

SSSP news

Institute for Science, Society and Policy
March/April 2016



Message from the director of the ISSP



Dr. Monica Gattinger

Dear Readers,

The last couple of months have been filled with exciting activity and developments in Institute outreach, research, and teaching/training.

In outreach, we held our second panel of the year on evidence-based decision-making, focusing on the 'how' of putting this important commitment of the new federal government into practice. We also welcomed Dr. Nigel Cameron, Founding President of the Washington DC-based think tank, the [Center for Policy on Emerging Technologies](#), as ISSP Visiting Fulbright Research Chair in Science and Society. In addition to participating in our second panel of the year, Dr. Cameron gave a public lecture on the challenges confronting political leaders in the context of fast-paced technological change. Finally, I had the honour of addressing the [6th Annual Canada Excellence Research Chairs Summit](#) on the topic of Science and Society: Building Strong Links for the Future.

In research, the Institute launched @Risk, a new research project focusing on how to reconcile tensions that can arise among risk management, democratization, and evidence-based decision-making. The project has received seed funding from SSHRC, and

will compare experiences across health, energy, and genomics. We also released [Fair Enough: Assessing Community Confidence in Energy Authorities](#), an interim report of a broader research study exploring local communities' trust in energy decision-making. The study is part of [Positive Energy](#), a three year action-research study on public confidence in energy development.

In teaching and training, students in the ISSP's Collaborative Master's program in Science, Society and Policy, completed their capstone project with ISSP Core Member Professor Marc Saner. As part of this process, the students presented their research findings to senior officials at the United States Embassy. The Institute is also pleased to partner with the University of Waterloo and Concordia University to host [Science Outside the Lab North](#) at uOttawa in May. In addition, we are partnering with Mitacs on the new [Canadian Science Policy Fellowship programme](#), which will admit its first cohort in the fall of 2016. The ISSP will provide training to the Fellows in a variety of key areas, including science policy, machinery of government, and the policy process.

Of course, these activities are only the tip of the iceberg: Institute members are all highly active in research, teaching/training, and outreach in their own spheres of expertise. And our network is growing: I am delighted to welcome our new Core Members, Professor David Grondin and Professor Jeremy Kerr (uOttawa), and our new Professional Affiliate, Dr. Natalie Brender (Genome Canada).

Sincerely,
Monica Gattinger



Spotlight: Dr. Daniel Paré



Dr. Daniel Paré

This issue of the SSP News shines the spotlight on an ISSP Core Member: Dr. **Daniel Paré**, Associate Director of Academic Outreach, and Assistant Professor in both the Department of Communication, and the School of Information Studies (ÉSIS).

Dr. Paré's areas of ongoing research and policy-related work focus on social, economic, political and technical issues arising from innovations in information and communication technologies (ICTs) in developing and industrialized countries. These days much of his time is taken up

with his work on the SSHRC-supported Geothink.ca Project, examining the implications of increasing two-way exchanges of locational information between citizens and governments and the way in which technology shapes, and is shaped by, this exchange.

"Emergent digital platforms are altering the ways in which different levels of government engage with their constituents," he said. "Civic engagement is no longer constrained by

jurisdictional boundaries and/or the physical presence of individual actors. People can communicate with government departments and agencies from anywhere at anytime. It's crucially important, therefore, to examine and assess processes of infrastructure development and their impact on government-citizen relations."

Daniel's current work is investigating how Canadian Municipal Governments use Open Data catalogues to communicate with people, and the extent to which these platforms enable users to, in turn, communicate with municipal governments. "I'm particularly interested in understanding gaps that rise between the design and implementation of Open Data platforms by municipal governments," he said. "These design-reality gaps are comprised of various dimensions - for example, information, technological, procedural, organizational objectives, skills, management structures, fiscal resources - and have direct implications for both the ways in which, and the extent to which, government-citizen communications are transformed by emergent digital platforms."

