

Leadership for the Ecozoic

STRATEGIC PLAN

Final Draft

April 25, 2018

OVERVIEW

The Ecozoic represents a vision for the future founded on mutually enhancing relationships between human societies and the global community of life through the lens of social justice. Leadership for the Ecozoic (L4E) is a global partnership initially based at McGill University and the University of Vermont to work toward that vision by: (1) advancing transdisciplinary scholarship in select doctoral programs to educate and empower new leaders for the Ecozoic; (2) co-creating a global research-to-action network to heal and restore Earth's life support systems and to define and foster a different mode of inhabiting the Earth, respectful of life's myriad ways of knowing and being; and (3) mobilizing and focusing higher education resources and communication on mitigating multi-faceted, human-induced, planetary declines in life support capacity.

L4E builds upon the success of [Economics for the Anthropocene](#) (E4A), a graduate research and training partnership that in 2018 includes 25 institutions, 80 collaborators, and 40 graduate student fellows. L4E is a new broader conceptualization which will continue to support joint courses, lectures, research projects, and service on doctoral committees as we work towards establishing a "global campus" that brings together an expanded community to envision, educate, and implement new, just, and existing pathways towards the Ecozoic. To realize this vision, L4E will establish a set of Network Strategy Centers (NSCs) in partnership with universities, NGOs and existing global networks. The transition to L4E from E4A will include increased focus on implementing, communicating and advocating for paradigm shift outcomes through internships, action-research projects, long-term partnerships and strategic communications.

An international steering committee was assembled to facilitate a process of broad consultation to formulate this structured yet adaptable strategic plan. The following plan begins with our central premises, guiding principles and theory of change. We then outline the mission, key objectives, and cross-cutting strategies of the partnership. Next, we present an organizational overview, outlining roles of partnering individuals and institutions. More detailed guiding principles and aspects of our theory of change are included as appendices. Also in the appendix are guidelines for a strategic communication and advocacy plan, which will be fully developed in the first year.

INTO THE ECOZOIC

“The most difficult transition to make is from an anthropocentric to a biocentric norm of progress. If there is to be any true progress, then the entire life community must progress. Any progress of the human at the expense of the larger life community must ultimately lead to a diminishment of human life itself.” – Thomas Berry¹

The current geological era, the Cenozoic, has been characterized by a vast expansion in the diversity and number of living things over a period of about 66 million years. However, since the dawn of the interglacial epoch of the Holocene roughly 12,000 years ago, humans have increasingly dominated the Earth, to the detriment of many species. First through agriculture and creation of hierarchical societies, then through an industrial revolution enabled largely by fossil fuels, the modern era is now characterized by exponential human population growth, vast transformation of the land, water, and atmosphere, and a sixth mass extinction. In the latter half of the 20th century the “great acceleration”² of human domination of Earth systems became unavoidably evident; this period is now widely referred to as the Anthropocene, the age of humans.

This anthropocentric era and narrative has arisen from an imperial legacy which has colonized lands, social systems, and minds. Its dominant economy is based on extraction, exploitation, violence, and human population growth which is dangerously disrupting Earth system functioning. Its worldview emphasizes individualism, consumerism, independence, liberty without responsibility, hierarchy, reductionism, linear thinking, commodification, privatization, linguistic imperialism, human exceptionalism and patriarchy. The foundational governance model is militarism and violence, in support of universalizing a privileged group experience that has historically ignored or misunderstood the long-standing resistance and liberation struggles by non-dominant peoples. The very language constructs and lexicon of this anthropocentric worldview limits imagination and reinforces destructive human patterns to the impoverishment of all life on Earth.

The Leadership for the Ecozoic (L4E) partnership is a systemic response to higher education's role in perpetuating this human dominance narrative. Particularly in the Global North, higher education predominantly features and legitimates one way of knowing and being in the majority of its teachings in economics, governance, ethics, religion and other disciplines. With L4E, we are building a global collaboration to design, advocate, and live a more scientifically informed, humble path forward into the Ecozoic, an aspirational idea inspired by the writings of Thomas Berry. He wrote in what might be called the organic tradition with roots in the Hebrew Bible and

¹ Thomas Berry, “Bioregions: The Context for Re-inhabiting the Earth,” p. 165 in *The Dream of the Earth*, Sierra Club Books, Oakland, CA, 1988.

² The “great acceleration” is described by 24 planetary indicators developed by the [International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme](#) and documents a period of recent “human activity, predominantly the global economic system, [that] is now the prime driver of change in the Earth System.”

pre-Baconian medieval traditions. Other leaders in this tradition include, Henri Bergson, Albert Schweitzer, Alfred North Whitehead, Aldo Leopold, Annie Dillard, Mary Oliver, Emily Dickenson and many others. Looked at over the course of history and diversity of human cultures it is the “organic way” that is most common and fruitful and the current industrial model the exception.

