A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Since its founding in 1900, our School has been at the forefront of environmental and forest science and scholarship, training generations of leaders who have tackled the challenges of their time. Today, we continue to build on this rich legacy by providing research, teaching, and public engagement aimed at creating a more equitable and sustainable world.

Our faculty, students, and alumni are working on a wide scope of urgent and important issues: climate change, clean energy policy, ecosystem science and biogeochemistry, hydrology, urban science, green chemistry, and environmental justice, among many others. Our alumni—who today number more than 5,500—are tackling the increasingly complex environmental, social, and economic challenges of the twenty-first century in all corners of the world. They work in NGOs, government, business, academia, law, public health, and communications, among other sectors. They also maintain vital connections to the School, with our alumni network providing valuable mentorship and support to our students as they prepare for their own professional challenges.

In July of 2022, we were thrilled to announce the launch the Three Cairns Climate Program for the Global South, a transformative program aimed at supporting the next generation of environmental leaders. Made possible by the largest gift in the School’s history, the program will support the Three Cairns Scholars, allowing YSE to meet 100 percent of the demonstrated tuition need for YSE master’s students from the Global South admitted through this program, and the Three Cairns Fellows, enabling YSE to expand access to its highly regarded online certificate programs for mid-career environmental professionals in the Global South. The gift also will support the development of new certificates relevant to environmental issues pertaining to the Global South. This program will strengthen the School’s position as a leader in global climate action and further enrich the YSE community by welcoming unique knowledge, perspectives, and lived experiences.

The teaching and study of forestry has been, and remains, a core strength of our School since its founding. The Forest School at YSE is a hub for practitioners and land stewards in forest-related fields worldwide, bringing together cross-disciplinary research in science and practice to find solutions to the challenges that face the world’s forests. The Forest School teaches all of our students the principles of natural resource management through the innovative research and sustainable practice occurring at our nearly 11,000 acres of actively managed forests.

In 2021, two new professors joined the YSE faculty: Assistant Professor Luke Sanford, whose research examines environmental stewardship from a political science perspective, and Associate Professor Nyeema Harris, a wildlife ecologist. These incredible scholars are emerging leaders in their fields and are enriching the academic experience at our School and across Yale. They joined a sterling group of teachers and scholars that includes the likes of Karen Seto, an expert in urbanization, who this year was a coordinating author on the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report and was elected to the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.
Last year, the School also formalized a partnership with the Central Park Conservancy and the New York City-based Natural Areas Conservancy, creating a new initiative to study the on-the-ground impacts of climate change on urban parks. The end goal of the Central Park Climate Lab is to work with cities across the United States to advance and implement urban park strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change and understand how these essential greenspaces could be used to create more resilient futures.

Since its founding, this School has demonstrated the willingness and strength to adapt to the evolving challenges facing our world. I have never felt more confident about how well poised we are to fulfill our mission of providing knowledge and leadership for a sustainable future. The work that we do here is vital to meeting the many global environmental challenges we are currently facing and will face in the future.

Ingrid C. “Indy” Burke  
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