexistence from different perspectives, including those of other-than-human beings, and grappling with the complexities of addressing complicities in ecological harm
- 4** Opening up adjacent possibilities for thinking, relating, hoping, imagining and being
- 5** Developing stamina and resiliency for the slow and challenging work that needs to be done in the long term.

The T5C network believes that the unprecedented challenges we face today are not primarily the result of a lack of information or problem solving skills, but rather of a habit of being/existing in the world that is jeopardizing the futurity of our species on a shared, finite planet. When the dimension of being (the ontological dimension) is overlooked, approaches to social and global change tend to promote simplistic understandings of global problems and solutions, superficial analyses of power and history, paternalistic and tokenistic notions of inclusion, and ethnocentric and self-serving views of justice, responsibility and change. The following questions are offered to support the interruption of these patterns:

- 1** What are the contributions, paradoxes, and limits of mainstream problem-posing and problem-solving paradigms of social and global change?
- 2** What protocols and practices need to be in place to support ethical engagements at the interface of different and unevenly positioned knowledge systems?

- 3** How can we relate differently to those who have been historically and systemically marginalized and positioned as if they were not equally intelligent, capable, knowledgeable, deserving and complex (beyond pathologization but also beyond essentialist idealizations or romanticizations)?
- 4** How do we develop approaches to community engagement that take better account of the internal diversity and complexity of communities?
- 5** How do we recognize both similarities and differences in assumptions and aspirations across and within communities (beyond our projections and desires for consensus)?
- 6** How can we enable the emergence of new paradigms of social change? How can we open ourselves up to different futurities and possibilities for (co)existence (without repeating the same mistakes, or simply replacing one system with another)?
- 7** What are we missing and/or missing out on? How can we experience the limits of the knowledge we have been taught to consider universal and open up to possibilities that are already viable, but are unimaginable and/or unintelligible within dominant knowledge systems?
- 8** How can we build capabilities and stamina for sustaining difficult conversations about the limits of our current systems and institutions, and their past and on-going violences?
- 9** What dispositions are necessary to enable us to learn from the (inevitable) mistakes and failures of sustainability and climate action initiatives?
- 10** How can we disarm and de-center ourselves in order to learn to move together differently, in a foggy pathway, while weaving genuinely different, and possibly wiser, collective futures?

# New horizons of practice

Trying to bring people together across multiple differences to address the climate and nature emergency in a time of increasing volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity is an enormous challenge. Various social conditions and rapid social change mean that what previously worked to bring people together is no longer working, including the fact that: there are multiple complex layers of reality operating in any context; there is increasing dissonance between generations; there is more diversity at the table, which results in competing ideas of “forward” (including between and within systemically marginalized groups); and stable authorities and consensus are no longer possible. Another part of the challenge is that what is optimal for the process of un/learning for one group of people is often not optimal for another.

As we design new opportunities for engagement with the CNE, one essential thing to consider is the contribution of the modern education system towards the creation of the CNE. Vermont’s Sterling College in the US has been one of the first post-secondary education institutions to take brave steps in this direction. They have adopted a vision that explicitly recognizes how higher education contributes to the climate and nature unfolding catastrophe. Sterling president emeritus, Mathew Derr has publicly stated that “If we continue to be the training ground for extractive economies—capitalist or socialist—that rob graduates of the livelihoods they promise, we will betray this and future generations.” Their response is to offer a kind of education that will equip students to contend with the ecological crises ahead. This commitment is reflected in their mission statement.

“Sterling uses education as a force to address critical ecological problems caused by unlimited growth and consumption that is destroying the planet as we have known it, such as:

Fossil fuel dependence and rapid climate change.

Destruction of biodiversity and loss of wild places.

Promotion of harmful agricultural practices that threaten human and natural communities.

Persistence of structural oppression that impacts human and ecological wellbeing.

Deterioration of civil society through estrangement from community, nature, and place.”

This type of education requires expanding our collective capacity and stamina to navigate complexities, paradoxes, tensions, different perspectives, and conflicting demands and accountabilities, and to be comfortable with the discomfort of “staying with the trouble” and not turning away from what makes us uncomfortable, fearful and/or frustrated.

Looking ahead, we offer an exercise that invites us to take “Seven steps back and seven steps forward and/or aside”. This exercise was created by the Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Arts/Research Collective to illustrate the relational dimensions of the CNE that are often overlooked in mainstream approaches that treat the CNE as a technical problem.