In envisioning the Ecozoic, Berry recognized the critical role of universities in that they “must decide whether they will continue training persons for temporary survival in the declining Cenozoic Era or whether they will begin educating students for the emerging Ecozoic.” Thus L4E has a **core mission to facilitate a paradigm shift towards the Ecozoic within higher education and in collaboration with civil society**. The **foundational premises** of our partnership are that: (1) humans are interconnected with all life as a co-evolved species; (2) the Earth system has provided abundance and can support a thriving community of life based on gratitude, celebration and reciprocity; and (3) diversity of lifeways and of lifeforms leads to resiliency and flourishing. An evolutionary narrative grounded in contemporary scientific understanding of the cosmos underpins a new story of humans embedded in a majestic universe. New life patterns re-emerging as expressions of harmony, competition, cooperation and creativity are found throughout the human experience in language, art, poetry, food, culture, practice, and ritual, and provide a means to remember and reinforce viable human lifeways.

A global movement that builds a new society will emanate from a solutions orientation that prioritizes, creates, tests and advocates for varied pathways into the Ecozoic with a spirit of possibility, courage, positivity and open-mindedness. To support, communicate, and animate this cultural revisioning, the L4E partnership builds on **guiding principles**³ of reimagining the possible; creating and living in learning communities of collaboration, trust, love, care and thoughtfulness; valuing truth and integrity in our collective work; prioritizing the leadership of young people who will be living in the future we co-create; encouraging humility, questioning, wonder, adaptation, and continuous learning in our journey together; and believing that through strategic, tenacious, and nonviolent work we will succeed in enabling the Ecozoic.

Our **theory of change** to envision and enable this new era is rooted in a belief that higher education has a moral imperative to redirect itself from “training persons for temporary survival in the declining Cenozoic Era” to “educating students for the emerging Ecozoic.” University students, especially graduate students, are well positioned to critique and develop alternatives to the structure and worldview of predominant human systems. L4E is therefore committed to investing in doctoral programs to train emerging change-makers and prepare them for key influential positions in academic, government, and advocacy organizations. Key elements of doctoral training will include research teams on Ecozoic pathways, immersion in place-based partnerships and research-to-action domains, and opportunities to test, learn, and share solutions through a global network of campuses and civil society partners. L4E will emphasize integrative science of socio-ecological system analysis, transdisciplinary research methods, strategic communication frameworks, and social movement mobilization and leadership.

³ Our full Guiding Principles and Theory of Change documents are included as appendices to this strategic plan.

Key disciplines for higher education reform will include the disciplines of economics and finance, law and governance, and ethics and religion. The predominant conceptualization and applied practice of these influential fields unreflectively perpetuate 17th century pre-scientific and 2000 year-old mythological metaphysical constructs that place the human at the center of the universe reinforcing an esteemed “duty” to conquer and exploit life and the Earth for short-term and exclusively human benefits. These foundational normative disciplines inform, underpin and legitimate professions of practice in agriculture, food science, forestry, technology, engineering, population dynamics, policy and political science, business and trade and other domains. In response to this recognition, L4E will work to create and enable new patterns and constructs within and among existing disciplines embedded in ecological knowledge.

We will acknowledge and confront this destructive path and invite others in academia to join us in developing constructive and compelling alternatives whereby higher education can regain its leadership in empowering students toward a positive future in harmony with the rest of earthly life.

PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The overarching mission of L4E is to facilitate the paradigm shift needed to transition to the Ecozoic. In beginning this work through this initial Strategic Plan, L4E will develop an evolving and solution-oriented program of (1) research and support for doctoral students, (2) strategic communication and advocacy and 3) development of a diverse and growing global community of practice.

Core L4E Structure



Objective 1 – Develop and sustain transdisciplinary research agendas. To enable our approach to doctoral education, the L4E community aims to support transdisciplinary research designed to develop Ecozoic-oriented solutions to local-to-global challenges grounded in the tension between the current dominant anthropocentric worldview and the L4E vision. The regional settings of L4E Network Strategy Centers will provide key venues for place-based research, co-designed with non-academic partners. L4E will also support complementary and broader integrated cross-discipline research initiatives on the challenges for law, governance, economics, finance, ethics and other disciplines in the transition to the Ecozoic.

Objective 2 – Build and nourish a global campus network for the Ecozoic. L4E will initially focus its efforts on PhD programs in North America, with McGill University and the University of Vermont as the first L4E Network Strategy Centers (described in more detail in the Organization and Governance section below). Over time, L4E intends to include other Network Strategy Centers (NSCs) in the United States and the rest of the world to create a virtual “global campus” for the core academic elements of L4E. The L4E community of practice will integrate this global campus within a broader global network of organizations and institutions (academic and non-academic) aligned with the L4E vision, mission and guiding principles.

Objective 3 – Co-create and implement strategic communication and advocacy work. The development and delivery of our diverse and creative program will be communicated through not only academic publications but also a broad range of media and advocacy approaches. The L4E community will include and link to collaborators and organizations with knowledge and proven experience in strategic communications and advocacy. L4E will engage these partners in training all L4E students in these domains. Appendix 3 describes in more detail L4E's objectives in regard to strategic communications and advocacy.