[Website](#)



15 March 2016: Speakers Series: Dr. Nigel Cameron



Dr. Nigel Cameron

ISSP Fulbright Visiting Research Chair in Science and Society, Dr. **Nigel Cameron**, founding president of the [Center for Policy on Emerging Technologies](#), gave a public lecture on how to address the challenges of political leadership in the complex and ever-changing context of emerging technologies on 15 March 2016.

[Fulbright Canada](#) was in attendance, as were many professors, students, ISSP researchers and fellows, and government representatives.

7 March 2016: Panel - Evidence-Based Decision-Making: From the What to the How

ISSP Director, Professor **Monica Gattinger**, chaired another [panel discussion](#) - the second in our series - exploring the various approaches to implementing the new federal government's commitment to evidence-based decision-making on Monday, 7 March 2016 at uOttawa. Panelists included: Dr. **Nigel Cameron**, Founding President, Center for Policy on Emerging Technologies, Washington DC, and ISSP Fulbright Visiting Research Chair in Science and Society; Professor **Heather Douglas**, Waterloo Research Chair in Science and Society, University of Waterloo, and Fellow, ISSP; and Dr. **Robert Walker**, Chair, MEOPAR Network of Centres of Excellence, Dalhousie University. Professor **Scott Findlay**,

Associate Professor, Biology, uOttawa and Co-founder, Evidence for Democracy, served as discussant.

NOTE: ISSP Senior Research Associate Dr. **Stewart Fast** wrote a [blog](#) following the panel.

A planned third panel discussion will explore the potential for open-data initiatives, including open access to journals and open data to transform evidence-based decision-making.



Left to Right: Drs. Monica Gattinger, Nigel Cameron, Heather Douglas, Robert Walker, and Scott Findlay



ISSP @Risk Project Launched and Receives SSHRC Grant

We are pleased to announce the launch and initial funding of a new ISSP research project called "@Risk: Risk Management, Democratization and Evidence-Based Decision-Making." The @Risk project focuses on situations where experts and public stakeholders differ in their perceptions of risk, which can lead to serious consequences, including putting current societal approaches to risk management themselves at risk. The project was launched on 10 March 2016 with a series of meetings involving faculty and practitioners, culminating in a public lecture entitled "Where did all the baby bottles go? Canada's regulation of BPA and democratic risk management" by Wilfrid Laurier University Professor **Simon Kiss**, together with comments from senior level practitioner discussant Dr. **Brenda Kenny** (Adjunct Professor, Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary, past CEO of the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association). Following the lecture, Dr. Simon Kiss wrote a [blog](#) on his research in this field.

In early April 2016, ISSP* was awarded a SSHRC Connection Grant to hold a workshop as part of the @Risk project. The workshop will take place on the 2nd and 3rd of May 2016 and involve researchers and practitioners from across Canada. Strong emphasis will be placed on developing collaborations for the next step in the research process: a Partnership Development Grant application to SSHRC in the fall. The objective is to secure support for a two- or three-year research project that will draw on experiences across three sectors - energy, health, and genomics - and examine the question: "How can risk management

frameworks and broader policy and regulatory decisions be made in ways that respond to public values and concerns whilst adhering to evidence-based decision-making?"



Left to right: Drs. Monica Gattinger, Simon Kiss, Brenda Kenny

We are pleased to acknowledge early financial and partner support from [Genome Canada](#), the [Geological Survey of Canada](#), and the [Faculty of Social Sciences](#) for the workshop. ISSSP is actively seeking additional partners and collaborators for the next steps of @Risk. Please contact Dr. Stewart Fast, Senior Research Associate, ISSSP, to learn more (sfast@uottawa.ca).

*Connection Grant Lead Applicant: Professor **Monica Gattinger**, Director of ISSSP. Co-applicants: Professor **Rukhsana Ahmed**, Department of Communication and Professor **Simon Kiss**, Wilfrid Laurier University. Collaborator: Dr. **Stewart Fast**, Senior Research Associate, ISSSP. Partner organizations: Genome Canada, and the Geological Survey of Canada.