The exercise is grounded in the assumption that there are two essential things we need to unlearn and to learn before we can work together on different grounds and approach the CNE in more effective and responsible ways. One, we need to unlearn what we have been cognitively, affectively and relationally conditioned to think, feel, relate, hope and imagine in modern/colonial systems, which includes our formal education systems. Two, we need to learn to expand our capacity to hold space for multiple, moving layers of complexity, complicity and uncertainty. Without this learning and unlearning, we will continue to address the CNE through the same mindset that created it and we will have little chance of approaching complex challenges or coordinating efforts in wiser, more emotionally mature, and more socially and ecologically accountable ways.



## SEVEN STEPS BACK

- 1 Step back from your self-image:** What investments, fears, hopes and intentions may be driving your climate action and research, and where are they coming from? What emotions, insecurities, unexamined desires, and/or unprocessed traumas could be driving your decisions? What emotional states are you actively avoiding and at what cost? To what extent is this avoidance limiting your capacity to address the challenges posed by the CNE?
- 2 Step back from your generational cohort:** How is the CNE perceived and experienced by other generations? What is your generation being “called out” on? To what extent are the interests and concerns of incoming generations considered in your approach to the CNE?
- 3 Step back from the universalization of your social/cultural/ economic parameters of normality:** What does your privilege prevent you from seeing and experiencing? What are you projecting as true, real, normal, and desirable for everyone? How can these projections become harmful to others and limit possibilities for relationship-building and/or coordinating responses to the CNE? Who could refuse to work with you on legitimate grounds?
- 4 Step back from your immediate context and time:** How do the challenges in your context reflect wider patterns of social change? What historical, systemic and/or structural forces are at work? What is your perspective of the bigger picture? How is this perspective limited?
- 5 Step back from patterns of relationship-building and problem-solving you have been socialized into:** To what extent has your approach to the CNE been conditioned/limited by your own situated context? What alternative ways of seeing, doing, relating, and being are viable, but are currently unimaginable to you? What are you missing out on? Who/what are you accountable to? What accountabilities are you denying, rejecting, or neglecting?

**6 Step back from the normalized pattern of elevating humanity above the rest of nature:** To what extent and how is the CNE a consequence of the perceived separation between humans and nature and/or the rendering of “nature” as property? How would you approach the problem differently if other species and entities (e.g., rivers, coral reefs, mountains) were accorded independent and inalienable rights to exist and to flourish (i.e., rights of nature)? To what extent are the interests of other species represented in your problem-posing, problem-solving, accountability and coordination approaches?

**7 Step back from the impulse to find quick fixes and expand your capacity not to be immobilized by uncertainty, complicity and complexity:** In what ways is your approach to the CNE part of the problem? To what extent are you being driven by desires for innocence, benevolence and hopefulness (e.g., a saviour complex) and how can these desires be harmful and/or detrimental to the task at hand? How can you leverage your recognition of complicity in systemic harm towards deeper and more enduring forms of responsibility and accountability? To what extent are you equipped to repair and weave relationships grounded on trust, respect, consent, reciprocity and accountability?

## SEVEN STEPS FORWARD AND/OR ASIDE

- 1 Step forward and/or aside with honesty and courage to see what you don't want to see:** Commit to expanding your capacity to sit with what is real, difficult, and painful, within and around you. In what ways are your projections, idealizations, expectations, hopes, fears, and fragilities preventing you from approaching aspects of the CNE that are unpleasant for you and/or that challenge your sense of reality and/or self-image? What are you not willing or ready to see and how does this unwillingness impair your ability to respond to the CNE?
- 2 Step forward and/or aside with humility to find strength in openness and vulnerability:** Commit to shedding any conditioned arrogance and sense of merit, status and self-importance in order to decenter yourself and centre the challenges presented by the CNE. How do your desires for recognition, validation, prestige and/or protagonism limit your capacity to build generative relationships and coordinate responses to the CNE?
- 3 Step forward and/or aside with self-reflexivity so that you can read yourself and learn to read the room:** Commit to tracing where your cognitive, affective and relational patterns of engaging with reality are coming from, where they are at, where they are going, their limitations and how they impact others and are part of the problem; learn to step back from yourself in order to “read the room” and read how you are being read in the room: learn to see yourself from other people's perspectives, especially the unflattering parts, and learn to be ok with that.
- 4 Step forward and/or aside with self-discipline to do the work on yourself so that you don't become work for other people:** Commit to identifying and interrupting unhealthy compulsions and impulses grounded on socially sanctioned and conditioned harmful patterns like greed, arrogance, vanity, indifference, extraction, indulgence, and consumption. How do these patterns contribute to the CNE? How do you justify your own compulsions?