These core objectives work to co-create knowledge, action, and advocacy through bridging with decision-makers, economic initiatives, media and advocacy organizations through internships, career development and job placement, and participatory action research. Key action domains and linkages are highlighted as follows.

To achieve its mission and objectives, L4E will implement a set of complementary, cross-cutting strategies.

Strategy 1 – Enable emergence of a community of practice around the L4E vision. L4E will provide a fertile setting for the emergence of a growing community of practice centered on transitioning to a hopeful pathway to the Ecozoic. A community of practice is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. A community of practice requires: (1) a shared domain, (2) a community, and (3) a practice. L4E will enable the establishment of community of practice with the shared domain being co-creation of the Ecozoic; the

community consisting of all L4E participants (academic and non-academic) and like-minded people, organizations and institutions; and the practice centered on L4E's broad approach to research, teaching and learning, and strategic communication and advocacy. L4E will also interact with professions of practice, including those organized around sectoral activities such as forestry, extraction, agriculture, etc., and those organized around disciplines such as law, economics, and philosophy.

Strategy 2 – Provide cutting-edge degree programs for L4E PhD students. L4E PhD students will be central to L4E initiatives. The university-based Network Strategy Centers (NSCs) in L4E will partner in delivering joint courses in a core L4E curriculum, linking L4E campuses with high quality web-based platforms. Required L4E courses are expected to include:

- Three or more full-term courses in the first year, on the foundations of the transition to the Ecozoic;
- An intensive two-week summer field course led by one or more NSCs on a mutually agreed theme (e.g. water, food systems, energy systems); and
- Student-led, second year seminars on topics related to the L4E vision, mission and guiding principles.

A key benefit for L4E PhD students will be access to a committed global network of academic scholars and other holders of knowledge for advice and support for their research. To enhance their scholarship, L4E students will also be centrally engaged in L4E's strategic communications and advocacy initiatives.

Strategy 3 – Implement participatory place-based research-to-action projects. The Network Strategy Centers (NSCs) will aim to develop and implement place-based research-to-action initiatives grounded in their respective regions and/or strategically selected sites. These will include L4E students and academics as well as relevant holders of knowledge and other members of the region. Foundational to these initiatives will be an understanding and commitment to co-creation of knowledge that includes the full L4E community and its partners and collaborators.

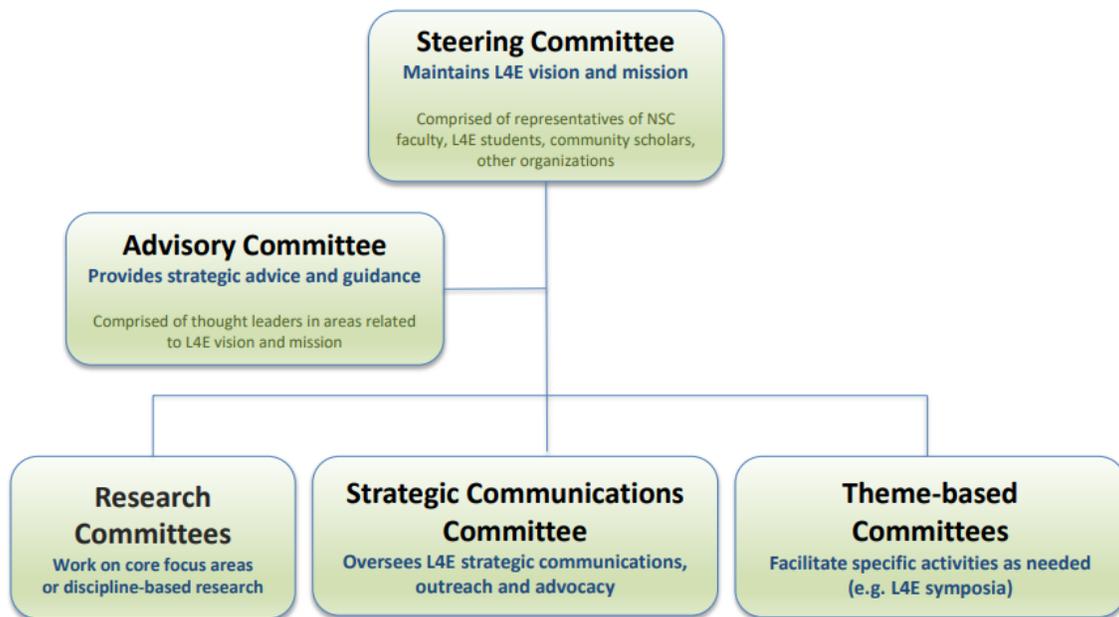
Strategy 4 – Engage the full L4E community in strategic communications and advocacy. The PhD students in L4E will become conversant in essential strategic communications concepts and applied expertise. To this end, L4E will include partners and collaborators skilled in strategic communications. L4E and its students will employ this knowledge in promoting the vision and narrative of the Ecozoic, student research outcomes, and the collective work of the L4E community of practice.

PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The L4E partnership will have an adaptive structure and governance approach designed to enable a growing international community. L4E governance will be grounded in our guiding principles and will provide mutually supportive training and research to co-create knowledge, advocacy and action. This section describes the overall L4E partnership structure, its individual and institutional constituents, partnership governance and the basic framework for measuring L4E's success.

