

**Washington University in St. Louis  
Environmental Justice Faculty Network**

**2018 Report Summary**

**Table of Contents**

I.	Introduction.....	1
II.	Definitions.....	2
III.	Themes.....	3
IV.	Potential Next Steps.....	7
V.	Conclusion.....	10
VI.	Appendices.....	11

**Primary Investigator**

Scott Krummenacher

Lecturer

Department of Environmental Studies

**Project Manager**

Timothy Dugan

Community Engagement Manager

Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement

**Secondary Project Manager**

Annalise Wagner

Environmental Justice Team Lead

Office of Sustainability

## **I. Introduction**

Washington University in St. Louis published four pillars in 2012 to provide vision for the university's future: (1) preparing the leaders of tomorrow, (2) advancing human health, (3) inspiring innovation and entrepreneurship, and (4) enhancing the quality of life. The Office of Sustainability supports research, teaching, and community service efforts toward these goals, partnering with students, faculty, staff, and community and university partners. Its 2015 Strategic Plan addresses the university's environmental impact in 8 key areas - energy and emissions, building, food, community, landscape, transportation, waste, and water. The Strategic Plan's forward from Hank Webber, Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration, and Phil Valko, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Sustainability, speaks to the university's crucial role in sustainability toward all four pillars of the university's vision:

Global efforts must be multifaceted and include rapid reduction of carbon emissions, restoration of damaged ecosystems, and adaptation to a changing climate. The challenge is especially great in light of a rapidly growing global population and the need to lift an estimated 2 billion to 3 billion people out of poverty. This truly is a complex problem that requires leadership and collaboration from all sectors. Institutions of higher education have a crucial role to play, and Washington University is fully committed to being part of the solution. Our faculty conduct research that helps us understand these complex issues and develop innovative strategies. Our students gain knowledge and leadership skills that prepare them to play important roles in shaping future solutions. Our staff members work to create and implement new systems that allow our campuses to operate more sustainably. Washington University in St. Louis is engaged in a multi-decade process to transform our traditional business operations into truly sustainable operations. While we have made a great deal of progress in the last five years, we continue to set loftier goals for ourselves and work toward a more sustainable future.

This letter speaks to the interdependency between sustainability efforts and social justice work. Negative impact to our natural world disproportionately harms marginalized communities, and positive engagement with our natural world disproportionately benefits our communities of greatest agency. Simultaneous protection of our environmental and empowerment of marginalized communities serve each of our university pillars. Through research and learning about complex environmental challenges, combined with creative thinking and collaboration toward remedies for socially and environmentally unjust systems, Washington University increases knowledge, expands capacity, and positions itself to improve the life and leadership of the university in St. Louis and beyond.

Inspired by its 2015 Strategic Plan, the Washington University in St. Louis Office of Sustainability launched the Environmental Justice Initiative. This initiative seeks to integrate

environmental justice into the university’s teaching, research, and service by bringing together students, faculty, staff, and community members around key environmental justice concerns in the St. Louis region. The initiative catalyzes social and environmental justice collaborations, incorporates environmental justice sentiments into existing efforts, and educates and raises awareness about environmental justice issues. Learn more about the Environmental Justice Initiative from the Theory of Change model (see Appendix 4). The Office of Sustainability Environmental Justice Initiative [webpage](#) contains environmental justice events, student groups, internship and funding opportunities for students, local and regional environmental justice collaborations, environmental justice-related courses, and faculty members doing or interested in doing environmental justice work. A team of Office of Sustainability professional staff, student interns, and campus advisers coordinate information sharing and efforts to increase learning and engagement in environmental justice programs.

Beginning in spring 2017, in accordance with the initiative’s goals, under the guidance of Scott Krummenacher, undergraduate Annalise Wagner and Gephardt Institute staff member Tim Dugan interviewed 12 faculty and staff members across 4 schools, as seen in the following chart:

<i>School</i>	<b>Brown School</b>	<b>Sam Fox</b>	<b>College of Arts and Sciences</b>	<b>Law</b>
<i>Department</i>	Public Health (3) Social Work (2)	Architecture (2) Dept. of Social Innovation (1)	Environmental Studies (2) Anthropology (1)	Environmental Law (1)

Because of Professor Scott Krummenacher and the Office of Sustainability’s previously established connections with faculty and staff in the College of Arts and Sciences, and specifically in Environmental Studies, the team elected to focus our interviews on faculty and staff whose environmental justice work may be less known to this team, in order to build new bridges and foster increased collaboration. Subsequently, the team reached out primarily to faculty and staff in the Brown School of Social Work (specifically, the School of Public Health and the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies--the organization responsible for hosting an “Environmental Justice and Indigenous Rights Symposium” early in the spring 2017 semester), and Sam Fox (specifically, those involved in community engagement and landscape architecture). An interview “snowball” strategy was used to identify additional campus partners for interviews from the initial list of professionals interviewed.

