

SIGNALS

NEWSLETTER

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Hello and happy Spring to everyone in the SIGNALS community!

Over the last three months, the SIGNALS Executive has been hard at work thinking of how we can continue to bring our alumni - new and old - together in meaningful ways. As part of this work, we have been planning our annual SIGNALS BBQ, which unlike in previous years, will be held on Friday May 13th rather than in September. Given the ongoing uncertainty around COVID-19, we made the decision to hold the BBQ in May to free up space to host the SIGNALS Gala in September. It is our hope that by doing this, we will have an opportunity to connect in person in an outdoor setting this Spring and also allow for more time to plan for a safe (and fun) Gala in the Fall. The Executive would also like to extend our greatest thanks to past SIGNALS president John Stronach for volunteering his backyard for the BBQ. Details about the BBQ and Gala will be shared on social media and via email as the events approach.

In celebration of International Women's Day on March 8th, SIGNALS also joined forces with the Carleton Sustainable Energy Research Centre (CSERC) to host a Women In Clean Energy Panel event, where we had the great opportunity to hear from five incredible women in the energy and environment space. In keeping with the spirit of International Women's Day, this volume features a "rundown" on the panel event, our first alumni feature - Kendra Sakaguchi, who graciously sat down for an interview with our current President Leia Jones, to discuss the questions covered at the event, and a spotlight on one of the impressive students who is the managing editor of this year's edition of ISEMA - Carmella Munyuzangabo.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the SIGNALS newsletter - the next one can be expected over the Summer. If you have any questions about upcoming events, have any ideas, or would just like to chat, please don't hesitate to reach out to anyone of us on the Executive (or reach out on social media) - we would love to hear from you!

We look forward to seeing you and having the opportunity to connect at the SIGNALS BBQ on May 13!

All the best,
The SIGNALS Executive Team

Newsletter Highlights

Following Up on the CSERC x SIGNALS International Women's Day Event

CSERC x SIGNALS - Women in Clean Energy Panel

Alumni Feature - Kendra Sakaguchi

SIGNALS Website Relaunch!

Get in Touch!

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NEWS, UPDATES, & UPCOMING EVENTS

- **May 13, 2022:** SIGNALS BBQ Returns. Time & Location to be communicated via SIGNALS social media. [RSVP here!](#)
- **September 2022:** The SIGNALS Gala is back! Interested in helping out? Email us at president@signalsnetwork.ca (date & time TBD).
- **ISEMA VOL. 15 is launching in May!** Follow along on the [ISEMA Website!](#)



Celebrating International Women's Day CSERC x SIGNALS Women in Clean Energy Panel

On March 10th, 2022, in celebration of International Women's Day, SIGNALS, with the Carleton Sustainable Energy Research Centre (CSERC), hosted a virtual panel highlighting four incredible women in the clean energy space (see below). The event, facilitated by Professor Alex Mallett, touched on our panelists' career paths, the importance of skills and knowledge development, career expectations, setbacks and opportunities, the power of strong support systems, and above all, our panelists' advice.

We also had the chance to hear our panelists share their views on where they see opportunities for women in the energy space as we move forward with the global energy transition, how we can create space for more women and other less conventional players in the energy space, and the steps they think are imperative as we move forward with the energy transition and fighting climate change.

Want to hear what our panelists had to say at the event? A recording can be found on [CSERC's website](#).

OUR PANELISTS



Kristen Schell,
Assistant Professor,
Mechanical and
Aerospace
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Carleton University



Natalie Irwin, Sr.
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Efficiency,
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**Funto
Oshumkinde,**
Analyst, Peak
Power energy



Maya Papineau,
Associate
Professor
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ALUMNI FEATURE – KENDRA SAKAGUCHI



SIGNALS President Leia Jones recently had a chance to (virtually) sit down with Carleton alum, Kendra Sakaguchi to pick her brain about her career, advice, and being a woman in the energy and environment space. Having previously spent seven years at the British High Commission, Kendra is now Deputy Director, International at Natural Resources Canada (NRCan).

Below is a summary of Kendra's insights on the questions asked at our Women in Clean Energy Event.

Q1: What skills have you learned that have helped you in your career? Is there anything that you think you're missing?

Being trained as an engineer, Kendra was taught that there is *always* an answer, and only one answer. But, as she's learned that's not always the approach in the policy sphere, and through her experiences, Kendra has learned that having multiple solutions to a problem, is *okay*. Even more, you can have an opinion on a solution without irrefutable proof that it's the best – because the real world is messy and complicated, and you can never be sure you're 100% right.

Recognizing that we can never know all the answers, some of the skills Kendra has had to pick up along the way in her career include French, international relations, and the day-to-day workings of international relations, government, and policy.

Q2: What advice would you give to your younger self, or someone just starting their career?

Kendra's advice... Don't worry about your title – focus on the skills and experiences your role offers. At the end of the day, you can have an amazing title but not be learning new skills. It's these experiences and learning opportunities (especially at the beginning of your career) that really matter, not the words after your name.

Starting her career before the climate space became what it is today, Kendra also noted that it's important to remember that just because there might not be a job in the sector you want to work in right now – that doesn't mean there never will be. If you can see a problem to be solved, there will be an opportunity to carve out a role for yourself.

Q3: What has helped get you to where you are today?

Kendra credits her "vision for the kind of experience [she] wanted to get – but with the absence of any kind of job [in mind]," and "following [her] interests with any of expectations" as part of what's helped her get to where she is. Further credit goes to her "great circle of gal pals and

friends, a great family, and some amazing bosses." She ended by noting that "it takes a village to have a career. Try to follow your interests and passions, which will open up opportunities you didn't know existed."

