



Walking the
Path of Hope:
Climate Anxiety & the Healing Forest

Co-hosted by:
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO | FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENT | WATERLOO Climate Institute



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

FACULTY OF
ENVIRONMENT

ANNUAL REPORT

DEAN'S OFFICE

ABOUT US



The Faculty of Environment at the University of Waterloo was formed over 50 years ago to advance knowledge on complex human-environment issues. Today, with over 100 full-time faculty members, including nine Canada Research Chairs, six University Research Chairs and three University Professors, Environment is the largest, fully interdisciplinary faculty of environmental studies or sciences in Canada.

Our faculty members work at the leading edge of environmental social and physical sciences, with notable strengths in climate change, sustainability, resource management, and urban development. Deeply committed to enabling practical solutions to global environmental issues, our faculty members work with community members and other partners, using the latest technology and multiple approaches to create and refine new knowledge.

This critical mass of environment-integrative scholars attracts students who are equally passionate about innovating for positive change. Through the multitude of experiential learning opportunities, including field schools, capstone courses, co-operative education, and internships, Environment offers, our students join the workforce with the latest skills and knowledge in their chosen fields and the capacity to keep growing those assets.

We have over 14,000 exceptional alumni making an impact across sectors and around the globe. We are fortunate to have so many of them stay connected to the Faculty, giving back through mentorship, bringing their professional expertise into the classroom, employing co-op students, acting as our champions, and making financial contributions. Environment and our students benefit immeasurably from this growing network of change-makers.

We hope you enjoy this year's report on the activities and achievements of our Environment community.

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT



The Faculty of Environment acknowledges that much of our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. Our buildings are located on the Haldimand Tract, land granted to the Six Nations of the Grand River by the 1784 Haldimand Treaty that includes 10 kilometers on each side of the Grand River. As a faculty committed to building a better future with the world, for the world, we recognize that reconciliation must be part of how we teach, learn, research, and build community. Our efforts are ongoing and are guided by the Environment Indigenous Initiatives Manager and our community, in collaboration with the Office of Indigenous Relations and Indigenous community at Waterloo.

2025

AWARDS & RECOGNITION



Environment and its community members were recognized at the international, national and local levels for the impact of their teaching, research and service over the last year. The following is a selection of these commendations. See department, school and portfolio reports for more highlights from the past year.

Faculty rankings

#1 Remote Sensing

#1 Water Resources

#2 Environmental Sciences
and Engineering

#4 Geography

*2024 ARWU, Academic Subject Ranking for Canada

**Top Five Environmental
Studies Programs In Canada**

*2025 Macleans University Rankings

Faculty member commendations:

Neil Craik - 2024 Canadian
Council on International
Law's Scholarly Book Award

Brent Doberstein - CAG
Award for Excellence in
Teaching Geography

Susan Elliott - Award of
Excellence In Graduate
Supervision

Blair Feltmate - King Charles
III Coronation Medal

Daniel Scott - University
Professor

Research chairs & grants

**Christine Dow, Chantel
Markle, Juan Moreno Cruz,
Maria Strack** - Canada
Research Chairs (new,
renewed, or advanced to
Tier 1)