- 5 Step forward and/or aside with maturity to do what is needed rather than what you want to do:** Commit to the long-term project of becoming a good ancestor for all relations. Taking into account that mainstream culture encourages self-infantilization and denial of responsibility, how can you reorient yourself toward eldership and (inter)generational accountability? To what extent are you aware of the complexity of your own thoughts, emotions, investments and patterns of relationship building? What learning/unlearning have you been avoiding? Why and what is the cost of this avoidance (for yourself and/or others)?
- 6 Step forward and/or aside with expanding discernment and attention:** Commit to expanding your capacity for discernment in the face of the many uncertainties, complexities, and paradoxes, presented by the CNE. What do you need to (un)learn cognitively, affectively and relationally in order not to be immobilized or overwhelmed by ambiguity, plurality and unknowability?
- 7 Step forward and/or aside with adaptability, flexibility, stamina and resilience for the long haul:** Move for the sake of learning to coordinate and be transformed by the process rather than to arrive somewhere. Be prepared to fall, to fail, to have your plans shattered, to be stretched, to change course and to find joy in the struggle itself rather than in the imagined prize at the end. To what extent are your desires and calculations to arrive at a solution or a predetermined future preventing you from engaging in the experimentations whose failures will provide the “data” for new directions to take that we cannot imagine from the outset?

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO TAKE THESE STEPS:

What kinds of challenges have you experienced in trying to bring people together to engage with the challenges presented by the CNE?

In your context of work, to what extent can Indigenous, Black and people of colour speak openly and critically without having to worry about prompting negative emotional reactions and/or retaliation?

How do you assess your personal capacity to hold space for discomfort, uncertainty, complexity, and complicity in systemic harm, in generative ways? How do you assess the collective capacity of the people in your social or professional circles to do this?

How do you usually respond when your worldviews and/or self-image(s) are challenged? How do you respond when you are asked to face your complicity in systemic social and ecological harm? What do these responses signal about your own internal complexity, relational attachments and emotional maturity?

Many Indigenous scholars and knowledge keepers argue that climate change is not a technical problem that can be fixed with more of the same knowledge and/or technology, but a relational one, based on an imposed sense of separation between humans and nature, other species and our own selves that normalizes irresponsibility. How is approaching a relational challenge different from approaching a technical challenge?



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## Acknowledgements

As interim director of PWIAS, I would like to express my gratitude to all who have made the CNE Catalyst Program a reality this year. I would like to thank all partners that have supported the program, including: the Musagetes Foundation, the Consulate General of France in Vancouver, the Emeritus College, UBC Climate Hub, UBC Sustainability Hub, the Public Scholars Initiative, the UBC International Justice and Human Rights Clinic, the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, the Haida Nation, the Centre for First Nations Governance, the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre (IRSHDC), the Centre for Climate Justice, the Chan Centre, the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation and the School of Postgraduate Studies.

I would like to thank the leadership team and program leads (Dr. Rafi Arefin, Dr. Sharon Stein, Dr. Hannah Wittman, Dr. Will Valley, Dr. Olav Salmaker, Dani d'Emilia and Dr. Linda Nowlan), the Advisory Committee to the Director (Dr. Jess Dempsey, Dr. Renisa Mawani, Dr. Denise Ferreira da Silva, Dr. Henry Yu, Dr. Brett Finlay, Dr. Olav Salmaker), all program participants, partner communities, funding applicants and special advisors Olive Dempsey (Scholars Program), Dani Pigeau (Indigenous Engagement), Romina Tantaleán Castañeda and Dr. Lisa Taylor (IACHR precautionary case), and Marian Urquila (strategic planning support).

A special thank you goes to the PWIAS staff and support team: Emma MacEntee, Robin Evans, Mary Rider, Nadine Bernate, Earl Dyer, Katie Leung, Camilla Cardoso, Jessica Carvalho, Bernadette Mah, Ritika Nandwani and all of those who assisted us with all operational, facilities and financial tasks, as well as SAGE staff Michael Troyer, Colin Dewar, Alita Parisotto, Levi Semadeni, Bogdan Anton and Eric Meyer.

As a community, we acknowledge and thank Peter Wall for his generous gift which established and has supported the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies over the past 30 years.



A PDF copy of this report and supplementary materials can be found at:  
[blogs.ubc.ca/movingwithstorms](https://blogs.ubc.ca/movingwithstorms)

We recognize the importance of the work of PWIAS in the past 30 years and the efforts of present and past directors, faculty, associates and staff to uphold its academic integrity and independence. PWIAS has been the most prominent space for interdisciplinary research at UBC and has built a distinguished international profile through the many partnerships and international visits it has supported in the last three decades. There are today hundreds of researchers from around the world who have participated in PWIAS programs. We want to thank the PWIAS community for their involvement in and commitment to this unique research initiative. As PWIAS programming is discontinued and UBC transitions to the new Peter Wall Legacy Fund, we are hopeful that other inter- and transdisciplinary research initiatives will carry on the legacy of PWIAS at UBC.

