

# Geography and Environment Chair's Monthly Newsletter

August 2022



**Katrina Moser**  
Department Chair

## Lesley Rigg and David Goldblum to go to Brock University

It was announced in Western News this week that Lesley Rigg will be taking on the role of President at Brock University beginning Nov. 1, 2022. David Goldblum will continue at Western in Geography and Environment through to July 1, 2023 when he too will move to Brock. Please join me in congratulating David on his move and thanking him for his many and continued contributions to our department.

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## Exciting News – Two New Faculty Members Join Us!

I have some wonderful news to share with all of you! In 2021/2022 Western funded four Indigenous tenure track positions through the Provost's Academic Renewal Fund (PARF) and two of these positions will be linked to Geography and Environment. I am delighted to announce that Sâkhitowin Awâsis (Cortney K. Dakin) and Vanessa Ambtman-Smith will be officially joining our department Jan. 1, 2023 and July 1, 2023, respectively.

Awâsis will join Geography and Environment and is an emerging scholar in Indigenous energy justice. Awâsis has several publications including one in *The Canadian Geographer* and one in the *Journal of Political Ecology*. Their research is exciting and cutting-edge examining energy governance from unique perspectives that contributes to strategies for decolonizing energy review processes and Indigenous self-determination. Awâsis' exemplary research record is complimented by a wealth of teaching experience and a deep dedication to community-engaged scholarship, including commitments to the Anishinaabe Round House in Deshkan Zibiing (Chippewas of the Thames First Nation).

Vanessa is clearly a leader in her field holding both a SSHRC Vanier and a Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation

scholarship. She brings to Western a wealth of healthcare experiences gained through healthcare positions including the Indigenous Health Lead for the South West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and the Chair of the Provincial Aboriginal Health Network Local Health Integration Network (LHINs) in Ontario. Vanessa's PhD research is focused on using traditional healing spaces in Ontario healthcare facilities to improve Indigenous healthcare. Vanessa's work is innovative and policy influencing. Her multi-disciplinary background and wide variety of healthcare experiences will allow her to support transformative learning in fields that center relationships.

We are very fortunate to have these two stellar scholars joining us! Please join me in welcoming them to Western Geography and Environment!

# Staff Updates

In keeping with the majority of campus, departmental staff will continue working remotely one day per week into the fall term. Of course, as meetings and other events come up these days may change, so please contact staff members directly to ensure they will be on campus if/when you need to meet with them in person. Days at Home Schedule:

Monday – Lelanya, Karen

Tuesday – no one

Wednesday – Angelica, Erika, Joe

Thursday – Lori

Friday – Kylie, Kathy



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## Western COVID Update

To the Western, Brescia, Huron and King's Communities,

With the start of the fall term only a few weeks away, Western is taking measures to guard against COVID-19 in our community and do all we can to protect in-person learning for the academic year. Based on input from our experts and our own community, we are requiring our students, staff and faculty to have been vaccinated for COVID-19 and to have received one booster. We are asking the Western community to submit proof of vaccination status by October 1, 2022, through a new [online process](#). Students living in residence will need to get their booster dose before moving in. However, Western will offer a two-week grace period - and easy access to the campus vaccination clinic - for those students unable to get a booster before they arrive. Starting September 1, as everyone is returning to campus, people will also be required to wear

medical-grade (ASTM level 3) masks in indoor instructional spaces, with some exceptions. We will reassess the need for masking beyond Thanksgiving weekend, with the goal to lift the mask mandate as soon as possible. Please visit our [COVID-19 website for full details and FAQs](#). We all look forward to the day the pandemic is completely behind us! In the meantime, we're doing everything possible to mitigate the effects of future waves - and to offer a consistent, positive on-campus experience for the coming year. Thank you for your continued support in protecting Western's vibrant on-campus experience and our community.

We are excited to see you on campus soon.

Florentine Strzelczyk

Provost & Vice-President (Academic)

Lynn Logan

Vice President (Operations & Finance)

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## Key Dates

**September 2** - Grad Orientation Pt.1

**September 5** - Labour Day (Western Closed)

**September 8** - Fall/Winter Term Classes Begin

**September 9** - Council Meeting  
(note the 10am start time)

**September 9** - Grad Orientation Pt.2, Grad Meet & Greet (3-4pm in SSC Courtyard)

**September 16** - Grad Retreat (off campus)

**September 20** - Welcome Back Coffee  
(9:30-11:30am in Pleva)

**September 23** - Chair's Walk at Noon, meet outside the doors closest to the main office. All are welcome! (rain date Oct. 7)

**September 25 to October 1** - UG Field Courses