Washington University's Environmental Justice Faculty Network: A Summary

Timothy Dugan, Scott Krummenacher, Annalise Wagner

May 1, 2017

Executive Summary

In the fall of 2015, 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. 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 9 faculty and staff members across 3 schools: The Brown School of Social Work, Sam Fox, and the College of Arts and Sciences. From these interviews, we created a report, "Washington University's Environmental Justice Faculty Network: A Summary," focused on identifying key commonalities among leaders doing environmental justice work, and potential areas for future discovery that may dictate action to serve all Washington University faculty. This is intended to be a living document that will receive annual updates as environmental justice work on campus evolves, and different individuals get engaged.

In the interviews, we first asked individuals to first define environmental justice and to note which portions of their work fall within or outside of the definition in order to provide context for further questions. Next, we asked individuals to describe what type of work they have done, are doing, or plan to do in terms of research, curriculum, and service, that relates to environmental justice, and what catalysts and hindrances are to this work. This helped us to pull out some major themes and takeaways regarding faculty and staff involvement and interest in environmental justice on campus. Lastly, we asked individuals to identify environmental justice partners on campus. We used this information to determine other potential interviewees, and to begin to make a map of the environmental justice network on campus.

Interviewee's definitions suggest that environmental justice work contains the following three ideas: (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.

Within this definitional context, three main themes emerged throughout the interviews: (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.

Overall, we found that faculty and staff were very enthusiastic and supportive of a steering committee to help move the Wash U community closer towards the Environmental Justice Initiate's stated goals. In our eyes, a steering committee would be beneficial to the initiative because, as we found in the interviews, most faculty view environmental justice work as tangential to their main academic and professional focus, and a steering committee would help faculty to see how their work relates to environmental justice, identify opportunities for collaboration, and ensure that projects do not lose steam after a semester or two. Based on this report, and early work on the Environmental Justice Initiative, we are currently developing a steering committee of faculty, staff, and students. When it is formed, we will present our report, which includes initial recommendations, to the committee. Overall, we hope that work on the Environmental Justice Faculty Network Report helps to inform continued work on the Environmental Justice Initiative, particularly through the creation of and contributions to an environmental justice steering committee.

<u>Washington University's Environmental Justice Faculty Network: A Summary</u>

Table of Contents

I.   **Introduction**

       In fall of 2015, 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 seeks to catalyze social and environmental justice collaborations, incorporate environmental justice sentiments into existing efforts, and educate and raise awareness about environmental justice issues. For more information on the Environmental Justice Initiative, the initiative's Theory of Change model can be found in Appendix 4. The Office of Sustainability has also created a website as a part of the initiative, which includes environmental justice events, student groups, and faculty members doing environmental justice work. The website can be found here: https://sustainability.wustl.edu/washu-environmental-justice-initiative/.

       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 9 faculty and staff members across 3 schools, as seen in the following chart:

School	**Brown School**	**Sam Fox**	**College of Arts and Sciences**
Department	Public Health (3) Social Work (2)	Architecture (1) Dept. of Social Innovation (1)	Environmental Studies (2)

       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, we 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, we 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). We also used a "snowball" strategy, in which we conducted further interviews according to initial interviewee's recommendations.

It is worth noting that due to its small sample size, this report may not draw conclusions reflective of university-wide faculty engagement. Rather, this report aims to identify key commonalities among leaders doing environmental justice work, and point to areas for further discovery that may dictate action to serve all Washington University faculty.

We asked individuals to define environmental justice and to note which portions of their work fall within or outside of the definition. We also asked them to describe what type of work they have done, are doing, or plan to do in terms of research, curriculum, and service, that relates to environmental justice, and what catalysts and hindrances are to this work. Lastly, we asked them to identify environmental justice partners on campus, and created a matrix of this network (See Appendix 1). For a full list of interviewees, as well as the list of questions used in the interviews, see Appendix 2.

II.   Definitions

Learning interviewee's definitions and understandings of different components of environmental justice help us to consider the best way to define environmental justice, as well as understand which aspects of environmental justice are most valued on campus. "Environmental Justice" can be accurately defined in many ways. In our interviews, we found three core ideas in interviewee's 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	9 (100%)	- Equal distribution of environmental burdens and health impacts - Equal access to environmental benefits - Elimination of environmental racism: a disproportionate impact of environmental burdens on low-income communities, which are frequently communities of color
Understanding	3 (33%)	Understand how people have been marginalized in a historical and cultural context (especially in relation to class, race,

		gender identity) • Work with how policy, regulations, industry, development, etc., have shaped communities in a way that disadvantages certain groups • Recognizing that every species has a right to its pursuit of life-sustaining resources
Self-determination	4 (44%)	Allow the marginalized to… • Self-determine direction of what they want • Have control over how their environment/resources are handled • Make decisions about how their environment is and how it evolves • Guide and regulate projects themselves

Often faculty member's 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 understood 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.

