

Government of the Northwest Territories - Brock University Partnership Year-in-Review 2022

Partnership Overview

Signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Brock University and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) in 2020 presented some interesting COVID-19 pandemic challenges, despite our productive record of past collaboration. The first two years of this exciting partnership occurred via long distance. In year one a needs assessment about professional development opportunities was undertaken with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR). Year two built upon this foundation and saw us start to identify key avenues by which professional development could occur. In year three, the possibility for travel returned. We were grateful to meet many individuals from many ENR units and learn how they might contribute to our partnership. Emphasis is now on co-creating educational opportunities for ENR staff through the development of two professional development courses, alongside a social science toolkit, and pilot testing course delivery.



Ryan Plummer, Director of the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre at Brock University

Visit to NWT in August 2022

Ryan Plummer and Amanda Smits visited the Northwest Territories (NWT) from August 5 to 11, where they were able to connect with more than a dozen ENR employees and learn about so many of the different programs. Connections were made with individuals from diverse units within GNWT from corporate communications to field officers. It was a wonderfully insightful trip that assisted in shaping the key concepts of both courses and solidifying the outline of the social science toolkit. A big thank you to Vincent Casey for arranging so many integral in-person meetings.



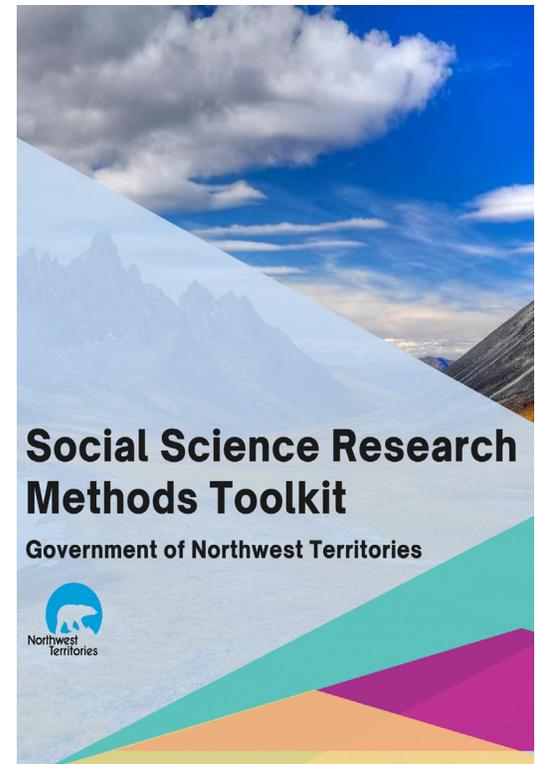
Photo images include (from left to right) hiking break between meetings around Yellowknife, field office visit where more was learned about the fire history within NWT, and a water sampling kit that is used in the community-based water monitoring program, which was highlighted during one of the meetings with ENR folks.

Course and Toolbox Planning

As part of the planning process for professional development courses, the partnership developed a **Social Science Methods Toolkit**, consisting of an online PDF guide that will be available to all ENR employees.

The partnership has also focused on developing two professional courses:

1. **Introduction to Northern Climate Resilience:** This 6-week long course considers climate change and resilience through a Northern lens, specifically drawing upon multiple perspectives, knowledge systems, and experiences, with focus on the important matters of vulnerability, adaptation, and transformation. Learners will come to understand different ways to affect change and build climate change resilience in the North.
2. **Ways to Engage Communities:** This 6-week long course focuses on working together with communities. It equips learners with the knowledges and skills necessary for meaningful community engagement, productive partnerships, and effectively mobilizing knowledge with a focus on concrete skills in areas such as science communication. Context and experiences in NWT, including Indigenous perspectives and Traditional Knowledge, are included throughout the course.



Primary Resource Development

For both courses, as well as the toolkit, several primary resources are being co-developed which include a focus on GNWT-specific examples. Below are listings of all primary resources currently under development for the two courses.

Introduction to Northern Climate Resilience

- Video compilation of ENR staff and employees describing how climate change impacts the work that they do at GNWT
- Infographic demonstrating how decisions are made relating to climate change within GNWT.
- Spotlight Series: highlighting three ENR focused examples that reflect mitigation, adaptation, and transformation efforts in dealing with climate change.
- Example poster and presentation, which will be final assignment within the course, on building resilience to climate change at ENR through climate change education.

Ways to Engage Communities

- Video compilation of ENR staff and employees describing what community engagement means to them and how they engage with the community through their role
- Spotlight Series: highlighting three ENR focused examples that reflect the "prominent ways to engage" including government to government (the formalized engagement process); or person to person (informal) engagement.
- Spotlight Series: knowledge sharing interview with ENR Caribou Range Planning Biologist.

Upcoming Initiatives for 2023

In 2023, we will be focusing on the course review process. The courses we've developed will be piloted in two phases over a six-week period from January-March 2023. This process will unfold as follows:

- First, host a kick-off meeting and introduction to the Climate Change course (January 2023)
- Next, host feedback meetings for the climate change course as well as the introduction to the ways to engage course (February 2023)
- Lastly, host a feedback meeting for the ways to engage course (March 2023)

For more information visit: brocku.ca/esrc/government-of-the-northwest-territories/