

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE  
ON SUSTAINABILITY  
PEDAGOGY



ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR THE 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

# COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

In our second full academic year of collaboration, the **Community of Practice (CoP) on Sustainability Pedagogy** brought together U of T faculty, staff, and doctoral students from different programs, faculties, and campuses to continue discussions and critical analysis of sustainability teaching and learning in higher education. In response to the increasing ways that sustainability is being introduced and enacted across the University of Toronto, the Community of Practice remains a way for interested community members to think critically about our orientation to sustainability, praxis and pedagogy, and to foster solidarity and collaboration in this essential work.

Through a mix of in-person campus retreats, online webinars, and lunch forums, the Community of Practice has collaboratively engaged faculty, staff, and doctoral student members in exploring transformative pedagogies to engage students in cognitive, affective, and embodied forms of learning. This year, we focused on the foundations of sustainability by engaging with the definitions, conceptualizations, and applications of ‘sustainability’ and explored a range of guiding principles of sustainability and associated pedagogies.

While future directions of the Community of Practice are still in discussion, we remain open to the emergent and evolving ways that the CoP can continue to support our collective and individual reflective practice as educators. It is with gratitude and appreciation for our partners, supporting organizations, and CoP members that we share this annual report outlining our collaborative efforts.

**SARAH URQUHART**  
**MICHAEL CLASSENS**  
**HILARY INWOOD**  
**LIAT MARGOLIS**  
**NICOLE SPIEGELAAR**

Community of Practice Organizing Team

## JHI WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP 2023-2024

Ayako Ariga, Staff, Committee on the Environment, Climate Change, and Sustainability

Michael Classens, A&S School of the Environment

Hilary Inwood, OISE Curriculum, Teaching & Learning

Alysse Kennedy, Staff, Natural Curiosity

Liat Margolis, Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape & Design

Mairi McKenna-Edwards, Staff, OISE Coordinator of Diversity, Equity, and Student Experience

Tien Pham, PhD Student, OISE Leadership, Higher & Adult Education

Alexandra Rahr, The Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy

Nicole Spiegelaar, School of the Environment & Trinity Sustainability Initiative

Sarah Urquhart, Ph.D. Candidate, OISE Curriculum, Teaching & Learning

Maria Vamvalis, Ph.D. Candidate, OISE Curriculum, Teaching & Learning

[Supported by Jyotsna Kumar, undergraduate work study student]

# COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE GOALS

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## **Community and Collaboration**

Provide a collaborative space to bring together UofT Faculty, Staff, and Doctoral Students across multiple faculties, disciplines, and campuses to engage in professional learning and community building

## **Reimagining Teaching and Learning**

Reimagining/critiquing how sustainability teaching and learning occurs in higher education in pedagogy, course curriculum program design, and co-curricular learning to inform how sustainability is taught at the University of Toronto

## **Knowledge Mobilization**

## **Transformative and Intersectional Approaches**

Exploring cognitive, affective, equity-based, and embodied forms of learning. Key to this is centering Indigenous worldviews and 'Land as first teacher' in sustainability teaching in combination with transdisciplinary, equity-focused and place-based education

## **Critique and Reflection**

Instigating critique about the University's approaches to sustainability as well as supporting individual & collective reflection on the complexity and challenges of teaching and learning that is relational, community-engaged, justice-forward and action-oriented



# COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE OUTCOMES

## Designing and Delivering Learning Events

Our learning events have thoughtfully brought in academic speakers to inform professional learning.

Events have occurred both in-person on the St. George campus and virtually.



## Building Community

Our learning events and discussions have brought together Faculty from across UofT to connect across disciplines and departments. This year, we have noted an increasing participation from Doctoral students.

Faculty, Staff and Doctoral students with the following affiliations have participated in our learning events:

- Arts & Science (Anthropology, Biology, English Literature, Human Geography, Indigenous Studies, Sociology)
- Dalla Lana School of Public Health
- Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design
- Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering
- Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education
- Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
- Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy
- Rotman School of Management
- School of Continuing Studies
- School of the Environment
- Trinity College
- Victoria College

## Mobilizing Knowledge

Sharing and learning has been facilitated through our learning events on a range of topics. A digital hub through our [Community of Practice Website](#) includes a repository of event summaries, webinar recordings, resources with literature and summary notes.

## Embedding Equity

Sustainability teaching & learning has been explored with a justice stance (e.g. Indigenous knowledges and Black liberation)

## Fostering Capacity

The Organizing team has supported colleague sharing sessions for promising practices and has provided paid opportunities to students.



