

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**MY PLAN FOR THIS YEAR'S REPORT** was to discuss the first five years of the Foundation's efforts to build the institutional capacity supporting Canada's transition to a low-carbon, sustainable economy. And I will. However, it is difficult to comment on anything now without acknowledging how the COVID-19 pandemic has upended the world. There has been extensive coverage of the extent to which COVID has caused disproportionate economic harm to specific demographics; notably women, young people, and service-sector employees.

The pandemic has exposed vulnerabilities in the socio-economic fabric of many nations, with some faring better than others, and Canada being among the more fortunate. There is, however, added hardship in Canada for those working in the oil and gas sector, where oil prices collapsed, caused by an increase in global supply, just as the pandemic brought on a massive reduction in demand for fuels.

It is this context that positions the work of the Ivey Foundation in a new light. Our focus over the past five years has been helping Canada transition to a more sustainable economy with an emphasis on shifting energy systems to become more efficient and less carbon intensive. Much of our work has been based on the premise that Canada's reliance on oil and gas as a major driver of the economy, and government revenues, was high-risk and short-sighted. Canada needed to introduce policies, market instruments and sustainable finance tools to accelerate the transition to an economy that was more diverse, and more resilient in the long-term. COVID has further compressed the timelines and heightened the urgency for this transition.

Last year we initiated an independent evaluation of our first five years of granting and programmatic activities in the Economy and Environment Program, our principle grant-making endeavour. The evaluation reinforced the Program's approach and direction, noting the role we have played in the creation of several important new organizations.

Since 2014 the Foundation has supported the creation of eight bespoke institutions and collaborations designed to fill what we saw as gaps in Canada's capacity to research, understand, communicate, and overcome fundamental barriers to transitioning the economy. Below is a list and what they do:

1. Accelerating the transition to a low-carbon economy with the [Transition Accelerator](#) a collaboration between research institutes, government and industry, developing transition pathways for major energy and socio-technical systems.
2. Financing the transition to a sustainable economy with the [Institute for Sustainable Finance](#) a collaboration of nearly twenty business schools undertaking research, teaching and policy building on our work with the [Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance](#).
3. Providing independent, expert climate policy advice with the [Canadian Institute for Climate Choices](#) a new national policy research organization.

4. Advising and educating on environmental pricing through [Canada's Ecofiscal Commission](#) an organization that became Canada's trusted expert body on carbon pricing; with its mandate completed, it has been folded into the new [Climate Institute](#).
5. Creating a national voice for energy efficiency, with [Efficiency Canada](#) leading efforts to create jobs and support local economic activity through a national building retrofit strategy.
6. Convening energy sector stakeholders, governments, regulators, data modellers and others in the creation of the [Canadian Centre for Energy Information](#) a new portal for energy data and analysis.
7. Building a coalition of farmer-led and farmer-supporting organizations across Canada, [Farmers for Climate Solutions](#), to design policies and practices that lead to more sustainable farming, addressing the increasing risk of climate change to Canada's food supply.
8. Promoting philanthropic collaboration through The Clean Economy Fund, an organization that convenes foundations across Canada, including for many of the initiatives listed above.

One of the main takeaways from the five-year program evaluation, and our internal strategic planning work, was the importance of integrating across these efforts. This takes us back to how COVID has put the work of the Ivey Foundation, and more importantly our grantees, in a new and more urgent frame. Our custom is not to discuss activities undertaken in 2020 in a 2019 Annual Report, however, with COVID, that rule is being discarded.

In May of 2020, we convened a group of finance, policy, and sustainability experts to design a plan for a recovery to a resilient economy; one that achieves Canada's near-term goals of creating jobs and economic activity, while also delivering on the critical need to build a sustainable and competitive economy for the future. Called the [Task Force for a Resilient Recovery](#), the group includes many of the country's top minds on these matters. This thinking is not unique, in fact much of the world is engaged in similar exercises along the lines of The Economist (May 23) calling upon countries to "seize the moment to flatten the climate curve."

The ideas coming out of these exercises, for example at the European Commission, align with much of the work being done in Canada, including the build-out of hydrogen infrastructure, retrofitting buildings at an accelerated pace, decarbonizing transport systems, and expanding electrification infrastructure. Our fear is that Canada may be falling behind much of the world in our ability to compete in the economy of the future. COVID aside, it is critical that we accelerate investment in the infrastructure, systems and technologies that will position Canada for success.

It is too soon to tell whether the world will return to business-as-usual or use this moment to take stock. We are optimistic that with the right mix of policy, inventiveness, and foresight, combined with highly capable organizations and people, Canada will pivot to an economy that not only endures COVID but thrives in a vibrant, modern world.

**Bruce Lurie, PhD**