

## Geography and Environment Chair's (Katrina Moser's) Newsletter September 2024

### **Welcome Back!!**

Another summer has come and gone. My summer was marked by personal challenges, but was also productive and rewarding. Highlights included field work in the Uinta Mountains and attending two conferences including The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in Niagara Falls. Here Dr. Beth Hundey, Sara Mai Chitty and myself gave four different presentations related to our course, C4CCA. Additionally, the three of us, along with Dr. Christy Bressette, were selected by Western to submit a project proposal to the MacArthur Foundation. Many thanks to those of you who supported me throughout the summer and thanks especially to Dr. Jamie Voogt, who served as acting chair several times.

Looking to the new school year, I am excited to work with everyone and for the opportunity to visit with folks during Fika! There is a lot happening this Fall. I am especially excited that **Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer**, author of *Braiding Sweet Grass*, will be here **Oct. 16-18**. Make sure to get tickets for her lecture – there is a [link](#) on our home page.

Wishing everyone all the best for the 2024/2025 school year!!

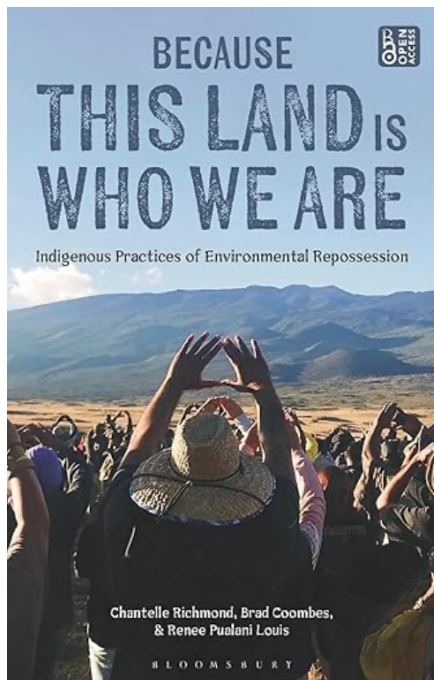


**LARS team doing field work this summer in the Uinta Mountains – for more on our research this summer click [here](#).**

## ***Congratulations to all of you who recently received external funding!***

I am incredibly proud of the accomplishments of Geography and Environment's faculty and students for their efforts and successes in obtaining external funding! Particularly noteworthy are a SSHRC IDG to Dr. Jinyung Lee. Dr. Geneviève Metson was a co-applicant on a successful \$3.9M NSERC-SSHRC Sustainable Agriculture Initiative grant and was awarded an NSERC Discovery Grant. Dr. Isaac Luginaah and his team were successful on a stage-one SSHRC Partnership Grant. Dr. Chantelle Richmond and her team were awarded a \$1.86M CIHR grant, which was the largest at Western in Fall 2023/Spring 2024. Also noteworthy, Agnieszka Leszczynski was chosen as a Western Faculty Scholar for the next two years. We recently learned that three of our graduate student's (Naser Ahmed, Reforce Okwei and Naeim Mijani) Vanier applications have been selected to move forward to the national competition. This is a record number for Geography! Congratulations to everyone and thank you all for your hard work!

## ***New book by Dr. Chantelle Richmond!***



*Because This Land Is Who We Are: Indigenous Practices of Environmental Repossession*, written by Chantelle Richmond, Brad Coombes and Renee Pualani Louis.

For several years, Chantelle Richmond, Elana Nightingale and several members of Biigtigong Nishnaabeg have been involved in an international research project with Māori scholar Brad Coombes and Kanaka Hawai'i scholar Renee Pualani Louis and members of their communities in Aotearoa (New Zealand) and on Hawai'i Island, respectively.

*Because This Land Is Who We Are* is an exploration of environmental repossession, told through a collaborative case study approach, and engaging with Indigenous communities on Turtle Island (Nishnaabeg), Hawai'i (Kanaka Maoli) and Aotearoa (Maori). The co-authors are

Indigenous scholars, community leaders and activists who are actively engaged in the movements underway in these locations, and able to describe the unique and common strategies of repossession practices taking place in each community.

This open access book celebrates Indigenous ways of knowing, relating to and honouring the land, and the authors' contributions emphasize the efforts taking place in their own territories. Through engagement with these varying cultural imperatives, the wider goal

of *Because This Land Is Who We Are* is to broaden both theoretical and applied concepts of environmental repossession, and to empower Indigenous communities around the world who struggle to assert their rights to land.