This report does not draw conclusions reflective of university-wide faculty engagement due to its small sample size and methods for engagement. Rather, this report aims to identify key

commonalities among leaders doing environmental justice work, and points to areas for further discovery that may dictate action to serve all Washington University faculty.

Individuals were asked to define environmental justice and to note which portions of their work fall within or outside of the definition. Interviewees shared about their past, current, and projected environmental justice related research, curriculum, and service, and the catalysts and hindrances to their work. Interviewees identified environmental justice partners on campus, which has led to a networking matrix of university EJ partnerships (See Appendix 2). For a full list of interviewees, as well as the list of questions used in the interviews, see Appendix 1.

## II. Definitions

Interviewees' varying definitions and understandings of the different components of environmental justice has informed consideration for the best way to define environmental justice, as well as to understand which aspects of environmental justice are most valued on campus. "Environmental Justice" can be defined in many ways. Through interviews, three core themes emerged from interviewees' definitions of environmental justice: equity, understanding, and self-determination. The table below highlights different phrases used to further elaborate upon these core ideas.

Common idea	# of Faculty who mentioned this idea	Phrases
Equity	12 (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Equal distribution of environmental burdens and health impacts</li> <li>● Equal access to environmental benefits</li> <li>● Elimination of environmental racism: a disproportionate impact of environmental burdens on low-income communities, which are frequently communities of color</li> <li>● Address lack of adequate environmental protection and undue environmental burdens specifically to minority populations.</li> </ul>
Understanding	5 (42%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understand how people have been marginalized in a historical and cultural context (especially in relation to class, race, gender identity)</li> <li>● Work with how policy, regulations, industry, development, etc., have shaped communities in a way that disadvantages certain groups</li> <li>● Recognizing that every species has a right to</li> </ul>

		<p>its pursuit of life-sustaining resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understanding the narrow lens: that is, individuals in minority communities have historically not gotten benefits of laws, and suffered undue environmental burdens. Diluting this focus reinforces that unfairness.</li> <li>● Understand “this is my city and my community,” and we can’t just be here to study “them”</li> </ul>
Self-determination	5 (42%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Allow the marginalized to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Self-determine direction of what they want</li> <li>○ Have control over how their environment/resources are handled</li> <li>○ Make decisions about how their environment is and how it evolves</li> <li>○ Guide and regulate projects themselves</li> </ul> </li> <li>● EJ work should engage and model past success in the community</li> </ul>

Often interviewees’ definitions of environmental justice reflected how their work relates to environmental justice. For example, staff members from the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies emphasized how native populations are negatively affected at a greater rate by negative environmental impacts, and do not have control over policy and industry that causes these negative impacts. One landscape architecture professor discussed how a core concept in environmental justice is designing projects that address issues of inequality, while allowing marginalized groups to guide and regulate these projects themselves. An epidemiologist who primarily teaches public health courses described environmental justice as an equal distribution of health impacts, and determinants of environmental exposures and outcomes in a community. Each interviewee identified similar or overlapping elements of environmental justice without common language or knowledge to articulate core traits and a fully comprehensive list of components to this work.

Interviewees’ definitions suggest that environmental justice work contains the three main ideas outlined: (1) an understanding of the social, cultural, economic, and political context in which you are entering to do environmental justice work, (2) allowing marginalized communities to self-determine the direction of what projects they want to help them achieve environmental justice, and (3) a final product that includes an equal distribution of environmental burdens and equal access to environmental benefits. It was also noted that environmental justice is inherently tied to environmental injustice, with much work focusing on retroactively addressing environmental

injustice. Interestingly, one interviewee brought up the idea that broadening the lens of environmental justice to look beyond minority populations that have lacked adequate environmental protection and suffered disproportionate environmental burdens reinforces the unfairness that these communities have suffered. This base understanding of environmental justice and its critical components may offer useful context when considering other nuanced themes and specific takeaways from the faculty network survey.