Overview of L4E Partnership Structure

Roles, responsibilities and interrelationships of key institutions, individual participants and committees in leading and engaging in L4E are illustrated in the following organizational and governance structure.



Key Constituents of L4E

Key institutions in the L4E partnership include:

- A set of universities that form Network Strategy Centers (NSCs), starting with McGill University and the University of Vermont, with PhD programs and faculty to support the partnership, as described below;
- Other non-NSC academic institutions that support the participation of individual PhD students or faculty in L4E courses and activities; and
- Non-academic organizations NSCs that support the participation of their staff or members in L4E activities, such as activist/advocacy organizations, government institutions, think-tanks, organizations with expertise in strategic communications.

The founding NSCs are McGill University and the University of Vermont. The intention is to expand NSCs into a virtual "global campus" linked to organizations and institutions (academic and non-academic) around the world. The NSCs will collaborate on:

- Shared curricula for L4E students, with students from different NSCs taking courses together using a variety of communications technologies and pedagogical approaches (remotely linked classrooms; webinars; student-led seminars);
- Annual intensive field courses for L4E students from all NSCs, hosted by various NSCs on L4E focus areas (e.g., population and demographics, food and agricultural systems, forests, fresh and salt water, energy, climate justice, etc.);
- L4E decision making, priority setting and strategic communication and advocacy, through participation of L4E faculty and students from all NSCs on L4E committees and in L4E events;
- Supervision of L4E doctoral students, through participation of L4E faculty and advisors from different NSCs on doctoral committees and through mentoring; and
- Communications and outreach, via joint research publications, planning and/or participation in L4E events or other events with significant L4E presence, coordination of strategic communications and advocacy.

University-based NSCs commit to a level of engagement according to the following criteria:

- Offer one or more doctoral programs relevant to the vision and mission of L4E, and recruit and support L4E students (with the understanding that all L4E students must meet the PhD requirements of the program at their university, in addition to requirements for L4E);
- Identify an L4E lead faculty member who will be responsible for managing the NSC's participation in L4E;
- Ensure adequate faculty commitments and administrative support to meet L4E needs regarding delivery of L4E courses in the shared curriculum, delivery of a theme-based intensive field course on a L4E focus area (e.g. population and demographics) and supervision and support for L4E doctoral students at the NSC;
- Identify and commit to cash and in-kind financial support for participation in L4E as a NSC; and
- Develop and run L4E courses that augment L4E's curriculum.

Because L4E initially relies on existing degree programs, without establishing new ones, L4E doctoral students at NSCs will receive their PhDs through those existing programs. The benefits to students of participation include access to faculty and courses at NSCs within the L4E network, and membership in a growing community of practice grounded in the L4E vision and mission. Select non-academic organizations may be considered to become NSCs as a means to strengthen L4E's capabilities. Establishment of these NSC partnerships will be addressed on an individual basis.

The key categories of L4E participants include:

- Doctoral students enrolled at one of the NSCs as full L4E PhD students, and other graduate students admitted into courses offered through L4E;
- Faculty or staff (including post-docs and research faculty) from NSCs and other universities and organizations participating in L4E, as instructors, researchers, coordinators of long-term research projects, guest lecturers, PhD supervisors/committee members, or advisors/collaborators;
- Community scholars, with attention to people typically from outside the academy who are leaders in their communities or sectors working, explicitly or implicitly, within a vision for the Ecozoic;
- Experts in strategic communications, outreach and advocacy;
- Social entrepreneurs central to L4E's work; and
- Program and administrative support staff for the overall L4E initiative and for individual NSCs (as necessary) and other organizations and institutions participating in L4E.

L4E Governance Structure and Key Committees

Several committees will be involved in the governance of L4E. Some of these will be permanent standing committees and others will be ad hoc. An interim Steering Committee was established to guide and support L4E during development of the L4E strategic plan. After completion of the Strategic Plan, a standing Steering Committee will be established to oversee the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

An advisory committee (10-12 members) will be established to provide strategic guidance to the L4E Steering Committee. The full advisory committee will ordinarily meet once per year, during the annual L4E Community Meeting. The full committee may be convened at other times as needed. Individual advisory committee members will be available to provide guidance to the steering committee according to their special knowledge and experience, as needed. All committees will have term limits.

Lastly, the core research activities will be guided by research working groups, established around:

- Research themes/focus areas (e.g. food systems, energy systems, etc.)
- "Research to reality" initiatives (these may be place-based, longitudinal or temporal);
- Long-term research initiatives (e.g. on law/governance, economics/finance, ethics, etc.)
- Strategic communications, outreach and advocacy

Framework for L4E Measures of Success

The framework for broadly measuring the success of L4E will be structured around the key elements of the L4E theory of change, which aligns L4E in the long term with the profound societal paradigm shift needed to transition to the Ecozoic. Drawing from Meadows (1999, p.18),⁴ these key elements are: (1) consistently and persistently highlighting “the anomalies and failures in the old paradigm”; (2) “speaking louder and with more assurance from the new [paradigm]”; (3) “insert[ing] people from the new paradigm in places of public visibility and power”; (4) working “with active change agents and with the vast middle ground of people who are open-minded”; and (5) not wasting time on “reactionaries” defending the old paradigm.

