Niya et al.  

Educational institutions play an instrumental role in social and political change, and are responsible for the environmental and social ethics of their institutional practices. The essays in this volume critically examine scholarly research practices in the age of the Anthropocene, and ask what accountability educators and researchers have in 'righting' their relationship to the environment. The volume further calls attention to the geographical, financial, legal and political barriers that might limit scholarly dialogue by excluding researchers from participating in traditional modes of scholarly conversation. As such, 

Right Research

is a bold invitation to the academic community to rigorous self-reflection on what their research looks like, how it is conducted, and how it might be developed so as to increase accessibility and sustainability, and decrease carbon footprint. The volume follows a three-part structure that bridges conceptual and practical concerns: the first section challenges our assumptions about how sustainability is defined, measured and practiced; the second section showcases artist-researchers whose work engages with the impact of humans on our environment; while the third section investigates how academic spaces can model eco-conscious behaviour.

This timely volume responds to an increased demand for environmentally sustainable research, and is outstanding not only in its interdisciplinarity, but its embrace of non-traditional formats, spanning academic articles, creative acts, personal reflections and dialogues.

Right Research will be a valuable resource for educators and researchers interested in developing and hybridizing their scholarly communication formats in the face of the current climate crisis.

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Cover design by Emilie St-Hilaire.
Educational institutions have long been at the fore of social and political change, a fact that was reaffirmed by the historic student-led Global Climate Strikes in the fall of 2019. Universities help to generate ideas and foster critical thought. That is why, in the face of the current climate emergency, the academy is uniquely positioned to take action. This collection—Right Research: Modelling Sustainable Research Practices in the Anthropocene—asks what responsibility do we, as educators and researchers have, in ‘righting’ our relationship to the environment? What does it mean to ‘do research’ sustainably? How can we reflect on and adjust our own institutional practices?

This anthology was inspired by an annual virtual conference at the University of Alberta, whose innovative online format was specifically chosen to minimize its carbon footprint. Organized by co-editors Chelsea Miya, Oliver Rossier, Geoffrey Rockwell and others, the Around the World (AtW) econference ran for six years between 2013 and 2018 and resulted in the production of an econference handbook and the establishment of a special virtual conference grant program to fund econferences at the University. The theme of the final AtW conference was ‘Sustainable Research: Modelling Nearly Carbon-Neutral Practices in the 21st Century.’ Researchers from around the world came together to discuss sustainable research in its many forms and to address the question of how we as an academic community can work together to learn how to better mobilize ideas without flying so many people. We

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also called attention to the geographical, financial as well as legal and/or political barriers that limit scholarly dialogue by excluding researchers from participating in traditional conferences. We asked how we might consider alternative or hybrid formats that are more inclusive and ultimately more sustainable.

The works in this collection were inspired by the conference theme of sustainable research, but also extend the conversation beyond the original event. There has been increasing interest in scholarship that foregrounds the role of academia in fighting climate change. Recent scholarly works include Julian Keniry’s *Ecodemia* (1995), Geoffrey Chase and Peggy Bartlett’s *Sustainability on Campus* (MIT, 2004), Mitchell Thomashow’s *The Nine Elements of a Sustainable Campus* (MIT, 2014), Patrizia Lombardi and Giulia Sonetti’s *News from the Front of Sustainable University Campuses* (Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2017), Walter Leal Filho et al.’s *Towards Green Campus Operations* (Springer 2017) and *Sustainability on University Campuses* (Springer 2019) and Ken Hiltner’s *Writing a New Environmental Era* (Routledge, 2019). The demand for research in this area reflects both the urgency of the current climate emergency and academics’ growing desire to reflect on their own practices and take the lead in modelling solutions.

What sets this anthology apart from similar collections is not only its interdisciplinarity, but its embrace of non-traditional formats. In order to reflect the diverse ways that sustainable-thinking manifests in research, particularly in practices of research-creation, these ‘interventions’ include not only academic articles, but also creative works, personal reflections, and dialogues.

*Section One: Re-defining Sustainability* challenges our assumptions about how sustainability is defined, measured, and practiced. Howard Nye makes an ethical argument for why our individual actions still have meaningful impact. Petra Dolata exposes the complex and contradictory history of sustainable thinking as it arose in connection with the unsustainable practices of the energy sector. Kristine Kowalchuk and Amanda Starling Gould each argue that the humanities has a unique role ‘righting’ our relationship to the environment. Doug Barlage and Gem Shoute consider the carbon impact of the digital revolution. The section concludes with a dialogue between Mél Hogan and Deb Verhoeven on the ecological promise of DNA computing.
Section Two: Art in/and the Anthropocene showcases artist-researchers whose work responds to and engages with the impact of humans on our environment. Joshua Korenblat offers a new approach to data visualization informed by Goethe’s ‘tender empiricism’. Eric Benson and Priscilla Ferronato experiment with ways of incorporating systems thinking into design education. Michael Leung’s photo essay documents the struggle of rural farmers in China and India to maintain their connection to the land even as they are being forcibly displaced by developers. Lai-Tze Fan reflects on the makings of the ‘e-waste peep show,’ an installation that offers a voyeuristic glimpse of labour conditions inside an e-waste dumpsite. The section concludes with a series of interludes that reflect on creativity in the face of climate catastrophe; series editor Natalie Loveless is joined by artists Andrew S. Yang, Karin Bolender, Christa Donner, Scott Smallwood, Leanne Olsen and Jessie Beier.

Section Three: Sustainable Campuses investigates how academic spaces can model eco-conscious behaviour. The section begins at the intersection of virtual and physical space: Ted Dawson’s case study of digital centres asks how researchers can become more conscientious of the environmental impacts of computer technology. My Green Labs founder Allison Paradise then reflects on the push to help science laboratories kick unsustainable habits. Hart Cohen is joined by Abby Mellick Lopes, Jonathon Allen, Maryella Hatfield and Alison Gill in a survey of experimental eco-initiatives at Western Sydney University, the result of making a culture of sustainability and ‘repair’ central to the university’s mandate. Of course, academic spaces include not only environments for conducting research but also environments for exchanging and disseminating ideas. With that in mind, the section on sustainable campuses closes with a trio of articles—by authors Terry Anderson, Nick Byrd, and Oliver Rossier, Chelsea Miya, and Geoffrey Rockwell—on ‘greening’ academic gatherings by moving conferences online.