Frustration and concern about our world’s future are mounting.
Canada’s researchers and innovators are leading the way in developing solutions.

**INNOVATION-POWERED CLIMATE ACTION**

Innovations are key to preventing the planet’s temperature from rising above 2°C. 

Microplastics in our oceans are a serious problem, and researchers are working to find solutions.

PolyGone Technologies is currently working with breweries to help them remove microplastics. 

By the end of 2018, the company had tested over 200 samples and found microplastics in 18 of them, including beer, wine, and soy sauce.

Using machine learning, the company can now detect and eliminate microplastics quickly and accurately.

This technology helps to prevent plastic fragments from entering the environment, making the world a better place.

PolyGone Technologies is exploring partnerships to scale their technology and expand into other industries.

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Challenging Stereotypes and Creating Pathways for Success

Nadine Spencer became an entrepreneur when she was 12 years old. Her mother moved from Jamaica to Canada and started a needlework business to support her family.

She saw an opportunity to make a living from her skills and took it.

Currently working as the CEO of Boxwell, Nadine is passionate about empowering women in the tech industry.

She encourages other women to pursue their dreams and believes that women can be just as successful as men in any field.

This is evident in Nadine’s work at Boxwell, where she aims to create an inclusive environment for all employees.

Recently, Nadine was awarded the 2019 Canada’s Most Powerful Women: Top 100 award, recognizing her leadership and contributions to the tech industry.

**RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**

These are just a few examples of how research and innovation are making the world a better place.
Harnessed machine learning to create climate-smart crops

The collaborative nature of our work across many disciplines and our partnerships with academia, government, industry and international development organizations are paving the way for the discovery of new technologies that will contribute to food security in Saskatchewan and around the world.

Andy Sharpe
P2IRC program director

When a major disaster affecting hundreds of thousands of people strikes, such as 2013’s massive flood in Calgary or a storm in Toronto, determining how to best provide emergency services requires quick thinking and decision-making.

Unfortunately, there are few systems in place that support disaster and emergency management (DEM). A streamlined process for emergency operations need to be in place to accurately collect data and swiftly share information. This is why Ali Asgary, professor at York University, has pioneered this research with the help of York's research funding. "This is a completely new and different way to perform and apply research. We will be able to use our research to help in real-time in emergency situations," says Asgary.

Dr. Ali Asgary
York University researcher

"We are on a push to make these technologies available and be relevant to the people," says Dr. Sharpe. "We look forward to working with our partners on developing this technology and making it available to those who can use it to save lives.""
MAKING MANUFACTURING SMARTER

Students at Georgian College are getting real-world experience in cutting-edge research and manufacturing, thanks to a new partnership with industry – people who could be their future employers or future references.

The program is clearly useful to companies as they look for ways to digitize their products or processes, with the goal of increasing productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness. Help is there, as a broader range of our students and industry partners will be able to connect with each other and work hand in hand.

The program enables our students to understand the concept of digital transformation, and so they'll be ready to work with industry when they ultimately leave the nest.

"...our goal is always to provide students, with the education, knowledge, and skills they'll need.

Dr. Minaya
Director of Research and Innovation
Georgian College"
Ultrasound is very portable. It is cheap and safe, some units fit in your pocket. The problem of technology translates to the expertise needed to use these devices is rare.

Dr. Donald Ziroukie, CEO, Medo.ai

The truth of the world does not have access to medical imaging. In developing countries, access is nonexistent.

"Town in (Jordan) such as Garabulli, in Lebanon," says Dr. Ziroukie. "Medo.ai, which has 10,000 patients drive for hours to be in a ultrasound center. We have been teaching a tech from the northern part of Syria. For him, ultrasound is a goldmine.

