

Justin Donhauser, PhD

Community Outreach and Engagement Statement | 2017

I specialize in increasingly urgent issues falling at the intersection of Environmental Ethics and Applied Philosophy of Science. My work is guided by the belief that engaging with philosophical issues that arise in practical problem-solving processes, within science, policy, and resource management, can provide new insights into more general philosophical issues while at once making philosophical analysis matter outside of philosophy. And my approach to both research and teaching has been shaped by a strong background in analytic philosophy, training in civil and environmental engineering, training as a service-learning educator, and experiences leading various community outreach initiatives.

In my current postdoc, at Western University's Rotman Institute of Philosophy, I work with the Ecological Philosophy unit on projects that advance several multidisciplinary initiatives, and associated multi-university partnerships, focused on devising efficient and ethical climate change response strategies (in collaboration with George Mason University's *Institute for Philosophy & Public Policy* and key leadership in the *International Society for Environmental Ethics*). Currently, I am actively working on two projects that will contribute to crossdisciplinary discourse about how to realize effective and ethical responses to mounting sustainability issues in other ways. One consists of a set of papers that examine ethical issues posed by applications of emerging robotics technologies for environmental protection and remediation, and aim to initiate the new sub-discipline of Environmental Robot Ethics (in collaboration with the *Foundation for responsible Robotics*). The other consists of companion pieces that inform efforts to devise more effective institutional responses to "climate refugee" resettlement and restitution problems through ampliative analyses of climate event modelling outcomes, existing international climate change and refugee response policies, and qualitative data from interviews with key leadership in refugee relief organizations in North America.

Most of my published work to date, has focused on illuminating how inferential methods in science can aid in practical decision-making about responding to emerging problems. My recent publications include papers that further develop parts of my dissertation—*A Philosophy of Theoretical Ecology for Environmental Policy* (2015). Those works examine the metaphysics and epistemology of model-based inferential methods used in ecology, and clarify how those methods work and how they can usefully inform significant political, ethical, and resource management decisions. In other recently published work, I analyze data-driven "weather event attribution" methods used in climate science to suss out implications and heuristic applications of those methods for pending UN climate-policy implementation decisions. I have published or have papers forthcoming in: *Philosophical Studies*; *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*; *Ethics & the Environment*; *Ethics, Policy, & Environment*; *Environmental Values*; *Science & Engineering Ethics*; and numerous collections.

My experiences with direct community engagement and outreach have mostly been attached to teaching and educational outreach projects. In fact, my current work exploring how to realize more effective responses to emerging social sustainability issues through work with refugee relief organizations and community activist groups, is an outgrowth of cooperating with such groups when teaching Applied Ethics courses that included substantive community-engaged service-learning components. In two of those courses, 'Social Justice & Sustainability' and 'Emerging Issues Urban Sustainability,' students completed academic projects in which they reflected on insights gleaned through working with community organizations and active non-for-profits. Examples of community outreach that happened in

those courses include: working with homeless at emergency shelters and employment programs; helping underserved populations through work with community food programs; and helping refugees through work with resettlement and community greenhouse programs. Another of my courses, 'Sustainability Practicum,' spawned a large number of "community-building," education, and outreach initiatives to address sustainability issues within the community. More, specifically, that course was an open-major, repeatable, course that essentially served as a platform for students to collectively devise and implement initiatives that addressed various environmental, economic, and social sustainability problems in the campus community and surrounding community in collaboration with community partners. Among other projects that came out of the iterations of that course, some interesting efforts that attended to aspects of environmental and social sustainability included:

'Refugee Relief Drive(s)': bi-annual events at which a large group of students (and myself) collected clothing, toiletries, food, and money that we donated to the International Institute to help incoming refugee families (*both events filled large trucks);

'Campus Clean-up(s)': bi-annual events at which a large group of students and recruited volunteers did environmental clean-up in areas on and around campus.

'Karma Project': an outreach initiative piloted by a female student who is a certified yoga instructor, consisting in her teaching "African yoga" to men and women in a local jail and drug rehab facility;

'Urban Youth Outreach': an initiative to put kids on track to stay in school, and on a career path—piloted by a first-generation Puerto Rican student from the Bronx. Entailed running college day-tours for groups of middle-schoolers from Buffalo City Schools;

'Post-it-ive Campaign': a media/performance-art campaign started by four female students, which used post-its and Instagram to deliver positive/inspirational daily messages to peers and included strategic efforts to get this type of "positive positing" to "go viral";

'Women Matter' events: essentially three public discussion events focusing on different aspects of institutionalized gender and race inequity that were organized and moderated by two students in collaboration with the Ethics Bowl Club (of which I was the faculty advisor);

'No More Hate' project(s): a collection of multimedia projects that provided information and educational resources to combat hate speech, hate crimes, and hatred based on misguided beliefs about gender, race, sexuality, culture, and religion.

Sustainability Information Campaign and 'Awareness Assessment(s)': A sustainability information fair organized in cooperation with the Sustainability Council was used as a platform for efforts to collect and report on awareness of sustainability issues in the campus community. Data collection was incentivized and made possible through the aid of two NSF grants.

My experiences organizing and leading community education initiatives include:

'Toward a Sustainable Buffalo: Public Lecture Series' (2016): A series of two speaker panel discussions—an Economic Justice panel and an Environmental and Climate Justice panel—organized in cooperation with the SUNY Buffalo State Graduate School and the NGO *OpenBuffalo*. Each session featured five community leaders, politicians, and industry and public works experts who provided information about local

Additional information about my research, teaching, and outreach work is available at:

<https://justindonhauser.weebly.com/>

environmental, economic, and sociopolitical sustainability issues and debated about innovative ways to make forward progress on those issues. In addition to organizing the events, I facilitated and refereed the panel discussion and discussion with community members and students in the audience at the events;

'The Machias Gravel Mine Phytoremediation Barrier Plan' community information session (2012): During my time as a PhD Research Fellow in the National Science Foundation's Ecosystem Restoration through Interdisciplinary Exchange (ERIE-IGERT) I worked on a team who developed the installation plan for a "green" ground-water contamination remediation system at a superfund site in Machias, NY (in collaboration with several environmental scientists and engineers, the EPA, and the Motorola Corporation). Upon completion of the plan, I helped organize and chair a "town hall" event to provide members of the community and local government information about the Phytoremediation Barrier, and its functionality, various environmental benefits, and educational uses;

'Contemporary Debates in Ecological Restoration: Public Lecture Series' (2011): A series of eight two-hour public seminars on debates in applied environmental ethics and issues pertaining to ecological restoration and environmental remediation. I lectured and refereed the discussion at all eight sessions; and co-ran three with Robert Earl and invited guest experts.