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IEJ Symposium 2019

by Abdeali Saherwala

Indigenous Environmental Justice (IEJ) Canada Research Chair, Deborah McGregor, Associate Professor, York University welcomed symposium participants by emphasizing the importance of student led research. The IEJ fall symposium held November 23rd, 2019, focused on disseminating the original research conducted by graduate students exploring topics relating to IEJ that the broader community needs to learn more about. The IEJ fall symposium offered an opportunity for delegates to hear from community based advocates and activists about their work. Keynote speaker Sylvia Plain, Water Walker and founder of the Great Lakes Canoe Journey from Aamjiwnaang First Nation, offered her perspectives on revitalizing canoe culture through enacting traditional knowledge and responsibilities. Anishinabe artist, Patricia Martin provided an artistic representation of the day for participants to enjoy. Professor McGregor encouraged the audience to learn and engage in dialogue and discussion with the researchers.

Stay tuned for podcasts about each presenter!

Leora Gansworth

All Our Relations: Eels and Other Swimmers Teaching Us Life

January 15, 2020

4pm - 6pm



“All Our Relations” is a winter a talk series sharing stories and insights about water and de-colonial water governance from the perspectives of community based research and other water beings. These events are co-sponsored by The Indigenous Environmental Justice Project (York University) and Great Lakes Waterworks/Water Allies (New College/University of Toronto). The first event titled, “All Our Relations: Eels and Other Swimmers Teaching Us Life” was held January 15th, 2020 at University of Toronto with Kristi Leora Gansworth. She is an Anishinaabe poet and geographer and a citizen of Kitigan Zibi Anishinaabeg and has ancestry belonging to the Onkwehonwe Haudenosaunee. Her presentation focused on research related to current and historic relationships between humans and eels. Currently, Leora is a PhD candidate in the department of geography at York University.

Nicole Latulippe

"Belonging to the Lake:" Unsettling Fisheries and Restoring Relations at Nipissing First Nation n Fishing Practices

February 6, 2020

12:30pm - 2pm

Nicole Latulippe delivered a presentation “Belonging to the Lake: Unsettling Fisheries and Restoring Relations at Nipissing First Nation” as part of the winter speaker series “All Our Relations”. Dr. Latulippe’s talk was based on her Ph.D. research conducted with Nipissing First Nation. Her research revealed the inherent ties that Nipissing people have for the lake and ongoing responsibilities and obligations to engage in mutually reciprocal relationships with the Lake Nipissing.



Indigenous Environmental Justice, the Wet'sewet'en and Student/Youth Perspectives Panel

February 10, 2020

12:30 - 2:00 pm

Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, York University

A student/youth panel was convened to dialogue on Wet'sewet'en –Canada relations and Indigenous environmental justice. After introductory remarks from Professors Deborah McGregor and Ruth Kolezar-Green, McGregor provided a brief historical context for understanding why conflicts over land continue to the present day. Historical and on-going colonialism revealed in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), Ipperwash Inquiry (2007), Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) and the Murdered Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry (2019) serves as a catalyst for contemporary conflicts. These public commissions show that Canada unfortunately continues to be very much a colonial society. The panel of youth/students; Hillary McGregor (student, Georgian College), Alie Hermanutz (PhD Student, Political Science), Jayce Chiblow, (IEJ researcher) and Monica Shafik (IEJ Research Assistant) shared their experiences and understanding of the events unfolding before the world in relation to the Wet'sewet'en Hereditary Chiefs opposition to the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline traversing their traditional territories. The panel generated lively discussion with the participants in attendance.

Please stay tuned for a pod cast of the panel discussion.



IEJ Project Supports York University's Efforts to Support the Wet'suwet'en

Wet'suwet'en Solidarity Event and Legal Defense Fundraiser was held at Vari Hall Rotunda on March 11th, York University.

Organized by Nicole Penak, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Social Work, Deborah McGregor and Jayce Chiblow, along with faculty, staff, volunteers, community members, and students delivered a day of solidarity, learning, creating and fundraising. Volunteers held up 12 donation jars and through cash donations raised close to \$3,000 dollars. This does not include the plethora of online donations, and departmental donations made along side this event.

This event was sanctioned by the Unist'ot'en and folks can still make contributions at the following link:

<https://actionnetwork.org/fundraising/unistoten2020legalfund/>

and continue to support and learn more via Wet'suwet'en Supporter Toolkit 2020 at: <http://unistoten.camp/supportertoolkit2020/>





School Visits - overview

The Indigenous Environmental Justice (IEJ) project, funded by Social Science and Humanities Research Canada (SSHRC) in collaboration with York's Faculty of Environmental Studies, offered student led workshops in several secondary schools in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in 2019. The workshops offer an opportunity for teachers and students to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of environmental justice issues from an Indigenous perspective. Students also learn more about environmental studies and student life at York University. Every workshop utilizes storywork as a teaching method offering students an opportunity to learn about values, principles and teachings associated with Anishinabek Re-Creation story, drawn from Elder Edward Benton-Banai's *The Mishomis Book: the Voice of the Ojibway*. Teachers and students are encouraged to engage in dialogue and activities designed to delve deeper into the teachings relating to environmental sustainability.



(left) IEJ team member Jayce Chiblow leading a school workshop.



(right) A student paints his impression of the theme "water is life" at an IEJ school workshop.



UPCOMING EVENTS

In response to the Corona Virus (COVID-19), all University gatherings/events have been cancelled and postponed as of March 16, 2020. As such the IEJ planned event on Water Justice has been postponed until further notice. To keep our followers engaged in time of social distancing, IEJ will be re-releasing pod casts and videos for new followers. We will also release new materials in lieu of any cancelled and post-poned events.

Please stay tuned on IEJ social media for updates.

Any Questions?



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