"If we could provide the same service for things like better options, and sub-specialists deliver ultrasound to a patient at home, then we would be able to decide to create software to augment ultrasound. Leading a diverse team, the team launched Medo.ai to commercialize the technology they developed. The company's technology makes it possible to put diagnostic ultrasound in the furthest corners of the country. By increasing the reach of ultrasound and minimally trained care providers to the most rural parts of the world, the goal is to transport trauma victims to an MRI scanner, emergency room doctors can even in remote ambulances could diagnose hip dislocation from a train car.

Your family doctor could diagnose hip dislocation in your office.

In addition to enabling virtual patient consultations, this technology is also a perfect solution for Canada, a country with very long winters that can restrict travelling," says Dornoosh Zonoobi, Medo.ai's CEO, who adds she's seen patients drive 500 miles in a snowstorm to see a doctor.

"With such a big focus on unicorns..."
We see millions of things every day without even thinking about it. And yet, different parts of our brains are busy parsing all of those images into objects, landscapes, and people we recognize and understand. Jennifer Steeves oversees the Perceptual Neuroscience Laboratory at York University in Toronto, where she examines exactly what happens in our brains when we see, or more precisely, recognize objects.

For more than 25 years, she’s studied how the brain changes when individuals lose an eye during childhood, such as in the case of patients with retinoblastoma, a rare eye cancer. “We look at how hearing and vision interact, and see how the brain adapts,” she says.

Dr. Steeves compared the vision of those with one eye to people with two. She discovered that not only is the vision of those with one eye very good, but in some instances, it’s actually better than the vision of people with two. How can this be with a smaller visual field and only half of the visual sensory information being received by the brain?

Using an MRI scanner at York’s campus, Dr. Steeves and her graduate students found that some parts of the brain dedicated to vision are actually bigger than they should be in people who have only one eye. This indicates that their brains have actually rewired—taking over brain cells which were originally connected to the common eye that was surgically removed. This rewiring is called brain plasticity.

The researchers also noted that some of the parts of the brain responsible for hearing were also shaped differently and appeared bigger than those in the brains of people with two eyes, meaning that people with one eye may also hear better, to help compensate for losing one eye.

In Professor Jennifer Steeves’ lab at York University, graduate students use transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) for research on the human brain.

APATHY. INGENUITY.

Urban research with global reach

As the world’s population continues to rise in urban centres, the health of our cities has never been more crucial. Now, more than ever, we must confront empathy with ingenuity. Tackling complex challenges like climate change, immigration and industrial automation requires a willingness to break down borders and embrace new ways of thinking. This is what we do at Ryerson University.

We believe in big ideas and bold research that helps create resilient and creative cities. Our world-class faculty are making decisive contributions in an array of fields that range from sustainable housing and renewable energy to immigration policy and democratic engagement. We’re not waiting for the future. We’re building it.

ryerson.ca
**DEEP THINKING, SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Advancing the integration of knowledge and practice

The university experience involves learning workplace skills, but more importantly, it’s about learning how to think critically. Experts say universities should include thought-provoking discussions that involve innovative graduate students who can make productive differences in their communities, and beyond.

“We push students to challenge their own thinking and explore. Their thoughts become the basis of our future workforce,” says Dr. Tara Hyland-Russell, vice-president Academic at St. Mary’s University.

There’s a compelling need for transformation across the world. We need thinkers and change makers who can influence businesses and pressing issues such as climate change, global inequality and poverty.

A liberal arts school with small classes, St. Mary’s University fosters a deep level of thinking through mentorship and a dedication to social justice. “We discuss important themes, philosophy and social issues purposely, to train our students to be leaders, writers, and public thinkers in a larger world,” says the president. Pursuing problem solving also looks at the science of society. “We don’t just think about the facts; we think about the nuance of truth and intention.”

A crucial nuance of truth is self-awareness, Dr. Hyland-Russell says. Dr. Tara Hyland-Russell says that self-awareness can be a flexible mindset. Students have it instilled in them from the start. “We know students are the future of our workforce,” says the president.