# COP LEARNING EVENTS FALL 2023



Virtual Event



In-person Event

<p>(Re)Storying St. George Campus Retreat Day</p> <p>September 2023</p>		<p>In collaboration with First Story, participants in this retreat day joined for a walking tour and lunch to learn about, discuss and rethink the spaces around us on the St. George campus. We engaged in learning about the significance of Indigenous histories within the institution and across campus grounds, as well as recent responses to the Truth &amp; Reconciliation Calls to Action for dedicated Indigenous spaces and opportunities to support teaching, research, and community.</p>	<p>38 UofT Faculty, Staff, and Doctoral Students</p>
<p>Webinar Symposium: From Sustainability to Regeneration or Bust?</p> <p>October 2023</p>		<p>Dr. Philip Loring (Guelph University) joined us to examine how notions of sustainability are contested: is sustainability revolutionary? Or vague, easily exploitable, and largely a new packaging of business as usual? We were invited to think about how both can be true and how sustainability has been redefined and reimagined over the last few decades. We considered lessons learned and prospects for the future - such as its relationship with the emerging notion of regeneration.</p>	<p>29 UofT members and general public</p>
<p>Lunch Forum: From Sustainability to Regeneration or Bust?</p> <p>November 2023</p>		<p>This in-person lunch forum was hosted by Trinity College for UofT faculty and doctoral students to engage in follow-up conversation about the themes and ideas shared in Dr. Loring's webinar symposium.</p> <p>Definitions and critiques of sustainability were discussed and emerging ideas about how these inform the principles of sustainability and sustainability pedagogies were shared.</p>	<p>24 UofT Faculty, Staff and Doctoral Students</p>

# COP LEARNING EVENTS WINTER/SPRING 2024



Virtual Event



In-person Event

<p>Webinar Symposium: Emerging Principles and Pedagogies for Sustainability Teaching</p> <p>February 2024</p>		<p>As our CoP recognizes the growing calls for faculty in every discipline to integrate sustainability into course curricula and pedagogy, we grapple with how shifting conceptualizations of sustainability make teaching it a challenging undertaking.</p> <p>In this symposium, we heard from three members of our CoP to share about the key principles and pedagogical strategies that inform their teaching practice in their disciplines: Blake Poland (Public Health), Alexandra Rahr (Environmental Humanities) and Sherry-Ann Ram (Engineering)</p>	<p>48 UofT members and general public</p>
<p>Lunch Forum: Emerging Principles and Pedagogies for Sustainability Teaching</p> <p>February 2024</p>		<p>Dr. Philip Loring (Guelph University) joined us to examine how notions of sustainability are contested: is sustainability revolutionary? Or vague, easily exploitable, and largely a new packaging of business as usual? We were invited to think about how both can be true and how sustainability has been redefined and reimagined over the last few decades. We considered lessons learned and prospects for the future - such as its relationship with the emerging notion of regeneration.</p>	<p>13 UofT Faculty, Staff and Doctoral Students</p>
<p>Conference Workshop: Catalyzing Beyond the Classroom to Address the Climate Crisis</p> <p>May 2024</p>		<p>As part of the University of Toronto's annual Teaching &amp; Learning Symposium, we look to bring in critical sustainability pedagogy to the conference theme of "What is a Classroom?". This teaching dialogue session will extend the work of the CoP with a focus on how we might collaboratively reimagine higher education classrooms for teaching for social and ecological justice. Using two outdoor locations on St. George campus (St. Hilda's back garden and the (yet unfinished) Lawson Centre for Sustainability, provocations and prompts at each site will encourage dialogic and guide reflection from participants.</p>	<p>Forthcoming!</p>

# COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

While we recognize that our CoP is still in relatively early stages of growth and formation, we felt that early experiences in establishing an interdisciplinary Community of Practice focused on the pedagogies of Sustainability might be of use to others in higher education. A literature review revealed that there is very little written about collaborations that focus specifically on teaching and learning of sustainability in higher education. Of the initiatives that do exist, most focus exclusively on operations and infrastructure. To address this gap, our CoP has begun to explore options for knowledge mobilization.

## ***Transforming Sustainability Pedagogies in Higher Education through Communities of Practice***

**NAAEE Conference  
October 2023**

 UNIVERSITY OF  
TORONTO



## **Conference Presentation**

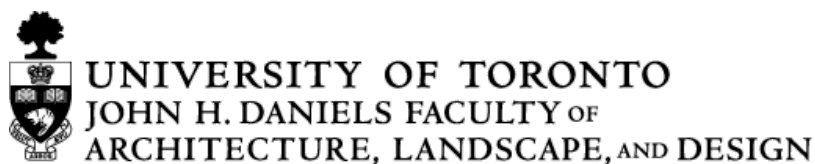
Members of our CoP organization team presented virtually on “Transforming Sustainability Pedagogies in Higher Education through Communities of Practice” at the annual conference of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) in October 2023.

## **Publication Draft**

Our organizing team is also working on the draft of a publication using collaborative auto-ethnography that outlines our personal and collective motivations for engaging in and coordinating a community of practice. A review of emergent themes in critical and transformative sustainability pedagogy demonstrates the key ideas that we have been engaging with through the CoP since 2022.



# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS



Jackman Humanities Institute  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



This Community of Practice on Sustainability Pedagogy has been made possible by the collaborative opportunities and funds from a variety of partners.

We are thankful for your contributions to the ongoing development of the CoP.

The CoP organizing team was designated as a **Jackman Humanities Institute Working Group** for 2022-23 and 2023-24.