Q4: To what extent has being a woman impacted your research or your work? (What is something you've learned?)

One thing that Kendra raised is the male-dominant nature of the energy sector, and the difficulty that comes along with building networks as a woman within this demographic. She noted "it's hard [as a woman] to find mentors in certain sectors. People will take you under their wing because you remind them of themselves. It's structurally harder to find mentorship when you don't appear to share an obvious connection to senior management."

In addition to difficulties finding mentors to guide her through her career, Kendra also recalled experiences of "not being listened to, people not even looking at you in meetings, because it's assumed you're just the notetaker." She also shared a story of her time when, as senior staff, she asked about catering options for a meeting. "I was told 'well you can always bake cookies and bring them in,'" – something she says would never have been said to one of her male colleagues, highlighting the challenges that some women still face in the workforce today.

Q5: What opportunities do you see for women in energy moving forward? How do you think we can create space and opportunities for more women and other less conventional players in the energy field?

In response to this, Kendra said "I think as the new generation comes up. It's going to be easier to take people with you." She observed that she thinks that "we are moving away from the divorce of energy and climate as two separate issues." Similar to this, she also sees "the divorce of biodiversity and climate starting to end. As fields start bumping up against each other there is going to be more room for people with different skills and unconventional backgrounds to shine."

ALUMNI FEATURE – KENDRA SAKAGUCHI

Q6: Has there been a setback that you've faced throughout your education or career that you now realize has been beneficial?

In reflecting on her career to date, Kendra drew on her experience securing full-time work, she noted "when I first started my career, I couldn't get a permanent job at NRCan. I just had back-to-back three-month contracts." As a result, she was consistently applying for jobs, until she was offered a permanent position at NRCan at the same time she got her job at the British High Commission. In the end, Kendra took the job at the High Commission, and looking back says "it was the best thing for me, but at the time – it was not the most fun."

Q7: Has anything along your path to date differed from your expectations (good or bad)? How?

To this, Kendra noted that "going into my masters and specializing in the environment" strayed from her expectations - "I didn't think my policy knowledge was deep, but I was surprised by how much I already knew." She was also surprised at the space in there was (and is) in the area to grow, and how "at the time [she] thought there would be answers to [her] research questions" - but they didn't exist "and still don't."

Kendra also noted that she was surprised at how much of her work in the international space has been focused on logistics.

Q8: As a woman, what do you want to see as we move through our energy transition?

"Energy and climate are such wicked problems, and it is so difficult to look at it holistically, and I would like to at least see us try to measure some of it."

Kendra also cited the difficulties around measuring impact on society and women. She suggests that "to fully include women and all marginalized groups we need to know how we are starting, and if we don't start measuring then we'll never get our answers." So, in moving forward, we need to know who is getting money for projects, "who are the researchers we are funding?" – these are some of the places we can start.

Q9: What people have supported and inspired you along your path?

In reflecting on this question, Kendra attributed a lot to the "great women that I have met along the way who are parents and somehow making it all work – holding high power jobs, being moms, but also being human-being all at the same time."

Finally, Kendra also mentioned the few people she's met along the way who have been much more senior to her, who have been incredible and kind, and very interested in her work. She says that "this is the model I seek to emulate" as she moves through her career.

We Want to Hear Your Stories!

Send us your updates, good news stories, milestones and we'll be sure to share across our community!

Want to share? Email us at president@signalsnetwork.ca

ALUMNI FEATURES

SIGNALS wants to feature profiles on our Alumni and Professors and the work you're doing!

We hope this will help connect our community and showcase the variety of fields and scope of topics that our members are focused on in the energy and environment space.

STUDENTS CORNER



Carmella Munyuzangabo

MA Sustainable Energy, Carleton University '22

Carmella is a graduate student in the Sustainable Energy program at the School of Public Policy and Administration. She is interested in conducting and delivering equity-centred energy policy research and solutions. Carmella is currently completing her final research paper on the role of civil society organizations in advancing a just transition in Canada. She also works as a Policy Analyst at the Treasury Board Secretariat, in the area of greening transportation. This Fall, Carmella will pursue a PhD in Public Policy at Northeastern University.

ISEMA Volume 15

This year, Micah and Carmella will present volume 15 of the graduate journal, *ISEMA: Perspectives on Innovation, Science, and*. This volume brings together several research papers that dive into the relevant societal, environmental, technical, and policy aspects of climate change and energy systems. We were able to create volume 15 due to the efforts of the editorial team and the many reviewers who took part in the peer-review process. We look forward to sharing it with you in May!

Be sure to keep an eye out for the launch at the [ISEMA Website](#)

OUR PERSPECTIVES

Every quarter, a member of the SIGNALS Executive team, or a guest writer will share their perspective on a current, emerging, or exciting energy or environment topic!

Are you interested in sharing your perspective on a topic? Is there something specific you want to hear about?

We would be happy to hear from you! Please contact us at president@signalsnetwork.ca or reach out to Jamie Ness directly at jamie_ness@hotmail.com.

SIGNALS WEBSITE

You can find the new SIGNALS website at Carleton.ca/signals where you can meet your SIGNALS Executive, hear about upcoming events, find recent job postings in the sustainability field, and read our newsletter!

Psst...You'll also find some sweet throwback pictures of Spring Banquets Past, so it's definitely worth a visit!

JOBS, JOBS, JOBS!

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SIGNALS – send us
the details and
we'll be sure to
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