

Government of the Northwest Territories - Brock University Partnership Year-in-Review 2023

A Message from Dr. Ryan Plummer, Professor & Director of the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre (ESRC) at Brock

In 2020, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Brock University and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) marked the initiation of a multi-year collaboration focused on co-creating professional development opportunities tailored for GNWT employees, to highlight the unique experiences and voices of the people of the North.

The initial two years of this dynamic partnership unfolded at a distance. During the first year, we conducted a needs assessment regarding professional development opportunities with the Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC). Building on this groundwork, we identified key pathways for professional development. In the third year, the Brock team traveled to NWT and engaged with numerous individuals across various ECC units to better understand how they could contribute to our collaboration. Much of the third year was dedicated to the collaborative development of two courses and a social science toolkit.

In this final year, the project team ran the first course with a handful of GNWT employees. This initial pilot test revealed key areas of success and areas of improvement, and allowed the teams to implement changes to the content to ensure that it was reflective of the Northern context. Our focus into 2024 includes running a second course pilot test with an additional 10 GNWT employees.



Revisions to Course Content

Between June 2023 and December 2023, both the Introduction to Northern Climate Resilience, as well as the Ways to Engage course modules underwent a full review process.

This process included reviewing content and incorporating changes suggested through the review process undertaken with GNWT staff in early 2023. Modifications to course content were also made to reflect the newly formed Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Pilot Testing of Courses

Our first joint offering “Introduction to Northern Climate Resilience” was launched virtually in October 2023 with 11 participants. This 6-week course offering ran from October 30th to December 8th. Collection of feedback on this pilot course offering will occur at several stages:



First, we touched base with learners at the course halfway point to ask three specific questions around their learning to date.

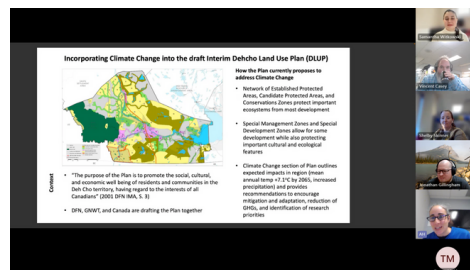
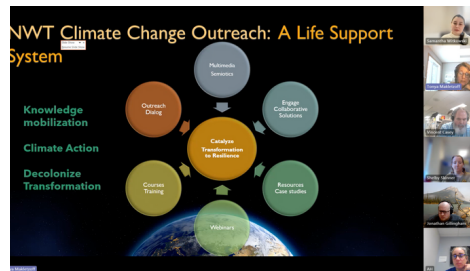
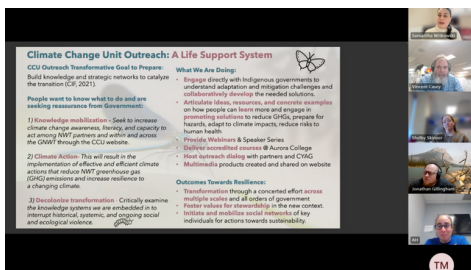
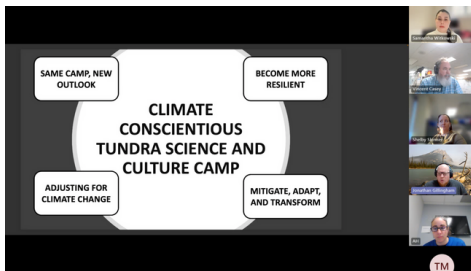


Participants have recently been invited to submit individualized feedback via an online Qualtrics survey.



Finally, the Brock team will meet in-person with participants on January 10, 2024 to host a group-based feedback session, which will also include the chance to brainstorm ideas to positively enhance future course offerings.

The culminating assignment in this course required learners to summarize a specific work-related project or program they are familiar with and describe how climate change may impact this work in the future. This assignment was meant to assist learners in creating connections between content covered in the course and their own work within ECC. Many learners joined a call on December 14, 2023 to present their final assignment to colleagues in the course.



Additional Projects with Results to come in 2024

From January 8-12, 2024, two Brock staff members will be travelling to Yellowknife to meet with ECC partners. Several in-person events are planned for this time including:

- Co-hosted panel discussion entitled “Preserving Culture in a Changing Climate” will be hosted virtually as a part of the ESRC’s Sustainability Seminar Series.
- In-person feedback session for learners who completed the “Introduction to Northern Climate Resilience” in Fall 2023, including a lunch social hosted by Brock University.
- In-person launch for the “Ways to Engage” course, which will run from January 15 - February 23, 2024. Feedback on this course will be collected in similar ways to the Fall 2023 course offering, with the exception of a virtual group feedback session, rather than an in-person gathering when the course concludes in late February.

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