This year, KI celebrated the (virtual) convocation of the tenth group of Bachelor of Knowledge Integration students, held the KI Exhibition of our third-year design course, and two senior research project symposia, one during the Fall 2021 term and another in Winter 2022.

The Bachelor of Knowledge Integration (BKI) students continue to do well, with excellent academic performance and involvement in a wide range of collaborative projects.

We had another strong group of first year students entering KI in September and maintained our application numbers for Fall 2022. Figuring out how to target and market the program remains a challenge, and will be a focus for the next few years. An important part of that will be emphasizing and enhancing the ways that the KI program aligns with the University's Future Ready Framework, and how this might translate into language for applicants and their parents.

Our graduates also continue their successes and continue to stay connected with and supportive of the KI community. They went into post-secondary education or into the workforce in diverse fields including designers, consultants, researchers and strategists.

Eric Kennedy (BKI’12), was the 2021 Faculty of Environment Young Alumni Inspiration Award recipient. Since graduating as part of the inaugural Bachelor of Knowledge Integration class, Eric has advanced research on disaster management, wildfires and, most recently, the social and human impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. He is Assistant Professor of Disaster & Emergency Management at York University, where he leads the Collaboration on Emergency Management, Preparedness, and Policy Research Lab. He also is involved with Science Outside the Lab North, an experiential education program he founded that introduces grad students from across Canada to the policy environment.

Our second cyclical academic program review is currently underway, and we have collected valuable input through surveys of current students, alumni, and employers. This review will inform the future direction of what we offer as a degree experience.

The pandemic caused us to cancel the 2021 INTEG 230 Museum Course field trip for the second year in a row, but we’re excited to be resuming this important educational opportunity in 2022 with a trip to Copenhagen April 28-May 9. KI courses were offered in a mix of in-person and remote learning, and we’ve stepped up to the challenge to keep students engaged while we missed some of the in-person connections in the KI Studio. This year, the weekly KI seminars had extra emphasis on community-building, and we are providing a valuable mix of opportunities fitting with the shifting restrictions throughout the year.

In the Fall term, Katie Plaisance provided an in-person collaborative opportunity for all of the first and second-year KI students through INTEG 275 Special Topics: Making Collaboration Work. This course was the first time the second-year students had been on campus, and their experience connecting in the studio was especially valuable.

In the Winter term, a highlight of this year’s offering of INTEG 121 Collaboration, Design Thinking and Problem Solving was working with the Sustainability Office Living Lab. As part of their coursework, students designed public service announcements that might be used to promote sustainable options at food service locations, discounts for sustainable behaviours (such as bringing a reusable mug to purchase a hot drink), or the Shift:Zero waste-sorting app.
This year’s offering of INTEG 441 Hard Decisions and Wicked Problems was integrated with the international student competition Map the System, which is supported at UW by the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement at Conrad Grebel University College.

INTEG 410 Interdisciplinary Collaboration was held with ERS 674 for the first time this year, and included grad students from ENV and Biology, along with upper-year KI students.

In March 2022, after missing 2021 due to the pandemic, a double cohort of third- and fourth-year students in INTEG 321 Museum Course launched seven exhibits. Nearly 700 visitors attended the exhibits at St. Jerome’s University during March Break including potential students, alumni, and KW community members. The students explored the connection between the mind and physical health, agriculture in Southwestern Ontario, breaking away from single-use items, promoting inclusive communities, hostile architecture in public spaces, the growth of consumerism, and what is missing from sex education.

The Anti-Oppression Knowledge Integrators (A-OK) working group, with KI Associate Professor Vanessa Schweizer serving as chair, continued their work including hosting a town hall during an INTEG 10 seminar and producing a report which was received by the department.

KI students were involved in many extracurricular projects. The Journal of Integrative Research & Reflection (JIRR), a cross-disciplinary undergraduate journal entirely edited, reviewed and administered by students from KI, continues to provide a valuable platform for student work. Volume 4 was published in November 2021.

Clarence Woudsma, former Director of the School of Planning and long-time friend of KI, supported KI as acting chair while Rob Gorbet was on sabbatical. Thank you, Clarence!

Paul McKone was recognized with the inaugural Environment Teaching Award and the University’s highest teaching honour, the Distinguished Teaching Award. Citations referenced his innovative, creativity-driven, and hands-on teaching and his indispensable contributions to building and delivering the Knowledge Integration program.

The KI faculty had another great year in their research and scholarly activities, as they adapted to the challenges the pandemic has presented.

Despite the pandemic, Rob Gorbet managed to travel a bit during his sabbatical, delivering a hands-on August workshop for mid-career design professionals at the Domaine de Boisbuchet in the south west of France. He returned to France in November to install a new collaborative sculptural work called Ar Frout Récif, for a private collector in the Brittany region. In between, he helped create a regular podcast on Living Architecture, called Living Dialogs, and ran a remote tech-art workshop for science students at Riverview High School in New Brunswick.

Katie Plaisance received Ontario’s most prestigious teaching recognition, the OCUFA Teaching Award, as well as the Teaching Excellence Award for Waterloo from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. She recently launched a new research group called “Co-Lab”, designed to study and improve interdisciplinary collaboration. Co-Lab has two main projects on the go. The first looks at the role of psychological safety and epistemic humility in creating inclusive teams and harnessing diverse perspectives. The second project aims to find ways of fostering fruitful collaborations between scientists and philosophers of science. Katie was also elected to the Board of Directors for the International Network of the Science of Team Science (INSciTS).
John McLevey’s first sole-authored book, *Doing Computational Social Science*, was published by Sage UK. He also co-authored a book called *The Face-to-Face Principle: Science, Trust, Truth, and Democracy*, which was published by Cardiff University Press.

During 2021, Vanessa Schweizer performed numerous online speaking engagements with groups such as the Aspen Global Change Institute and the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center in the US related to her work on design thinking, complexity science, and scenario analysis for climate change research. She also completed a project with the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development on baseline scenarios for climate adaptation. As the current director of the Waterloo Institute for Complexity and Innovation (WICI), she also worked to renew WICI for another 5-year term into 2026 and to incorporate the Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience (WISIR) as a WICI sub-centre.

Mathieu Feagan joined the Faculty of Environment and the Department of Knowledge Integration as an Assistant Professor in January. His research interests are in social theory, Indigenous ways of knowing, emancipatory pedagogies, ecological consciousness. Matt developed and taught a new elective for KI entitled “Action Research Methods and Student-Produced Knowledge.” He also developed the university’s first course on Climate Justice, and presented his research on pedagogical designs for knowledge co-production as part of our INTEG 10 seminar.

On behalf of the Department of Knowledge Integration I’d like to thank the faculty, staff, and students of the Faculty of Environment for their collegiality and support as we continue to build this innovative approach to undergraduate education.

Submitted by Rob Gorbet, April 28, 2022