“Students at St. Mary’s will carry their university programs, combining book learning with work-integrated learning. They can choose from study abroad programs, internships, community service learning, community positions, faculty-driven research, and partnerships. They can form their own partnerships and opportunities for meaningful and purposeful learning,” she says.

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Dr. Tara Hyland-Russell, vice-president Academic at St. Mary’s University in Calgary

**BY DENISE ANYTV PROFESSOR OF COLLEGES AND INSTITUTES CANADA**

Mary Griffiths’ Whistlestop, President of Canada’s Bakery in Charlottetown, PEI, worked toward automating parts of its production because of labour shortages, it did what a growing number of Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are doing and hired its local college to help. So Mary Griffiths and a team of eight local students and experts worked together to develop a new ultra-sonic cutting system.

In a first of its kind, the students took an existing robotic cutting bar and replacethe bakery’s long-used manual method of cutting cookie bars. They identified that a robotic controlled ultrasound cutting system would be the ideal solution and worked with the company to develop and implement the new system successfully. The robotic cutting system will speed up their production and save businesses.

The College of the North Atlantic partnered with students and experts to develop a new cutting system for a bakery in Prince Edward Island. This is why Colleges and Institutes Canada, along with six other national and regional associations, recently called on the Government of Canada to help expand SME participation in the innovation ecosystem by investing $40-million in the government’s Innovation Cluster program.

The partnerships allow students to work hand in hand with employers to develop ideas, design prototypes and communicate solutions to potential business partners. Today, the partnerships allow students to design, develop and create cutting-edge products and services to solve current problems.

The partnerships also benefit the communities and the organizations that participate. Students often find that they are able to work with teachers in a way that is positively influenceful, says the president.

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Introducing Farming 2.0. Using the best of computer science and machine learning, farmers world-wide benefit from higher yields in increasingly variable growing conditions — and from a uniquely Saskatchewan perspective.
EVALUATING GOVERNMENT

Innovative online learning prepares graduates for evaluating government, public policy and program performance

With your long-term engagement in fostering diversity and inclusiveness, what is a piece of what you have been able to achieve?

I began working to advance the representation of women in tech almost three decades ago. While there has been progress and with significant challenges to overcome this is still a work in progress. We have seen remarkable women enter into tech and remain positive. We are working to address this with the Women Entrepreneurs Knowledge Hub (WEKH), which is part of the federal government’s Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES), an ambitious plan that aims to double the number of women entrepreneurs by 2025.

How can the goal be accomplished? As an investment group that supports women-owned and operated businesses, WEKH recognizes the work that is required by many small and mid-sized businesses across the country. This work is critical to the success of women entrepreneurs and advancing the trajectory of women’s economic and social empowerment.

What are some of the barriers women entrepreneurs face?

One barrier is the stereotype of what someone who sees an entrepreneur as looking like. If you see people that are not in the range of what you think entrepreneurs look like, then people will make assumptions about what they value and whom they support. It is important to keep in mind that women entrepreneurs come up with a combination of Mux Zacharias, Elon Musk, Bill Gates and Steve Jobs. A simple example would be that men tend to have a more solitary approach in building the vision for creating something new and covering a wide spectrum of actors. Women are more likely to be involved in a team-oriented approach to building successful businesses, but these sectors need to be overhauled.

When we look at organizations supporting entrepreneurs, both financial institutions, venture capitalists, incubators and accelerators, providing access to educational institutions, research shows there are all other biases built into the processes that affect who they value and whom they support. But the problem is complex. We know women entrepreneurs have different expectations and abilities than others. This is something we must take into consideration when we develop an integrated strategy, which convened these complex interactions.

How can this be addressed?