### III. Themes

Throughout the interviews, three main themes emerged: (1) Faculty felt as though their research, curriculum, and/or service was tangentially related to environmental justice, rather than directly related. (2) faculty experienced similar hindrances (lack of collaboration, funding, and time) to potential environmental justice work, and (3) faculty emphasized the importance of community engagement. First, we will explain these themes in greater detail, and then will use this information to suggest potential next steps.

- (1) *Faculty felt as though their research, curriculum, and/or service was tangentially related to environmental justice, rather than directly related.*

In the interviews, no faculty or staff member regarded environmental justice work as their primary teaching, research, or service focus. However, *all* interviewees identified part of their past, present, or future work as being related to environmental justice in some way. Two interviewees noted that their work is not tied to EPA's legal definition of environmental justice, or the traditional view of environmental justice. Liz Kramer, Assistant Director of Community-Based Design and Sustainability, noted that since her work has to do with community engagement, it is not necessarily related to environmental justice, yet community engagement certainly can and should be applied to environmental justice work. Similarly, two interviewees working in Public Health in the Brown School of Social Work noted the inherent connection between public health and environmental justice, but did not feel as though they could identify any of their current research and curriculum *directly* with environmental justice, though they do include environmental justice in their public health classes. Maxine Lipeles, Law School Professor and Director of the Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic, noted that the Clinic has always *desired* to represent individuals and communities in environmental justice matters, though the work is client-driven, so it is difficult to come across these opportunities, despite outreach efforts. She did not identify much of the Clinic's work as being directly related to EJ, explaining that identifying work as environmental justice work when it does not directly serve minority communities suffering from unequal access to environmental protection and benefits perpetuates the cycle of injustice.

In that vein, it is important to distinguish the varied roles that faculty, staff, and students from different disciplines and departments can play. These may vary from roles of advocacy, research, representation, engagement, and more. For example, Bret Gustafson noted that he sees his

role as speaking out about concerns with injustice, and identifying the role that WashU, and individuals, play in inflicting and perpetuating these injustices. As previously stated, Maxine Lipeles and the Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic provides legal representation free of charge to non-profit organizations. While different departments have different specialties and strengths, interdisciplinary efforts that are able to address many different aspects of environmental justice problems have exceptional promise and value to the community.

All interviewees recognize their work as at least somewhat connected to environmental justice, and all interviewees expressed an interest in environmental justice work. However, many interviewees expressed similar hindrances to pursuing environmental justice research, curriculum, and service, including lack of knowledge, resource, or opportunity.

*(2) Faculty experienced similar hindrances (lack of collaboration, funding, and time) to potential environmental justice work.*

The main hindrances to increased environmental justice research, curriculum, and service seemed to center on lack of collaboration, funding, and time. Interviewees emphasized that they would be very interested in in-person networking events or a database to allow for increased connections with other faculty members, as well as community members. The independent nature of individuals within the university, frequent faculty turnover, and different research agendas of faculty members can make it difficult to create momentum, particularly with environmental justice projects that tend to be place-based and require significant time to be dedicated towards relationship building. Two faculty members used the term “semesterization,” referring to the artificial semester cycle of higher education and the difficulty to get faculty and students involved in long-term projects spanning across semesters.

In general, almost all interviewees expressed that it would be helpful to gather faculty in order to find out what people are doing and what they are interested in doing (in terms of research, curriculum, and service), and to create connections between faculty members on campus, and community organizations. As a starting point, Public Health Professor Angela Hobson noted that it would be useful to know other faculty members’ name, department, brief description of interest, what they are teaching, and the foci of their research and service to the institution. The majority of interviewees also expressed that it would be particularly valuable to learn these things about faculty in other schools and departments. Also worth noting, Landscape Architecture Professor Rod Barnett mentioned that he found that most of the faculty engaged with environmental justice work in the College of Arts and Sciences tend to specialize in and approach this work from a lens of science rather than art, civic engagement or other. He suggested that it would be useful if faculty in the humanities contributed to projects in order to better build and support communities. Environmental Studies Research and previous Programs Coordinator Rachel Folkerts and Professor Barnett played a significant role in a project in Baden, St. Louis, that sought to alter MSD’s current plans to install bioretention and detention basins in Baden to also serve as a park. This project