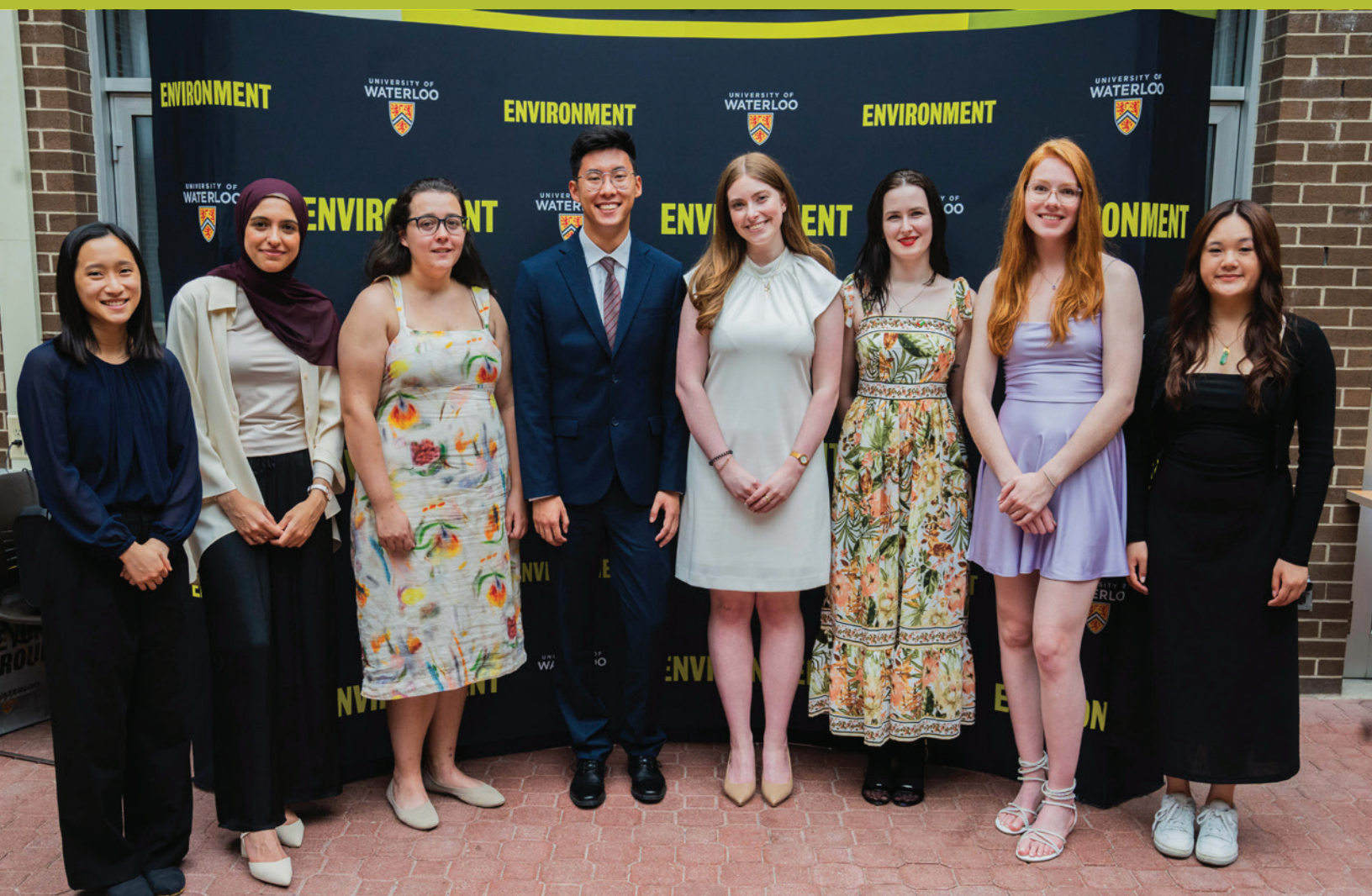
**Felicitas Eguny, Amr ElAlfy,
Helena Shilomboleni** -
Insight Development Grants

Helen Jarvie - University
Research Chair

Katie Plaisance - Waterloo
lead on \$2.5M SSHRC
Partnership Grant

2025

AWARDS & RECOGNITION



Student and postdoc awards

Michelle Anagnostou, Albert Jiang - Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship

Alexa Bennett, Celeste Morinigo Baez - Flight 302 Legacy Award

Bethany Poltl - Starfish Canada's Top 25 Environmentalists under 25

Natasha Serrao - finalist, 2025 SSHRC Storytellers Challenge

Burgess Langshow Power - Cadieux-Leger Fellowship

Student innovators

Code Monkeys (Andrew Ding)
- Second place in the ECCE App Challenge for Metro-Booming app

Beekon (Eric Devos, Prayan Jegathees, Konrad Borowski)
- First place, 2025 Jack Rosen Pitch Competition

Mapkot Technologies (Kwaku Owusu Twum) - finalist, 2025 Velocity Pitch Competition, "all-star showdown"

Environment annual awards

Carrie Mitchell, Michael Wood
- Faculty Teaching Award

Komal Habib - Faculty Research Award

Johanna Wandel - Faculty Service Award

Susie Castela, Tara Charlton - Staff Service Award

2025-2026

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The Faculty's 10-year vision - Environment 2035 - was endorsed at the 2024 Faculty AGM, following which Faculty leadership met to discuss 2024-2025 implementation plans. In parallel, the University is implementing integrated planning and budgeting, as well as budget reduction measures to manage a deficit. The following is an overview of key Faculty-level initiatives.



INITIATIVE 1 | Creating Common Core Undergraduate Programming

Work towards a common core for all four-year degrees, including fostering a common identity and skill base for ENV undergraduates, streamlining course offerings, enhancing cross-unit collaboration, building more flexible pathways to increase mobility, and enabling all students to engage in specialty field courses. Explore new markets for existing, redesigned or new courses and programs, including students in other faculties and life long learning students.