Many organizations beyond L4E are already and will continue to promote this paradigm shift. L4E's unique contribution in this growing community will be its focus on higher education reform, especially in North America. For the term of this strategic plan some key measures of success for L4E include:

- Growth in the number of students, faculty, NSCs and other academic and non-academic institutions and organizations involved with or linked to L4E;
- Number and nature of placements of L4E students in internships and post-doctoral employment; and
- Number and nature of L4E publications and other outreach and strategic communications outcomes.

⁴ Meadows, D. 1999. *Leverage Points: Place to Intervene in a System*. Harland, VT: The Sustainability Institute.

IMPLEMENTATION

A three year “launch phase” of L4E commenced in early 2018 with funding secured to recruit ten new doctoral students at McGill University and the University of Vermont as an evolution of the Economics for the Anthropocene project. The launch of L4E builds on a 10-year Memorandum of Understanding “to build and support the academic staff to continue, deepen, and expand the capacities necessary to continue the partnership between McGill and UVM beyond the current three [E4A] cohorts of students.” University support for the launch includes faculty and staff time, teaching assistantships, and tuition scholarships. Graduate students will be assigned to help expand the partnership to other doctoral programs, formulate and implement a strategic communications plan, and begin to build the foundations for the L4E global campus. In addition, each student will be part of international working groups led by L4E research scholars. Student training will be built around a core set of networked courses, including both real-time (i.e., web-linked lecture/discussion sessions allowing interaction among all participants) and asynchronous sessions (i.e., pre-recorded lectures and online discussion forums). Additional staff resources will be put into place over this launch phase to develop focal research areas and a community of practice.



The bulk of implementation will then follow through three phases, outlined in the following table. Phase 1 is primarily focused on solidifying the network within North America, implementation of the strategic communications plan, cultivation of global partners, and identification of diverse funding sources. This will require the recruitment of two additional student cohorts and additional post-doctoral staff to lead the research focal areas. Phase 2 is focused on building the global campus. New Network Strategy Centers will be recruited for Europe, Asia and Australia, with cultivation of new partners for South America and Africa. The sharing of curriculum, coursework, student interns, faculty mentors, place-based research results, and advocacy platforms will be the ingredients for a vibrant international network. Phase 3 is then the “aspirational” phase, with goals to expand the impact of the global campus to master’s degree programs, professional training, and further focus on the global south.

Phase	Overlapping Time Periods	Key Activities
Launch	Jan 2018 – Aug 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Strategic Plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Communications and Advocacy Plan, Implementation Plan and Timeline, Community of Practice, Secretariat Function, Student Internships and Graduate Placement Program development • Transition from E4A to L4E • Recruitment of cohort 1 (10 PhD students: 5 @ McGill, 5 @ UVM) • Recruitment of 2 postdoctoral students (McGill/UVM), 1 research associate (McGill), 2 research assistants (McGill/UVM) • Launch of L4E core curriculum • Identification of key disciplinary infusion zones • Creation of NSC development and implementation plan • Initiation of cohort 2 recruitment
Phase 1	Jan 2019 – Aug 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of network in North America (establishment of West coast partner/NSC; setting of performance standards) • Implementation of Communications and Advocacy Plan • Recruitment of cohort 2 (15 PhD students: 5 @ McGill, 5 @ UVM, plus others - location and numbers tbd) • Recruitment of cohort 3 (15 PhD students: 5 @ McGill, 5 @ UVM, plus others - location and numbers tbd) • Identification of additional funding sources (including SSHRC and FQRNT) • Recruitment of 3 additional postdoctoral students (McGill/UVM/West coast partner) • Identification of key global partners
Phase 2	Jan 2020 – Aug 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of network (establishment of global campus, including self-funded NSCs/partnerships in Europe and Asia, possible establishment of Comms and Advocacy NSCs; setting of performance standards) • Additional funding sources secured
Phase 3	Jan 2021 – Aug 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspiration goals: inclusion of Master’s programs, global south

APPENDIX 1

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Purpose

To be effective, L4E needs to envision and begin to create pathways to a new mutually-enhancing human/ecosphere relationship; the Ecozoic. This section describes the recognitions that prompt our determination to bring forth the Ecozoic and lays out our response in the form of the Guiding Principles. We believe these principles will unite and strengthen the L4E community in our shared efforts to engender a paradigm shift to an Ecozoic worldview.

The Guiding Principles are intended to be the directional North Star of L4E. Our intent is to use them, make them visible in our work and actions, employ them as guides for our decision-making, and hold them up as yardsticks for measuring our progress and achievements. We also acknowledge that our dreams, beliefs and hopes are many and this skeleton outline (enforced by the wicked word count wizard) will only succeed through the efforts of our collective flesh and blood enlivenment of the Guiding Principles in the years to come.