offers a useful lesson on the importance of cross-disciplinary involvement: it began because a group of faculty members wanted to do a cross-disciplinary project that was community-engaged, and, subsequently, the City of St. Louis' Urban Vitality and Ecology Initiative wanted Wash U to get involved with the project. With financial contributions from InCEES (formerly I-CARES), the university hired Rachel Folkerts to work directly on the project, managing the university's role and community partnership while also supporting Professor Barnett's landscape architectural work. Rachel's involvement was essential to the program's success. In her interview, she noted that the extra capacity was important because her work ended up being tangential to what most faculty were doing, so likely would not have been completed otherwise. She also emphasized the importance of involving faculty on these projects who see the work as integral to their job function. Frequently, the fact that faculty do not see environmental justice work as integral to their job function may be a major hindrance to developing environmental justice projects and curriculum, and Rachel's work indicates to potential and opportunity for faculty engagement when provided support. Following Rachel's departure, Carolyn Cosgrove Payne was hired as the Environmental Studies Community Engagement Coordinator, and will serve as an important link between the University and community organizations for future projects.

In all cases, if an interviewee was not engaged in direct environmental justice work, they mentioned that they would be interested in getting involved with more environmental justice research and/or projects, but do not actively pursue this because they lack funding, time, or both. In some cases, their grant funding their research does not encompass environmental justice. In others, their position at the university is focused on teaching, and does not allow for research flexibility. Many noted that they simply did not have the time in their schedule, and the stamina to add another project onto their workload. Faculty emphasized that they would be more likely to develop and teach environmental justice coursework, and engage in environmental justice research and projects, if they could secure funding to do so. Faculty also noted that it can be difficult to find impactful environmental justice projects to engage in - that is, they would be open to conducting research or representing community members if they could identify community desire/needs. Notably, faculty and staff from the Brown School of Social Work talked about how there is an Environmental Justice Competency embedded in the curriculum, which requires faculty to include something about environmental justice in their syllabi. This curriculum requirement is certainly a catalyst to furthering the goal of the Environmental Justice Initiative, and it would be interesting to see if a similar or related curriculum requirement could be put in place in other schools. Additionally, it is clear that grants for environmental justice curriculum and research would significantly catalyze environmental justice work across and beyond campus. With any environmental justice work, six interviewees explicitly mentioned the importance of community engagement.

*(3) Faculty emphasized the importance of community engagement.*

In her interview, Liz Kramer brought up a failed project in 2011-2012, in which Wash U students and faculty designed a school garden and native landscape for the Patrick Henry School, but did not have a long-term maintenance and support plan, causing the project to ultimately fail. She emphasized the importance of incentivizing faculty and students to be present to community people, and that if faculty, staff, or students go into a community and make commitments to the community, they must be confident that the project can create sustainable change.

In order to make these commitments to the community, faculty interviewees had a few suggestions. Two faculty members explicitly noted the importance of connecting with St. Louis organizations who are currently engaged in environmental justice work. To start, they included, it would be useful to know which St. Louis organizations are doing environmental justice work. It was suggested by one interviewee that a steering committee include a leader of a community organization. When selecting who this will be, however, it is important to be sure they will represent the community well, and that their inclusion in the steering committee will not alienate other community organizations.

The failed Patrick Henry School project demonstrates how important it is to allow communities to decide what types of projects they want to pursue to address environmental inequalities, and have community members be engaged in the project, so that it can be sustainable. If the community really “owns” the project, and the university provides resources and expertise when needed, it is much more likely to succeed than if the university simply came in and completed a project with little to no community involvement. All of the faculty members who mentioned community involvement suggested that a project without community buy-in is not worth beginning. As such, this is an important piece to keep in mind when pursuing any environmental justice work.

Additionally, an important piece of community buy-in is acknowledging the place of privilege from which many faculty, staff, and students approach the community. St. Louis communities experiencing environmental injustice may find other issues more salient: for example, the danger the police presence poses to many black individuals. Self-determination must be respected. It is important for university faculty, staff, and students to recognize their role as a guest in a community and without experience, perspective, or voice that can best speak to the needs and priorities of the community. While it is important to clarify and offer academic expertise, it is equally important to respect the the community’s lived experience and opinions as critical determinant for the direction and leadership of any partnership. Differences resulting from the privileged place of WashU students, faculty, and staff, should also be kept in mind: WashU is a majority white, majority wealthy campus, and this is not representative of the greater St. Louis community--particularly communities facing environmental injustices.