One way, we can encourage women entrepreneurs to be more visible, to have the successes, as the, in order to increase awareness of what they are. It’s only one way to develop the visibility. If you want to stay at the top of the game, women entrepreneurs must stay in the game. And we also have to recognize this not only in technology companies but also in the management of the companies. Entrepreneurs can take many forms, and when you consider the variance women, immigrant, indigenous, Aboriginal, diverse, and disabilities and others, it adds to the diversity. In many areas, diversity has different challenges, valuing and removing women in cities. Better understanding the ongoing work to develop women entrepreneurs is going to be critical to understand what makes this project so successful.

How can we be effective in following one strategy? The strategy has to be the success of women entrepreneurs and that is what you add value to. It is important to keep in mind that animals face the same challenges as refugees. When we look at men, we see the challenges that we have to support for the market and what they need to do. Better understanding the ongoing work to develop women entrepreneurs is going to be critical to understand what makes this project so successful.

Oak & Aylwin

G&A THE GOAL: DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS BY 2025

By building a robust evaluative platform, and training new evaluators to conduct programs online, Carleton University has more than doubled applications to 80 from 34 per year. While we can’t do everything, says Dr. Shepherd, and innovation must be in the way we work.

Dr. Robert Shepherd, executive of the graduate online Diplomas in Public Policy and Program Evaluation (DPPE) at Carleton University

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As issues around immigration, migration, and multiculturalism continue to grow around the world, Canada, largely a nation of immigrants, continues to advance its leadership role in developing innovative research that will impact policy and positions in these critical areas.

At the forefront of this work is Ryerson University and professor Dr. Triandafyllidou, who recently was named the Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Migration and Integration. The federal government announced the prestigious appointment in April - the first CERC for Ryerson since 2012 - in a move in research funding over seven years.

Dr. Triandafyllidou, a world-class researcher and international expert in migration and settlement, arrived in Toronto in August to accept the seven-year appointment in April.

"I knew that Ryerson has built around a number of themes in migration and is the perfect platform for making the work we do here known at a global level."

Dr. Triandafyllidou is curious about a number of themes in migration, including studying migration trends and migrant agency. She will conduct comparative analysis of public policy, focusing on Canadian realities and advancing a global perspective. It will examine cities' diversity, considering impacts on infrastructure and services, and the program will build on the partnerships and collaborations that were already a reality at Ryerson.

Inquiries into migration and integration are very timely, as questions around citizenship abound, along with the local and worldwide rise of xenophobia and populism.

"The ambition is to build on and identify the implications of the Truth and Reconciliation process occurring."

Analyzing new types of data, gauging the impact of discipline and policy across migration is the case if it in migration management and fine-tuning integration policies. On other hand, "If you look at a Facebook account, you can have a migration trajectory," she says. "But what we want to do is explore the potential for social media and other methodologies to inform and fine-tune integration policies, seeking supplementary interdisciplinary research to inform our work."

In considering shifts in migration patterns, there's an emerging need to research environmentally induced migration. Dr. Triandafyllidou adds: "Some might say, 'We're not going to be really affected any time soon.' But there is a small secondary movement that is caused by environmental change."

The trend of developing or affluent countries towards attracting high-skilled and new scope of inquiry, she says. "We need to look at how both skilled and low-skilled migrant transition between long-term, and coming into the world of work."

Dr. Triandafyllidou urges, "We need to think about these processes with the global processes of transformation of our societies. Often times, anti-immigration attitudes actually have more to do with how our work and welfare are changing. But migration somehow becomes a catalyst for popular resentment."

Dr. Triandafyllidou sees the CERC as a commitment from the Government of Canada and Ryerson to more clearly identify those conditions that will provide evidence of why certain things are happening, and that migration is not the problem but the opportunity.”
Our researchers and students are breaking new ground in computing science and machine learning, conducting world-leading AI research that delivers innovative results across disciplines and sectors.

Our spin-off companies are detecting colon cancer earlier and making the power of medical imaging more accessible and available. Optimizing first responder deployment in forest fires. Enabling discovery and repurposing existing drugs to treat rare and newly identified illnesses through an online database.

That’s University of Alberta impact.