Recognitions

We recognize the predominate colonial imperial legacy which has colonized lands, social systems, and minds. We recognize that the dominant economy is based on extraction, exploitation, violence, and human population growth which is dangerously disrupting Earth system functioning. We recognize the dominant worldview emphasizes individualism, consumerism, independence, “liberty”, hierarchy, reductionism, personal responsibility, linear thinking, commodification, privatization, linguistic imperialism, dominance (and its associated –isms), human exceptionalism and patriarchy. We recognize that the governance model that supports the dominant economy is militarism and violence. We recognize the universalizing of privileged group experience where privileged ways of doing things are seen as normal, standard and “good”. We recognize privileged groups have historically ignored or misunderstand the long-standing resistance and liberation struggles by non-dominant peoples. We recognize that the language constructs and lexicon of the predominant worldview limits imagination, perceptions and reinforces destructive human patterns.

Guiding Principles

In response to the above recognitions, we the staff, faculty, students, activists, steering committee, partners and volunteers of L4E will work together to embody the below stated set of principles which underpin of our vision for a new era; the Ecozoic. These Guiding Principles include shared Premises and our Core Values.

Premises

Interconnection – We believe humans are embedded in webs of life and interconnected, as part of the Earth’s social-ecological systems, with other co-evolved species and natural entities. Thus we celebrate and promote the worldview of humanity as part of nature and

work to inform and influence humanity's unique role in the community of life. We recognize interconnection across space and time and thus promote intragenerational and intergenerational fairness among all species and natural entities. We recognize that our human struggles are interconnected and thus we promote collective liberation. We recognize the interconnectedness of all elements of the universe, thus we employ a systems-based transdisciplinary, holistic approach. We recognize communities of life within the larger community of the Earth and the universe, thus we embrace bioregionalism and promote place-based approaches.

Abundance and Sufficiency – We believe the Earth system has provided abundance supporting a thriving community of life. We believe there are natural laws which delineate boundaries for this flourishing of life on Earth. Thus, we emphasize gratitude, celebration and reciprocity for natural abundance versus the fear and greed of scarcity. We believe that there are biophysical conditions that constrain and enable the flourishing of life on Earth.

Diversity – We believe diversity, of lifeways and of lifeforms, leads to resiliency. Thus, we value and support the wisdom of ancient positive human lifeways as cultural expressions of evolutionary adaptive human responses. We seek to understand other ways of knowing and the varied perspectives, methodologies and legal frameworks of ancient peoples and respect the contributions of traditional ecological knowledge. We promote multiplicity not homogenization. We welcome and create new positive life patterns; held in language, art, poetry, food, culture, story, practice, ritual and story, as a means to remember and reinforce sustainable human lifeways. We reflect and celebrate the power of diversity in our curriculum breadth, student, faculty and community including gender, racial, socioeconomic, nationality, language and religious diversity. We respect and promote action to support the interconnected thriving of all ecospheric lifeforms; the rich diversity of earthen life. We strive to create and support adaptive human systems, constructs, and interventions that can absorb and accommodate the dynamism of ecosystems.

Core Values

Solutions Orientation – Our vision is to build a new world based on a mutually enhancing relationships between human and non-human life on Earth. Thus, we prioritize, create, test and advocate for varied solution pathways with a spirit of possibility, courage, positivity and open-mindedness.

Reimagining – We conduct intentional and directed reimagining and explore possible reorganizations of existing human systems to enable the Ecozoic.

Leadership – We prioritize leadership from the young people who will be living in the future we are creating, and honor the wisdom of our predecessors. We work to empower accountable diverse leaders for the Ecozoic, intentionally and systematically undertaking

leadership development. We strive to give, not take; power, tools and knowledge. We view leadership as a practice, not a position. We are ecocentric not egocentric.

Community – We prioritize deep relationships over task. In creating and living in community we value collaboration, trust, love, care and thoughtfulness. We support autonomy within community. We call each other in, not out; judgments and comments are oriented and intended to promote understanding, be strengthening, show compassion, and foster empowerment. We take an active role as conveners, connectors, partners across issues and groups. We strive to be inclusive, accepting, welcoming, and supportive in our aligned work within the environmental, social and economic justice movements.

Integrity – We value truth and recognize that seeing truth can be uncomfortable. We recognize that valuing, respecting and bringing our full humanity; our mind, body, spirit and emotions, to L4E fosters our honest and enriching contributions toward the Ecozoic.

Learning – We envision ourselves as a learning community, where all are learners and all are teachers. We emphasize humility, not hierarchy. We actively encourage positive innovation, new constructs, questioning, experimentation and adaptive alterations in our work. We acknowledge we do not have “the answer”, that there are many possible pathways and pieces of solutions. We are committed to continuous learning, amplifying what is serving our mission and joyfully releasing what is not.

Wonder – We approach humans and the rest of the co-evolved universe with reverence, awe and wonder.

Ability – We believe that through strategic, tenacious and nonviolent work, we will succeed in bringing to humanity our vision of the Ecozoic era.