### ***Chantelle and collaborators***

A book launch is being planned for **November 6<sup>th</sup> in the evening** at the Wampum Learning Lodge! More details to follow. At the launch, Chantelle will sign copies for everyone who wants one. In the meantime, you can download an open access version of the book through this link: [Bloomsbury Collections - Because This Land is Who We Are](#).

### ***Welcome to Dr. Evan Bowness!***



We are thrilled that this July, Dr. Evan Bowness joined the Department of Geography and Environment as a new Assistant Professor focusing on topics at the intersection of sustainability and social equity.

Evan’s new research group at Western, the “TEST Lab” or the Towards Equitable Sustainability Transitions Lab, is co-developing a research program that is *directed by* communities on the frontlines of the climate and nature emergency. These communities live in close relationship with their surrounding waters and lands. They also contribute the least to carbon emissions, and have benefited the least from the “gains” of the industrial economy that are destroying the ecosystems on which they depend.

***Dr. Evan Bowness doing field work***

Land-based communities are also often excluded from academic research, which tends to be conducted “on” rather than “with” them and their lands. The TEST lab is aimed at reversing longstanding harmful research practices involving marginalized communities. In the words of collaborator Mateus Tremembé, Indigenous leader, traditional food culture researcher, and agroecological farmer in Brazil, “The university needs to establish a responsible and committed dialogue with Indigenous peoples and traditional territories who are facing the climate emergency. It needs to share in both the struggles and collective resilience strategies against these changes. Academic collaborations must benefit these peoples and their lands in some way, while also following the guidelines and sentiments of the communities who care for Mother Earth and all of nature.”

The TEST Lab is co-developing projects alongside Mateus and other land-based community partners to use visual social science methods, in collaboration with natural scientists, to enable research that is fundamentally community-directed.

Evan is a settler, born and raised in Canada in Treaty 1 Territory and holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Resource Management and Sustainability from the University of British Columbia. Before coming to Western, he was an assistant Professor of Community Food Systems at the Trent School of the Environment.

### ***Introducing the Executive for 2024***



This year’s executive includes me as chair, Isaac Luginaah as chair of research, Agnieszka Leszczynski as undergraduate chair, and Jamie Baxter as acting graduate chair. Special thanks to all three for all their hard work keeping the department running smoothly.

***Please send me news and announcements that you wish to appear in my newsletter. I love to hear what everyone is doing. Thanks! Katrina***

## Announcements

Friday Fika (coffee): Fridays in the Faculty and Staff Lounge at 10:00am

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation - September 30, 2024 – [The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#) is being recognized at Western by making Sept. 30 a non-instructional day, which also means no assignments due, tests etc. There will be events held on campus and everyone is encouraged to participate.

Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer – Oct 17<sup>th</sup> at Centennial Hall for tickets click [here](#).

## Important Upcoming Dates

Date	Description
September 2, 2024	Labour Day
September 5, 2024	Fall/Winter Term Classes Begin
September 6, 2024	Day 1 – Graduate Orientation
September 6, 2024	Fika (coffee) @ 10am in the Staff & Faculty Lounge
September 13, 2024	Day 2 – Graduate Orientation
September 13, 2024	Fika (coffee) @ 10am in the Staff & Faculty Lounge
September 17, 2024	GAC Meeting
September 20, 2024	Graduate Retreat
September 27, 2024	Council Meeting
September 23-27, 2024	UG Field Course
September 27, 2024	<i>Fika (coffee) @ 10am in the Staff &amp; Faculty Lounge</i>
October 4, 2024	<i>Masters Students - What I Did Last Summer</i>
October 4, 2024	UAC Meeting

October 4, 2024	Fika (coffee) @ 10am in the Staff & Faculty Lounge Chair's Walk 1:00-2:00 Meet outside the Geography Office
October 11, 2024	Fika (coffee) @ 10am in the Staff & Faculty Lounge
October 12-20, 2024	Fall Reading Week
October 14, 2024	Thanksgiving Day
October 17, 2024	Robin Wall Kimmerer – Centennial Hall
October 15, 2024	GAC Meeting
October 25, 2024	Council Meeting
October 23-25, 2024	Autumn Convocation
October 25, 2024	<i>Scholarship Workshop - Preparing a Scholarship Application</i>