2024-25 Progress:

- All programs have implemented a common core of three first year courses, one of which is a new professional communications course. This new required course includes two Indigenous-focused modules: Indigenous Storytelling and Communicating Across Cultures
- Offered five new local and international field courses open to all ENV students to encourage cross-program interaction and ensure every student has field-based opportunities.
- Reviewed minors, options and diplomas for opportunities to increase curricular flexibility, reduce duplication, and align with the four areas of strength

2025-26 Milestones:

- Complete update of ENVS 200 Field Ecology, including incorporation of Indigenous content focused on climate resiliency.
- Continue progress on sharing courses and collaborating on curriculum across programs to ensure Environment can continue to offer a positive student experience while also increasing flexibility and efficiency.
- Launch co-curricular engagement record to encourage student engagement and leadership.

For more details, see the report of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies.

INITIATIVE 2 | Building the Graduate School of Environment

Establish a physically and administratively centralized school of graduate studies to make it easier and more attractive to apply to Environment and enhance student experience. Explore streamlining programming and administration to reduce duplication and increase students' interactions across programs. Explore new markets and programs, including PhD by practice and course-based, online programs.

2024-25 Progress:

- Completed broad consultation on structure and services for the Graduate School of Environment.
- Reviewed course-based masters for opportunities to enhance relevance and accessibility to target markets.
- Reviewed PhD programs to explore options for common core courses and a common programs.

2025-26 Milestones:

- Design proposed organizational structure, refine conceptual design for GSE space, and develop plans for fundraising.
- Design common core courses for research masters and doctoral degrees.
- Update course-based masters.
- For more details, see the report of the Associate Dean, Graduate Studies.

INITIATIVE 3 | Advancing Transdisciplinary Research in Areas of Strength

Remove barriers and increase supports to enhance success and impact of research projects within Environment's areas of strength.

2024-25 Progress:

- Established Research Council in Environment Constitution.
- Designed research information database to inform research related inquiries and activities.

2025-26 Milestones:

- Populate and refine new database.
- Map networks of ENV faculty members and partners collaborating in the four areas of research strength.
- Execute on Research Council initiatives, including updating research websites and exploring peer to peer research supports, e.g. community of practice, mentorship.

For more details, see Associate Dean, Research.

INITIATIVE 4 | Reinforcing Culture and Identity

Build connection, inclusion and resilience within the Environment community. Communicate who we are, how we make an impact, and opportunities to collaborate and learn with us. Collaborate across organizational units, academic disciplines, and public and private sectors and within areas of current and emerging strength to understand and co-create solutions to pressing societal challenges. Align our activities with the Waterloo Values.

2024-25 Progress:

- Completed phase 1 and 2 of the rebranding project.
- Started redesign of website.
- Updated Faculty's visual assets through new photo and video shoots.
- Launched Environment Indigenous Initiatives Survey.
- Began work on the Faculty of Environment Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Co-hosted a fireside chat with the Waterloo Climate Institute that highlighted diverse Indigenous perspectives on climate change and resilience.
- Signed a partnership agreement with the Moccasin Identifier organization; art installation planned for late 2025.

2025-26 Milestones:

- Roll out refreshed brand.
- Complete integrated marketing strategy.
- Launch new website for feedback and UX testing.
- Host high impact events to demonstrate thought leadership in areas of strength and foster connections between faculty, staff, students and partners.
- Reimagine termly community building events and hold one per term.
- Launch the Faculty of Environment Reconciliation Action Plan and begin reporting on strategic themes set forth in the plan.
- For more details, see the report of the Director, Strategic Initiatives & Communications and Manager, Environment Indigenous Initiatives.

INITIATIVE 5 | Ensuring Financial and Operational Resilience

Explore opportunities to increase revenue and reduce expenses to enhance Faculty resilience.

2024-25 Progress:

- Implemented new research overhead policy.
- Implemented university teaching-load guidelines.

2025-26 Milestones:

- Reduce duplication of courses.
- Reduce number of courses that fall below sustainability threshold.
- Review programs where enrollment falls below sustainability threshold.
- Increase enrolment from dual degree programs with international partners.
- Explore course-based graduate program strategy.
- Continue high impact high school outreach programs.

INITIATIVE 6 | Campaign

Grow endowment and expendable funds to support Faculty priorities, including scholarships, experiential learning, research chairs and professorships, and the Graduate School of Environment.

2024-25 Progress:

- Established campaign priorities with faculty leadership.
- Supported fundraising capacity building with faculty leadership.
- Hosted several successful alumni, partner and community events.

2025-26 Milestones:

- Increase endowment funds, particularly the Centennial fund.
- Increase expendable funds for ENV2035 priority areas.
- Develop case for funded professorships and chairs.
- Raise funds for Graduate School of Environment.
- Roll out Why ENV campaign.
- Launch Alumni Hall installation.
- For more details, see the report of the Director of Advancement.

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