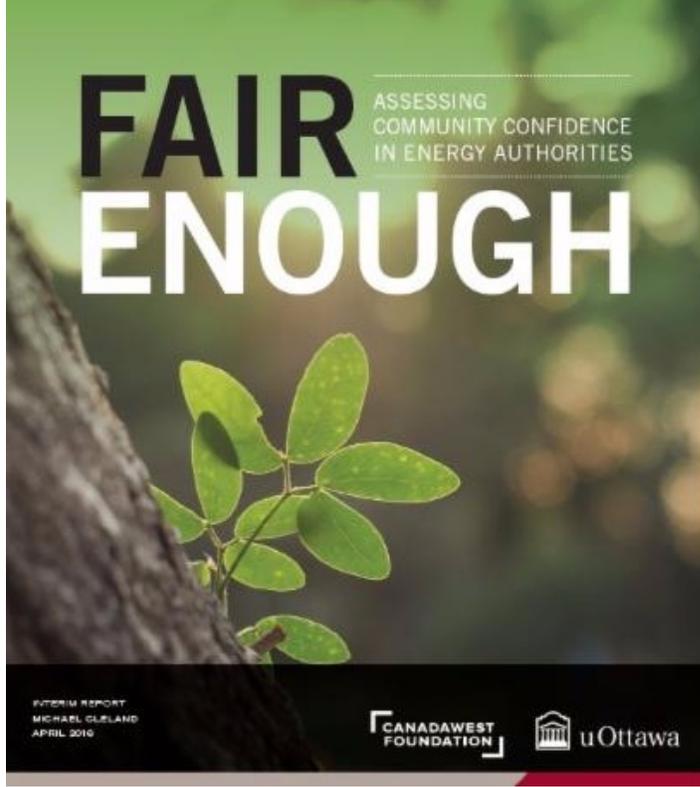
Photo credit: Laura Nourallah, Research Assistant, Positive Energy



Is Fair Enough Good Enough?

The [Positive Energy](#) project, in collaboration with the [Canada West Foundation](#), recently released a report entitled [FAIR ENOUGH: Assessing Community Confidence in Energy Authorities](#). The report is a compilation of views expressed by a diverse group of energy leaders - environmentalists, regulators, policy makers, Indigenous leaders and senior executives from energy companies - who were interviewed about trust in public energy authorities. The report was authored by uOttawa Senior Fellow **Mike Cleland**, along with uOttawa doctoral candidate **Laura Nourallah** and ISSSP Senior Research Associate Dr. **Stewart Fast**.

"Our research reveals that the



decision-making system is not "broken," said Cleland, "but trust in the decision-making system is lacking. Two of the main reasons for this are that, one, decisions are hobbled by unresolved policy issues beyond the regulatory system, particularly on climate change and the rights and responsibilities of Indigenous communities, and two, there is a lack of adequate forums for community engagement and a lack of adequate and accessible information."

The report includes a framework of possible reforms that may guide policy and regulation. Research is now being carried out in six Canadian communities that have faced proposals for energy-infrastructure projects ranging from wind farms and hydro projects to pipelines and power lines. The final

report of the study, featuring the findings from the case studies, will be released in the fall of 2016.

"The traction we are getting with this initiative is growing, and we hope it will provide an illustration of the kind of important contribution the University of Ottawa can make to salient questions of public policy," said ISSP Director **Monica Gattinger**, also Chair of uOttawa's Positive Energy project.

Microbeads: "Tip of the Toxic Plastic-berg?" Regulation, Alternatives, and Future Implications

Microbeads are small plastic particles used as exfoliates in consumer and personal care products such as shampoos, soaps, lip gloss, and toothpaste. They also find application in abrasives, cleaning products, and medical devices. A recent [literature review](#) of the issue was carried out by uOttawa students in the ISSP's Collaborative Master's in Science, Society and Policy under the direction of former ISSP Director and Professor Marc Saner as part of the graduate Capstone Practicum of the master's program.

