

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 sustainable world.

This year we will continue this important work under a new name. Only July 1, 2020, we changed our name from the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies to the Yale School of the Environment. At the same time, we established the Forest School at the Yale School of the Environment in recognition of our founding mission and the continued importance of forestry.

This is a historic time for our School and, I believe, a vitally important one. This new name better reflects who we are as a community and the far-reaching impact we have across many disciplines and sectors. Our faculty, students, and alumni are working on a wide scope of urgent and important issues—including climate change, clean energy policy, ecosystem science and biogeochemistry, hydrology, urban science, green chemistry, and environmental justice, among many others. Our alumni—5,300 and counting—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. They also maintain vital connections to the School; our alumni network provides valuable mentorship and support to our students as they prepare for their own professional challenges. As the Yale School of the Environment, we will be accurately communicating the breadth and depth of our scholarship, research, impact, and mission.

At the same time, it was extremely important to me that we reaffirm our commitment to forest science and global ecosystem management. The teaching and study of forestry remains a core strength of our School. We will continue to teach 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, and to provide them opportunities to study these forests and those around the world. As Professor Mark Ashton, who will serve as the first senior associate dean of forests, recently wrote, our forestry program is strong now and will only get stronger.

We also launch this new era in our School's history with two new faculty members. Dorceta Taylor '85 M.F.S., '91 Ph.D., joined our faculty on July 1 as a professor of environmental justice—a truly momentous occasion for our School. You simply cannot find more qualified experts in the field of environmental justice than Professors Taylor and Gerald Torres, an acclaimed scholar of environmental law, critical race theory, and federal Indian law who joined our faculty in January. Yuan Yao also officially joins us this fall as an assistant professor of industrial ecology and sustainable systems. In addition to her research examining the environmental and economic impacts of emerging technologies and industrial processes, she is dedicated to developing online educational materials to engage with diverse student populations and enhance the public literacy of sustainability. To strengthen our science-to-solutions scholarship and deepen our engagement on the critical issue of climate change, over the next year we will introduce two Coleman P. Burke Visiting Professors in Climate Change, who will be with us during the spring 2021 and fall 2021 terms.

There are many other signs of our hard work and forward momentum, including hosting our first Global Environmental Justice Conference, which was made possible by a gift from the Yale Chichilnisky Environmental Fund, last year; raising new funds to launch expanded efforts in environmental humanities; and new scholarship funds for forestry students.

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. I'm excited to continue this incredibly important work with a name that recognizes the full scope of what we do while maintaining the connection to our roots as a school of forestry.

Our vision statement says it all: we aim to provide knowledge and leadership for a sustainable future. We invite you to be a part of this work.

Ingrid C. Burke
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