#### IV. **Recommendations for Next Steps**

Throughout the interviews, we found that faculty and staff were very enthusiastic about and supportive of a steering committee to help move the WashU community closer towards the

Environmental Justice Initiative's stated goals. This committee believes that a steering committee would help faculty to more directly connect their academic and professional work to environmental justice by offering resources, including thought partnership and clearer language. A steering committee may increase project sustainability by helping to remove barriers.

A steering committee would hopefully consist of faculty from diverse backgrounds and academic expertise, to give way to creative approaches and interdisciplinary collaboration. Also, a steering committee would ideally have student, staff and community partner representation. Staff representation should be from individuals and offices whose mission and goals align with the environmental justice initiative, community engagement, and/or faculty environmental justice and community-based teaching and research. Student representation should be leaders with passion, academic background, and ideally experiential or paraprofessional experience with environmental justice. Community representation should include regional leaders in this and related work, with strong community and organizational networks. Community representatives with knowledge or experience working with Washington University is welcomed but should not be required.

While the steering committee would ultimately self-determine university priorities in campus environmental justice work advancement and resource accrument, the EJI team has identified opportunities for the steering committee to consider. The items are in no particular order, and are meant to serve as a starting point as the committee seeks to create action items moving forward. The priority items are reflective of the faculty and staff interviews, as well as the core tenants of the Environmental Justice Initiative: convening leaders to catalyze social and environmental justice collaborations, incorporating environmental justice sentiments into existing efforts, and, educating and raising awareness about environmental justice issues.

### *Item 1: Collaboration*

Due to the inherent interdisciplinary nature of environmental justice projects and feedback from university leaders who are conducting environmental justice work, increasing collaboration will likely be a major priority for the environmental justice steering committee. All interviewees discussed the importance of making connections and cross-discipline collaboration. Overall, faculty and staff members were eager to learn more about environmental justice work and potential partners in other schools and departments.

Specifically, faculty were very interested in cross-school networking in the form of periodic face-to-face meetings, as well as a database of each faculty member's name, department, and research and academic interests. As the Office of Sustainability's Environmental Justice Initiative website includes a link to faculty profiles, the steering committee could help encourage more faculty to fill out profiles, and help advertise this site as a database for faculty and staff interested in environmental justice.

Faculty were also interested in networking with St. Louis community members and organizations to discuss research ideas and opportunities to work together, potentially in the form of happy hour networking events, as well as a database.

Another idea for the steering committee to consider is an opt-in email listserv advertising environmental justice-related events, grant opportunities, volunteer opportunities, or other relevant information. Email is frequently the fastest and most convenient way to disseminate information, but is also the most easily ignored form of communication, so allowing faculty to choose whether or not to receive information (rather than just sending it without first asking whether they would like to receive it) could be an effective way to communicate, and to be sure that those on the listserv are truly interested in environmental justice work.

Faculty and staff involved in the aforementioned Baden project explained that the project was able to receive funding largely because of the many different schools that were involved. Therefore, convening leaders across schools to work together on environmental justice projects will help address faculty members' common hindrances of lack of funding and lack of collaboration.

### *Item 2: Funding*

Faculty members who were not directly engaged in environmental justice projects, research, or collaboration stated that they could be more involved if their position at the university, or funding, allowed for it. No interviewees discussed specific projects they had in mind that they would pursue funding opportunities; lack of funding was mainly cited as why they were unable to think about such projects.

It could be very helpful for the steering committee to help faculty find opportunities for funding. This could take the form of some database (which could potentially be included in the Office of Sustainability's existing environmental justice initiative page, or another site that faculty are familiar with), or be included in a listserv. Examples of potential funding sources are the Office of the Provost's [Bring Your Own Idea \(BYOI\)](#) small grants, [Diversity and Inclusion Grants](#), the [Gephardt Institute Civic Engagement Fund](#), [The Divided City Grants](#), and the [Ferguson Academic Seed fund](#). While ultimately, creating additional environmental justice grants and funding opportunities would certainly enhance on-campus work, it requires much less time and energy to simply draw attention towards existing opportunities.

### *Item 3: Language*

As previously noted, when defining and discussing environmental justice, faculty referred to similar ideas, but did not use common language. Clear language and universal agreement of definitions and components of environmental justice will allow faculty, staff, and other more easily recognize their work within this realm and identify opportunities for connection and collaboration for others doing similar or overlapping work. Perhaps, this suggests that if there was more

awareness of environmental justice and its various components, as well as more awareness of potential applications of environmental justice on campus and in the region, faculty, staff, and others would be more likely to see how their research, curriculum, and service does and can relate to environmental justice.