Interviewee's 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. 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 was 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.

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 Programs Coordinator Rachel Folkerts and Professor Barnett are involved in a promising, ongoing project in Baden, St. Louis, that seeks 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 support 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.

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. Also, understandably, 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. 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 Environmental Justice Initiative's goals, 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 on campus. With any environmental justice work, however, four 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 how if faculty, staff, and 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.

IV.   **Potential 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 Wash U community closer towards the Environmental Justice Initiative's stated goals. In our eyes, a steering committee would be beneficial to the initiative because, as we found in the interviews, most faculty view environmental justice work as tangential to their main academic and professional focus, and a steering committee would help faculty to see how their work relates to environmental justice, and ensure that projects do not lose steam after a semester or two. A steering committee would hopefully consist of faculty from different backgrounds, to give way to creative approaches and

interdisciplinary collaboration. Also, as previously noted, a steering committee would ideally have representation from community members of the surrounding region, or, at the very least, strong connections with community organizations.

While the steering committee would ultimately have the decision-making power to decide how to begin and continue environmental justice work on campus, we have identified potential priority items 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 justice/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, increasing collaboration will inevitably be a major priority for the environmental justice steering committee. All interviewees discussed the importance of making connections and cross-discipline collaboration. Three interviewees explicitly expressed their excitement that they were being interviewed, because of the potential for making more connections, and because they were not aware that any university faculty members, staff members, or organizations were doing environmental justice work. The two interviewees from the Buder Center were happy to learn that the Office of Sustainability is interested in supporting environmental justice work, as they frequently felt as though they were on their own on various projects. 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.

Also, the Office of Sustainability is a part of the recently formed Equity Network of organizations with an equity focus at Washington University. This network could potentially facilitate increased collaboration between faculty and student organizations, and lead to more events and projects on campus.

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, 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.

Environmental justice, social justice, and diversity trainings and workshops could help develop common language and increased understanding of environmental and social justice issues amongst faculty and staff members. Students would also likely benefit from trainings and workshops. 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. While it is positive that some courses relate to environmental justice, there is certainly room to expand upon this.

In the Brown School, there is an environmental justice competency, which means that professors are required to include some discussion of environmental justice in their courses' syllabi. All interviewees from the Brown School mentioned this competency 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.

V.   **Conclusion**

The Environmental Justice team at the Office of Sustainability is willing and eager to offer logistical, research, and any other necessary support to a faculty 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 to increase environmental justice curriculum, research, and service on campus and in the region. Furthermore, we view this report as a living document to be regularly updated to document the state of environmental justice at Wash U. 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. 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.?)?
4. What is the best/most effective way to work with community members?

