

PRINCIPLE 4: RESEARCH

We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding of the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in creating sustainable social, environmental, and economic value.

A Virtual Beginning



The 2020 Academy of International Business (AIB)

Canada Chapter and iBegin Conference was hosted by UVic virtually on November 20, with authors presenting on the topic Sustainable Innovation and Entrepreneurship in a Fragmented World.

Organizer and Associate Professor Kristin Brandl shared, “the conference went well. We initially had planned an in-person conference for summer 2020 but moved to a virtual format in response to COVID-19. We managed to organize an online conference with very interesting panels and speakers, an interactive roundtable session, a paper development workshop and the first presentation of the newly formed Academy of International Business Shared Interest Group on Sustainability, which perfectly aligned with the theme of the conference. The conference had a theme of ‘Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Innovation in a Fragmented World,’ which was chosen to reflect the pillars of Gustavson and the research we do.”

Inside the UN Climate Change Conference: A Gustavson post doc’s experience at COP26 in Glasgow



Kevin Andrew is a post doctoral fellow who has been working with Basma Majerbi, CSSI fellow, with research on financing models, which include carbon emission analysis, climate change risk analysis and carbon pricing policy. This year, Kevin had the opportunity to attend the UN Climate Change

Conference COP26 in Glasgow. The following is his first hand account of his experiences.

I first recall learning about the United Nations in my high school ‘World Issues’ class. I had a passionate teacher named Mr. Smith who strongly believed in the capacity of the global community to work together to solve difficult problems. This class inspired my later choice to pursue a PhD in economics and then to pivot my research focus to the economic and financial risks related to climate change.

I have always been fascinated with difficult problems and climate change is perhaps the most difficult problem facing humanity. In economics jargon, it is the mother of all externalities. It is only fitting that the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP26, represented humanity’s last best chance to avert the worst consequences of climate change. I was humbled to be able to attend, and was part of a group funded by Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS).

COP26 is short for the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (just one of the many acronyms associated with the conference). It was a two-week conference held in Glasgow, Scotland, Oct. 31–Nov. 12, 2021. World leaders, activists, academics, NGOs and corporations attended. COP26 involved the final negotiations of the Paris Climate Agreement, country pavilions, side events, educational experiences and opportunities to network. There were just under 40,000 registered participants. The conference centre was teeming with people from all over the world

while the streets were full of protesters. The event truly was a spectacle.

My experience at COP26 taught me that there is a momentum to multi-lateral climate policy. While COP26 did not achieve the tangible emissions-reduction promises some would have liked, it also left the door to a world with 1.5C warming slightly open. In other words, it is still code red for humanity, but at least humanity can live to fight another round.



Exploring Global Supply Chains with Operations Professor Adel Guitouni



In 2021, Adel Guitouni, CSSI fellow, submitted new research on global supply chains to the journal Production and Operations Management. In 2020 and 2021, the world saw supply chain disruptions at unprecedented levels due to the worldwide pandemic. This disruption highlighted the sensitivities and fragility of our supply chains, and Adel says that sustainability will be key to a solution. Adel finds supply chains solely extract from nature. Notably, approximately 80 to 90% of emissions from any consumer product come from the supply chain. A stable supply chain will help nature and contribute to social wellbeing. Adel collaborated with

six graduate students, two post-doctoral fellows and the BC Blueberry Council and developed a relationship with a farming centre on Vancouver Island. With this relationship, Adel focused on food and health to validate the concept and expected it would apply in other sectors as well. Through his research, Adel confirmed three main preconceptions from basic business principles: business is a team sport, collaboration and trust are paramount, and supply chains connect different layers of the economy, society and the environment. To support collaboration and trust Adel would like labels that provide the CO2 footprint added to consumer products, similar to the way food products are required to provide nutritional labels.



MBA Capstone Project Consults with Malahat Nation on Sustainable Energy Development



MBA 596 is a capstone course where MBA students test

their newly expanded knowledge of business best practices by taking on a consulting project. Over the years, student projects have ranged from advising non-profits on national expansion to investigating the role of smart agriculture in global food security, and everything in between.

Each term has its share of notable new project topics; one of them is chosen as the winner of the Ritchie Foundation—MBA Best Capstone Project Award. This year's winner was a stand-out: a clean energy roadmap for Vancouver Island's Malahat Nation.

Chief George Harry of the Malahat Nation has strongly supported the project for years. "The UVic-Malahat capstone project is innovative and ties in with everything that Malahat is working towards. The project is culturally inspired by the land and resources of the Malahat Nation. It is moving towards stability for Malahat's businesses and the environment as a whole."

In response to the goals identified by Malahat Nation administrators, MBA students Tristan Gale (who is also an executive director of Malahat Nation), Omar Abdul Ghani, Steve Jones and Najib Raie undertook creating the energy roadmap as their capstone consulting project.

Their report notes: "Malahat is growing both in terms of members living on its lands, and in terms of ambition for the future it can provide for them. It has a strong economic plan, and recent land acquisitions and improved infrastructure are needed to help deliver economic stability to its members. The business park and industrial lands are the engines for this economic growth."

The student team brought a usefully diverse array of knowledge to the project: Steve and Omar have engineering backgrounds, while Najib has extensive business administration experience. Tristan, for his part, has a degree in biology and has worked in environmental stewardship. Together with the knowledge gained from the Gustavson MBA program the team delivered a plan to increase economic opportunity to the community and received a highly coveted prize in the process.