In order to establish common language and increased understanding of environmental and social justice issues amongst faculty, staff, and students, some sort of space to share best practices and seek solutions to challenges would likely be beneficial. In the environmental justice ice cream social hosted by the Office of Sustainability at the end of the spring 2017 semester, students suggested that some educational presentations or readings on environmental justice be included in first year programming, because students frequently do not come in contact with the very term, let alone issues and opportunities for involvement, before taking more specialized classes.

#### *Item 4: Curriculum*

Two central goals of the Environmental Justice Initiative are to incorporate environmental justice sentiments into existing efforts, and educate and raise awareness about environmental justice issues. Both of these can be addressed by incorporating environmental justice into existing curriculum, and developing more courses with an environmental justice focus. The past several semesters, the Office of Sustainability environmental justice team has compiled a list of courses related to environmental justice, which can be found [here](#). Notably, these designations are informal. It would be useful to have a commonly established definition and language to work from, as well as an “Environmental Justice” indication on webstac so that students can more easily find environmental justice-related courses.

In the Brown School, there is an environmental justice competency, which all interviewees from the Brown School mentioned in a very positive light.

On the undergraduate level, we have found that there is student interest in increased environmental justice curriculum. In the spring 2017 semester, the Office of Sustainability sent a survey out to students that asked about student’s majors, and academic and extracurricular involvement and interests relating to environmental justice. Appendix 3 lays out the survey results in a more detailed manner, but where curriculum is concerned, 14 out of 43 students said they had completed courses that included an environmental justice component, while 11 students said that they have not taken any relevant coursework, but are interested in pursuing more academic work in environmental justice. Among these were an architecture student who noted he would be interested in applying the design process towards solving environmental problems, and a business student who mentioned that his research has focused mostly on socially responsible investing and impact investing, though he is actively looking for more ways to contribute to environmental justice research on campus. Courses that students identified as related to environmental justice were mostly in the environmental studies department (for example, Introduction to Environmental Policy, Sustainability Exchange, Urban Ecology), but there were some in anthropology as well (for

example, Anthropology of Human Birth, Introduction to Global Health, Culture and Environment). Overall, the survey results suggest that students would be interested in taking more environmental justice courses if they were available across schools and majors.

Information gathered via the survey, Brian Okelo's research, and conversations at the Environmental Just-Ice Cream Social in the Spring of 2017 suggests that there is not a clear understanding of environmental justice within the student body. Students note that it does not come up in all environmental studies courses, and when asked what relates to environmental justice, and what environmental justice is, many students default to a broader idea of environmentalism (or perhaps, justice for the environment/natural world, rather than the marginalized communities within it). Clearer definition and intentional incorporation of environmental justice in curriculum may decrease confusion and engage more students in this work. We recommend that the steering committee reflects upon this, and thinks about how to create more understanding and awareness on campus.

## V. **Conclusion**

The Environmental Justice team at the Office of Sustainability is eager to offer logistical, research, and other necessary support to a faculty steering committee. The [Environmental Justice Initiative website](#) offers a listing of academic courses, faculty profiles, collaborations, student organizations, internships, and events relating to environmental justice, which could potentially be expanded upon via the work of the steering committee. Over the past semester, Student Associates have learned about Wash U students' involvement with and interest in environmental justice through meeting with student group leaders, surveying students electronically, and enlisting the help of an anthropology student, Bryan Okelo, to conduct ethnographic research. A summary of pertinent information on student interest and involvement with environmental justice can be found in Appendix 3.

Overall, we hope that this report can help to inform continued work on the Environmental Justice Initiative, particularly through the creation of an environmental justice steering committee. We view this report as a launching place for a steering committee to create an action plan that will increase environmental justice curriculum, research, and service on campus and in the region. We also hope that this report will function as a living document to be re-drafted and edited as we learn more about environmental justice work and interest on campus. Clearly, in order to learn about faculty engagement with environmental justice, and what an effective action plan would need to specifically require, more research is needed. One concern we had in our study, and why we decided to conduct interviews in order to gather information, was survey fatigue. That is, when there is not much benefit offered for completion, it is easy to avoid filling out surveys. Because other teams in the Office of Sustainability were conducting surveys throughout the semester, we felt as though sending out more surveys would damage response rates of our survey and others. As such, we sought out more in-depth interviews that would allow us to reflect on more general

themes. Yet as we move forward, our team has developed several questions that have emerged that the steering committee could consider:

1. What is the best/most effective way to gather more information?
2. How can we better understand environmental justice needs in the area?
3. What are the best/most effective ways to help raise awareness about environmental justice on campus?
4. How large/small should the geographic scope of the initiative be (i.e., should we focus our work on the campus, St. Louis City, the region, etc.?)?
5. What is the best/most effective way to work with community members?