Appendix 1: Interview Details

Interviewees:
- **Rod Barnett**: Professor and Chair of the Master of Landscape Architecture Program, Sam Fox School
- **Christine Ekenga**: Assistant Professor, Brown School of Social Work
- **Rachel Folkerts**: Research and Programs Coordinator, Environmental Studies
- **Angela Hobson**: Senior Lecturer, Brown School of Social Work
- **Liz Kramer**: Assistant Director of Community-Based Design and Sustainability, Sam Fox School
- **Joe Steensma**: Professor of Practice, Brown School of Social Work
- **Kellie Thompson**: Assistant Director of the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies
- **Molly Tovar**: Director of the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies
- **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
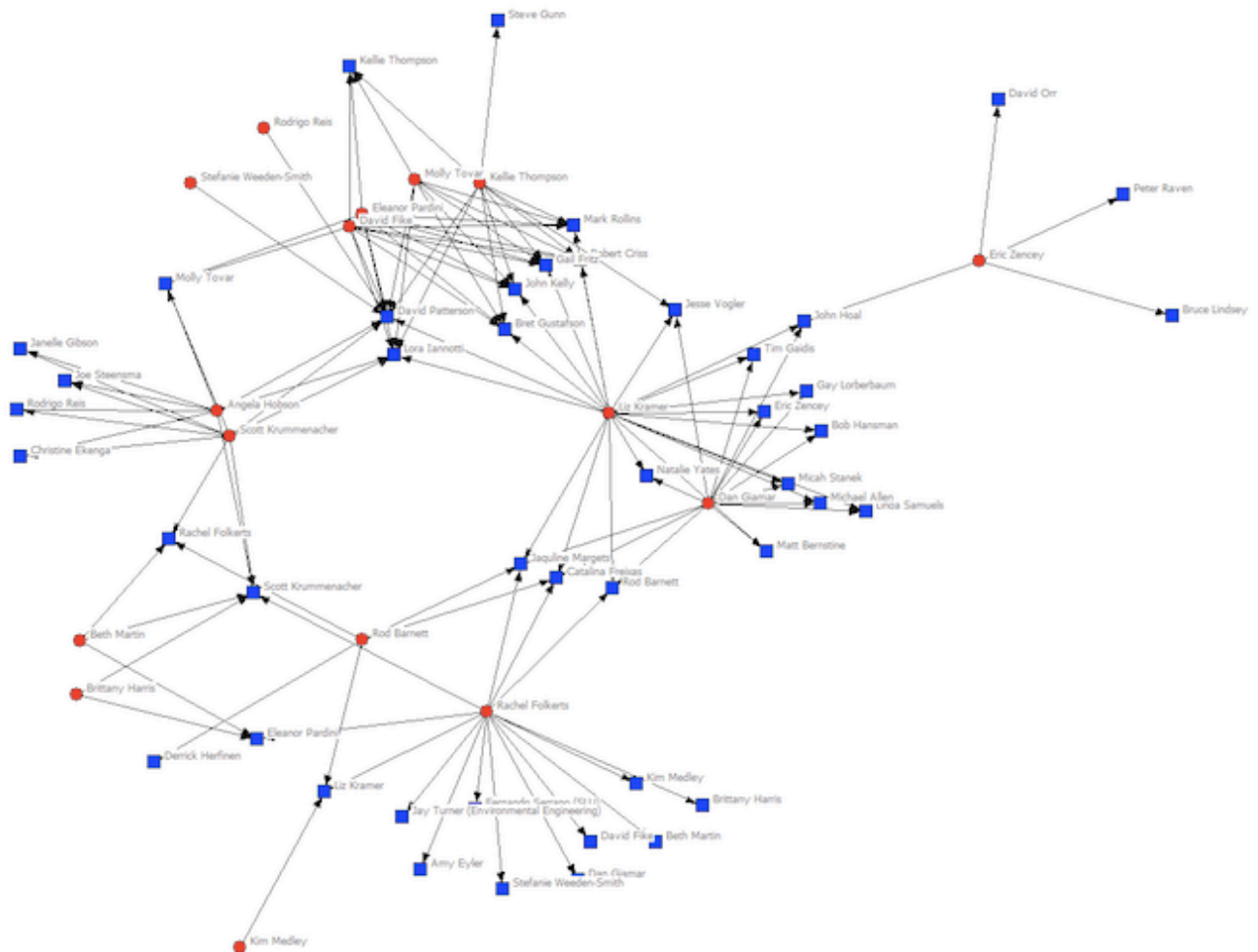
Red circular nodes represent faculty/staff interviewees. Blue square nodes represent faculty/staff who interviewees identified as colleagues/partners on environmental justice.

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

Sustainability
Washington University in St. Louis

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.

We Will

RAISE AWARENESS TO INCREASE KNOWLEDGE about Environmental Justice Issues, Research, & Efforts

BRIDGE CONVERSATIONS between Environmental Justice and Social Justice to PROMOTE DIALOGUE about key issues.

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS across WashU, regional, and national EJ, Sustainability, and Social Justice communities.

MEASURE IMPACT & IMPROVE
- Knowledge, discussion, integration, partnerships, and action in EJ Initiative.
- Representation and Inclusion

BY
- Establish a **Steering Committee** comprised of WashU Faculty, Staff, Department, Institutions, Research Centers, & students to provide leadership, strategy, oversight, & direction for Initiative.
- **Office of Sustainability communications** will highlight EJ Initiative stories, news, events, research, policies, and efforts on the website, newsletter, fliers, etc.
- Facilitate **Round Table discussions** for the WashU community to raise awareness, provide info, and spark dialogue about EJ issues, opportunities, & challenges.
- Implement an **EJ Conference** at WashU in partnership with regional EJ and Social Justice partners.
- **Integrate EJ into Academics** through curricular readings, research, case studies, and service projects.
- **WashU Collaboration & Participation** in regional EJ efforts.
- **Showcase WashU Faculty & Student EJ** research, projects, and publications annually.

- Partner with the WashU Office of **Diversity and Inclusion** to ensure a wide range of people and perspectives are represented, participating, and included in the EJ Initiative.
- The Steering Committee will seek input, feedback, and data to **continuously evaluate and improve** the EJ Initiative through data collection, surveys, reflection, and ongoing planning.
- Measure long-term changes/improvement in regional EJ issues.

So That

WashU students, staff, & faculty are aware of EJ issues, advocacy efforts, & opportunities

Environmental Justice, Sustainability, & Social Justice champions identify their intersectionalities & build collaborative partnerships

WashU students & faculty take action to improve EJ issues through research, publications, & projects

WashU is seen as a valuable resource, and thought partner

Environmental Justice is realized in St. Louis.

CORE VALUES

Collaboration   Mutual Respect   Inclusion   Justice   Stewardship