APPENDIX 2

THEORY OF CHANGE

Purpose

We are developing our theory of change (ToC) to serve us in several ways. In coming to consensus on our ToC we hope to create a shared vision, sense of ownership and shared responsibility. The ToC also serves to guide the development of our Strategic Plan. We intend for our ToC to help us clarify L4E's specific role, purpose and potential leverage within the context of both higher education and society at large, as well as for the L4E community itself. Through our ToC, and detailed in this Strategic Plan based upon it, we hope to explain how we think L4E can contribute to bringing forth a mutually enhancing human/ecosphere relationship and indicate why we have chosen particular interventions to work toward this end.

We also intend to utilize our ToC and accompanying ToC diagram(s) to communicate, explain and market L4E's unique approach. We will use these with a variety of audiences and to attract potential collaborators and new community members. After we move into the implementation stage, the ToC will serve to direct evaluation, to improve and assure accountability, to guide resource allocation decisions and to make explicit the connection between actions and specific outcomes.

Premises

The Guiding Principles are the foundation of our ToC. In addition, underlying our ToC are a number of axioms as follows. We believe higher education has a moral imperative to redirect itself from "training persons for temporary survival in the declining Cenozoic Era" and to transition to "educating students for the emerging Ecozoic."⁵ We believe that younger people have a higher potential to be less entrenched in the structure and worldview of the predominant human systems. We believe investing in emerging young leaders will spur a re-imagining of humanity's future and help create the human systems of the Ecozoic. We believe building new models for various human systems will help make existing models obsolete. We believe promoting a strong place-based approach will help engender a right relationship with life and world.

We believe employing a holistic, systems approach is necessary to create systemic change. We believe centralizing justice and ecological restoration is essential in working toward a flourishing diversity of life in the Ecozoic. We believe that to foster a mutually enhancing human/ecosphere relationship new human systems must consider regeneration and reciprocity, cooperative labor, the goal of collective well-being, limits defined by dynamic ecological processes and cultures based on a belief in the sacredness of all life. We believe a paradigm shift in the predominant worldviews is necessary to bring forth the Ecozoic Era. We believe certain approaches are beneficial to promoting a paradigm shift including; pointing out anomalies and failures in the old

⁵ Thomas Berry, *The Great Work*, 1999, pg 85.

paradigm, speaking out with assurance from the new paradigm, inserting people with the new paradigm in places of public visibility and power, ignoring reactionaries, and working with active change agents and with the open-minded⁶.

Theory of Change

L4E's central theory of change is that establishing university based programs that invest in emerging leaders who are driven to work toward bringing about a transition to a mutually-enhancing human/ecosphere relationship will help create pathways to the Ecozoic Era.

Embedded and aligned with this central ToC are a myriad of accompanying less articulated ToCs that address scale (societal, national, higher educational) and focus areas (economics, law, ethics, etc.). L4E seeks to have a transformative change on a critical mass of individuals, in particular it's PhD students, but also on the broader community of practice. We aim to prompt exploration and creation of new institutional and governance constructs. We strive to identify, highlight and offer responses and new options to address root causes of Cenozoic decline, thus assisting to bring forth the Ecozoic. We will tangentially support mobilization, resistance work, and activism as aligned with our mission. Ultimately L4E seeks to have impact at the individual level, influence at the broader level, leverage to garner on-going support and the capacity to bring all these elements to bear in fulfilling its mission.

We also recognize that the L4E we will create is part of and/or related to a variety of other efforts which range in connectedness and alignment with L4E. L4E is envisioned as a particular part of a group of larger loosely coordinated efforts under one umbrella. It is also an emerging network in itself. Additionally, L4E is part of a broader global contingent of entities and individuals working on separate threads of a gathering fabric of ideas, possibilities, and creations that envision, announce, and enable the emerging pathways to the Ecozoic. These recognitions provide and bolster our hopes for the next chapter of "the human project"⁷.

Theory of Change Narrative

L4E was founded on the strengths of the Economics for the Anthropocene (E4A) project. In it's initial founding, L4E is a collaboration between McGill University and the University of Vermont. The founders of L4E recognize that the predominant worldviews of the Cenozoic legitimize and support human constructed systems that are dangerously disrupting earth's systems and pushing earthen life in increasingly destructive directions. We recognize that the structure of human systems are a creation and choice of humankind. L4E's goal is to create, promote and prefigure human systems that build a mutually enhancing human/ecosphere relationship as the basis of the next era of human existence; the Ecozoic Era.

L4E has been founded as a PhD program based on the theory that supporting the education and development of qualified emerging leaders focused on prefiguring the Ecozoic will enable the transition to it. Three central reasons L4E is initiated as a PhD program focused on the US are;

⁶ Donella Meadows, *Leverage Points*, 1999, pg. 18.

⁷ Caroline Webb, *Caduceus*, issue 59, pg. 3.

the PhD provides sufficient time for an influential body of work to be developed, tested and perhaps implemented, PhD leaders can go on to influence not only the institution of higher education but also their areas focus in their professional lives and the US is the central source and promoter of predominant destructive worldviews.