## Appendix 1: Interview Details

### Interviewees:

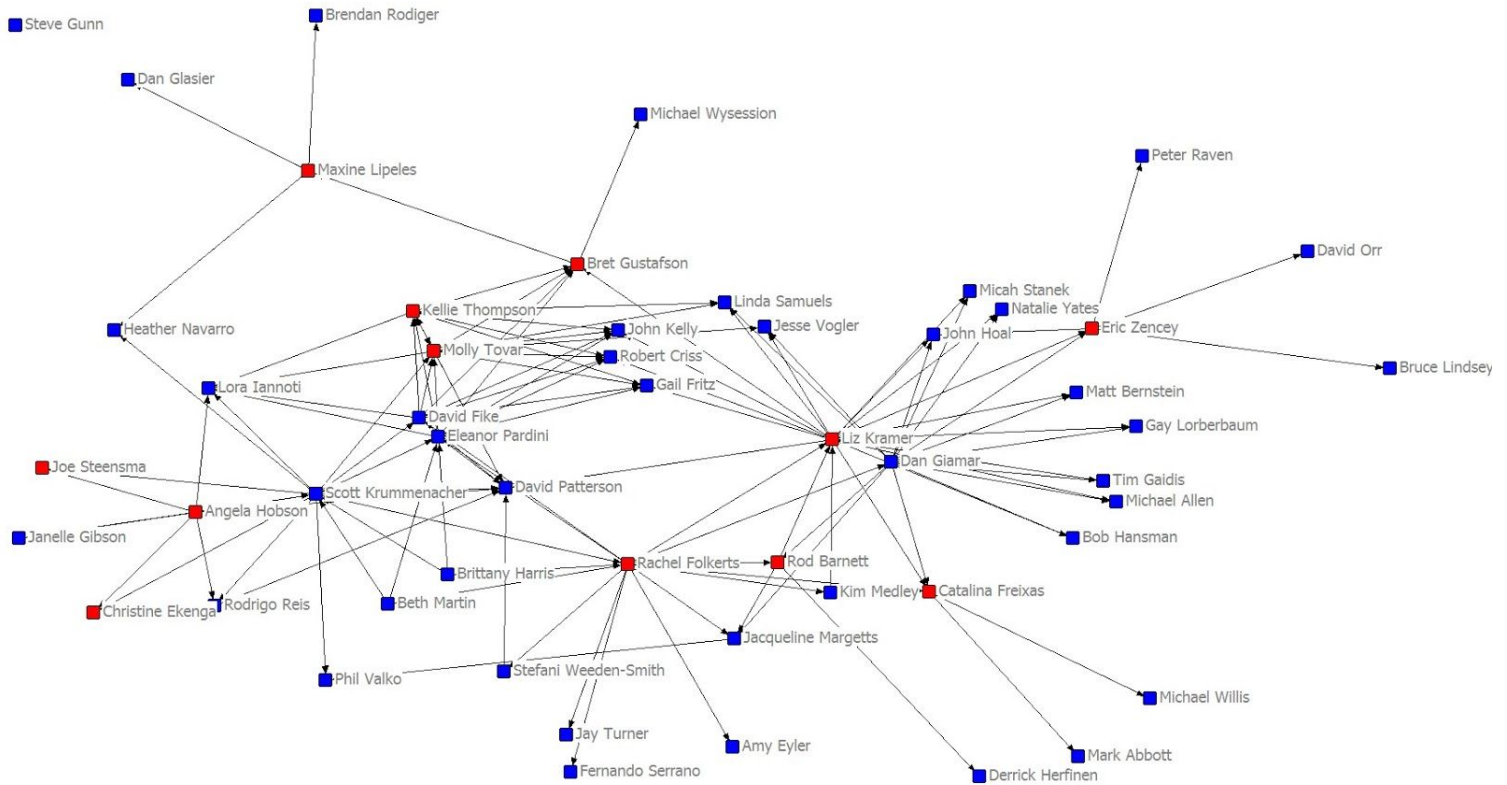
1. **Rod Barnett:** Professor and Chair of the Master of Landscape Architecture Program, Sam Fox School
2. **Christine Ekenga:** Assistant Professor, Brown School of Social Work
3. **Rachel Folkerts:** Research and Programs Coordinator, Environmental Studies (no longer at WashU)
4. **Catalina Freixas:** Assistant Professor, Architecture and Urban Design
5. **Bret Gustafson:** Associate Professor, Anthropology
6. **Angela Hobson:** Senior Lecturer, Brown School of Social Work
7. **Liz Kramer:** Assistant Director of Community-Based Design and Sustainability, Sam Fox School
8. **Maxine Lipeles:** Senior Lecturer in Law; Director, Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic
9. **Joe Steensma:** Professor of Practice, Brown School of Social Work
10. **Kellie Thompson:** Assistant Director of the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies
11. **Molly Tovar:** Director of the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies
12. **Eric Zencey:** Visiting Lecturer, Sam Fox School