The literature review covers three questions in the context of microbeads. (1) What is the comparative state-of-affairs of the current and planned federal regulations in Canada and the United States? (2) What can we expect



Left to right: Bud Locklear (Special Energy and Climate Advisor, US Embassy), Acacia Paton-Young (ISSP Collaborative Master's program and Master's student in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs), Rachel So (Environment, Water and Fisheries Specialist, US Embassy), Professor Marc Saner (uOttawa), Danielle Monosson (Deputy Counselor, Energy & Environment, US Embassy), Simon Lester (ISSP Collaborative Master's program and Master's student at the Institute of the Environment), Nicholas Girard (ISSP Collaborative Master's program and Master's student in Geography, Environment and Geomatics)

to see in terms of replacement products and are there any safety concerns with those? (3) How does the current concern over microbeads in personal care products relate to micro-plastics from other sources, for example, from the breakdown over larger plastic products?

On 14 April 2016, the students presented their report to senior officials at the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa.

Photo credit: David Birdsey, Counselor, Energy & Environment, U.S. Embassy

New ISSP Network Members

Associate Professor David Grondin of Political Studies has become a new Core Member of the ISSP. He is an Associate Professor in the School of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa (specialized in International Relations, American studies and critical security/military/war studies). He is above all fascinated by the relationship between culture, science, technology, and society, power/knowledge, militarization, and security in the US context, which explains his strong focus on everything that deals with the US national security state and the transformation of the American ways of war in the digital age.



Dr. David Grondin



Dr. Jeremy T. Kerr

Biology has become a new Core Member of the ISSP. Professor Kerr is the incoming President of the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution and holds the University Research Chair in Macroecology and Conservation. His contributions to understanding how climate change and habitat losses harm biodiversity are highlighted across the spectrum of global media, including the New York Times, Guardian, CBC's The National, BBC, NPR, The Washington Post, Le Monde, The Globe and Mail, and many others. Professor Kerr has also played a public role over many years in contributing scientific evidence for policies and legislation, and he has defended science integrity in Canada by speaking at the Stand Up for Science demonstration on Parliament Hill, helping author a Parliamentary motion on science integrity, and

writing op-ed contributions to The Globe and Mail and Toronto Star. Professor Kerr is a Fellow of the Science Leadership Program, a member of the International Boreal Science Panel, and was elected to the exclusive Global Young Academy.

Dr. **Natalie Brender**, National Director of Genomics in Society at Genome Canada, has become a new Professional Affiliate member of the ISSP. From 2008 to 2015 she was a public policy writer/researcher working with government, professional and non-profit clients; a research associate and publications coordinator at uOttawa's Centre for International Policy Studies (2011-2015); and a columnist for the Toronto Star on Canada and international affairs (2013-2014). Previously she was senior writer and policy advisor to the President, and senior research associate in the Education and Learning Division, at the Conference Board of Canada (2005-2008), as well as a policy advisor and speechwriter for Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs (2002-04). From 1996-2002 she was an assistant professor at Wesleyan University (Connecticut), specializing in ethics and political philosophy. She holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from Johns Hopkins University.



Dr. Natalie Brender

ISSP Network Member Activities

On 12 April 2016, Senior Fellow **Michael Cleland** was the first expert witness to appear before the Senate Transport and Communications Committee, which commenced a new study on the transport of crude oil in Canada. Mr. Cleland presented the results of [Positive Energy's Fair Enough](#) report on community confidence in energy authorities. The proceedings can be watched [here](#).

ISSP Director, Professor Monica Gattinger, gave a presentation entitled "Science and Society: Building Strong Links for the Future" at the [6th Annual Canada Excellence Research Chairs \(CERC\) Summit](#) on 11 April 2016 at the



Dr. Monica Garringer

University of Ottawa. The CERC Summit brings together CERC holders from across Canada to share the most recent advances of their research programs with the greater public. For this iteration of the CERC Summit, the theme was Science and Society.

Professor Rees Kassen gave a presentation at The InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) Conference on Science Advice and General Assembly 2016 in Hermanus, South Africa. Called "[DIY SynBio: A New Geography of Research.](#)"

Former ISSP Director and Professor Marc Saner spoke on "[How to Build a Culture of Safety](#)" at the first-ever Canadian Do-It-Yourself Biology Summit on 16 March 2016, hosted by the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#).



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