L4E is basing its initial strategy on a range of assumptions, namely; positive visions empower and enable positive outcomes, a paradigm shift to a mutually enhancing human /ecosphere relationship will provide more positive prospects for earth's community of life, higher education can be influenced from within and leaders are central to envisioning, creating and implementing change, the success of L4E will attract and prompt replication. The central assumption of our Theory of Change is that emerging leaders can be made more impactful through education and skills development. Thus, while L4E will have many corollary and aligned activities and goals, its central initial goal is to provide L4E program PhD students with the intellectual framework, pragmatic skills set, research support and surrounding community of practice to enable and support their personal development as leaders for the Ecozoic.

L4E believes that leaders for the Ecozoic will need broad transdisciplinary understanding. Our initial focus will be on the economic and financial systems because we believe new approaches in these areas offer the greatest immediate and long-term prospects for positive change. Concurrently, we wish to foster new approaches in disciplines including law, governance and ethics to promulgate ecologically positive norms. Ultimately, we hope to develop a broad new curriculum which elucidates the opportunity for a paradigm shift toward human systems aligned with life affirming biogeochemical flows of the planet⁸. Additional human systems we intend to address over time, perhaps through cohort themes, include: human population and demographics, business, agriculture and food systems, health, education, technology and science. We will also foster student understanding, familiarity, and skills in communications, advocacy, social movements, anthropology, systems thinking and other ways of knowing.

Based on L4E's resources, the founders have decided to prioritize supporting the development of capable Ecozoic leaders, development of effective strategic communications skills in the L4E community and fostering change within US higher education. We have decided not to initially include master's students or to put effort into creating a global curriculum hub because we want to concentrate our energies on leadership development. Therefore, we will focus on recruiting those with illustrated leadership potential. We have prioritized leadership development in our Theory of Change to help ensure that we remain focused on this central objective of L4E. In addition, as envisioned herein, L4E intends to develop strategically driven collaborative relationships with a range of entities in its work to build a purposeful and productive network supporting its mission of engendering the Ecozoic.

⁸ Steffen, W. et al, Science 13 Feb. 2015, Vol. 347, Issue 6223.1259855, <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/347/6223/1259855.full>

APPENDIX 3

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

Strategic Communications

In the United States, promoters of the predominant worldview have consistently and strategically invested in communications for many decades. They have used communications to market and sell their visions, values and policies. The United States stands out as a world leader in marketing, sales and public relations yet the bulk of this expertise is directed toward promoting behaviors and values that are predominantly deleterious to the community of life. L4E believes that the harnessing the power of strategic communications will provide a powerful tool essential to enabling the emergence of the Ecozoic.

In the last 40 years, US consumerist ideology has spread almost as a new religion reaching all corners of the globe. The particular promotion of “the free market” has been a coordinated, strategic and highly effective effort. Meanwhile viewpoints, activities and peoples not aligned with the free market worldview have been suppressed, marginalized and even labeled as “terrorists”. This assault on land, lives and liberty has achieved such total subjugation that our whole lexicon is infused with market minded vocabulary which constantly reinforces this predominant worldview.

L4E believes we must free ourselves from the choke hold of “free market” ideologies and idioms. L4E intends to unleash pent-up and stifled desires to create new options for the Human Project. Although we have no illusions that L4E alone can address the gargantuan task of supplanting the predominant worldview, we will strive in our small way to offer a compelling new vision. We hope many will find this new vision more attractive than the current destructive market paradigm. One important tool in this undertaking will be strategic communications.

At its heart, L4E is about telling a new story about humankind’s relationship to the web of life and universe itself. Whether we call this Strategic Communications or refer to the component parts and mediums of framing, issues management, sales, marketing, film, brand management, media training, social media, campaigning, journalism, opposition and social research it all amounts to the promotion of a narrative, to storytelling. And the story L4E wishes to tell is that of a new vision for humanity. It is this objective, the spreading and adoption of a new story, which is a necessary precursor to the paradigm shift to the Ecozoic. This is the reason we give special focus to strategic communications and with it to the power of story, myth, legend, ritual and ceremony; the makings of a new vision for humankind.

Advocacy

Since L4E’s objective is to educate leaders, we are committed to developing strong advocacy skills among our students. We wish to graduate “pracademics,” students grounded in academics who also possess the skills needed to be effective leading practitioners in their fields. Well-developed capabilities in strategic communications as well as advocacy will provide L4E graduates with tools critical to their success.

L4E will foster advocacy skills in three central ways: training, individual support and collective action. Training will take the form of learnings in non-violent direct action and its historical roots. Individual support will be offered for student selected and motivated activities that may relate to their individual research or cohort focus. Collective action is likely to evolve as a repetitive annual advocacy event which is spearheaded by L4E across its global campus. This advocacy event will promote L4E's mission of fostering a paradigm shift in higher education toward preparing students for the promise of the Ecozoic.

For all these advocacy activities L4E will work with and draw from the expertise of leading advocates and advocacy organizations, often through our relationship with them as Community Scholars, seminar leaders, internship hosts, graduate placement organizations, speakers and event and research partners.