### Interview Questions:

1. How do you define environmental justice?
  - a. What are the critical components of environmental justice and what environmental, sustainability, or other justice work that you do falls outside of your definition?
2. Where and how have you, do you, and do you plan to do environmental justice work?
  - a. Has, is, or will this be incorporated into your teaching curriculum?
  - b. Has, is, or will this be part of your research?
  - c. Has, is, or will this be a part of your service to the university, your field, or St. Louis in other ways?
  - d. Who are your colleagues and partners on environmental justice?
3. What are the catalysts and the hindrances to your environmental justice work at Washington University?
  - a. How do you envision the university enhancing these catalysts and mitigating the hindrances to your work?



## Appendix 2: Faculty Network Matrix



(Red nodes indicates faculty/staff who we interviewed; blue nodes indicate faculty/staff who interviewees identified as colleagues or partners on environmental justice)

## Appendix 3: Student Data

The following data regarding student involvement and interest in environmental justice is drawn from two sources: first, an online survey the Office of Sustainability sent out to students at the beginning of the spring 2017 semester; and second, the ethnographic research of an anthropology student, Bryan Okelo.

### Survey Results

The Office's survey gathered 43 responses, and asked about student's majors, and academic and extracurricular involvement and interests relating to environmental justice. In general, students were able to see the link between environmentalism and social justice, though, like faculty, for the most part claimed that their academic work and involvement on campus was *related to* environmental justice, rather than identifying their work *as* environmental justice work. 31 students listed that they are in organizations that do work related to environmental justice on some level. The groups that seemed most directly EJ were Green Action, Globemed, as well as Missouri Coalition for the Environment (one student worked as a Food Access Intern with MCE, working with the St. Louis Food Policy Coalition). Several other groups were listed that students considered related to environmental justice, including APO, Campus Kitchens, Burning Kumquat, and Net Impact.

### Ethnographic Research

Bryan Okelo's research could also be of interest to an environmental justice steering committee. As a sophomore anthropology student, Bryan interviewed nine students in a variety of grades, schools, and majors to get a sense of how environmental justice is perceived on campus. He found that students view environmental justice as a response to the exploitation of the environment, which includes monitoring and regulating human activity. Overall, he found that students view environmental justice as addressing humanity as a whole rather than addressing marginalized groups of people. The OOS EJ team had also found in meetings with students that because environmental justice can be difficult to define, and because it does not have a strong presence in curriculum on campus, students can default to defining it as "environmentalism" in a general sense.

Within this framework, Bryan reached some helpful conclusions that can inform the continued work within the Environmental Justice Initiative. He found that students view education as critical to developing environmental justice advocates, and saw Washington University as having a significant role in this development, because certain classes and programs can have significant influence in students' perceptions of environmental justice. Another important finding was that students who are less engaged would be likely to become more engaged if presented with data and research that shows them that their involvement can make a tangible impact. Because of the busy schedules of students, any environmental justice work would have to compete with existing

commitments, so if students could see the direct value of becoming involved with environmental justice, they would be more likely to participate.

## Appendix 4: Environmental Justice Initiative Theory of Change

Draft 1: June 2016



# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

## Theory of Change

**Mission:** The Office of Sustainability at Washington University in St. Louis commits to raising awareness about Environmental Justice (EJ), bridging the conversation between environmental and social justice, and building partnerships with community members in order to promote dialogue, increase understanding, and encourage appropriate action.

