



# Center for Ethics & Social Responsibility (CESR) Impact Report



# Introduction

“ I’m proud of CESR’s efforts over the past year to support higher-quality programs related to sustainability and social impact for Leeds students and CESR’s faculty affiliates. We hosted high-profile speakers from Nike and Apple, launched a new Sustainability & ESG MBA Pathway, and implemented a Climate Curriculum Award, among other initiatives aimed to empower current and future business leaders to solve tough environmental, social, and ethical challenges.

Moving forward, we plan to offer innovative experiential learning opportunities that complement the Leeds curriculum and help students get great jobs, ideally with companies whose values align with their own.

- **Kathryn Wendell, Executive Director of CESR**

# CESR's Mission and Strategy

CESR's mission is to empower current and future business leaders to solve environmental, social, and ethical challenges. We envision a more sustainable, inclusive, and ethical world.

## STUDENT PROGRAMS

Objective #1: Provide Leeds students with sustainability and social impact knowledge, skills, and experiences so that they get great jobs.

**Outcome indicator: Job placement rate for CESR affiliated students at Leeds, with a strong emphasis on the quality of jobs.**

- Attract high-potential students to Leeds.
- Offer experiential learning opportunities, including practitioner-led bootcamps, industry treks, corporate consulting projects, and case competitions. Empower student clubs. Facilitate students' participation in out-of-state experiences through scholarships.
- Increase students' participation rates in the CESR-led SRE Certificate (for undergrads) and MBA career pathways in Clean Energy, Natural & Organic Products, and Sustainability & ESG.
- Support job placement by helping to source industry experts and collaborating with the Career team.
- Build a community of mission-aligned alumni.

## FACULTY AFFILIATES PROGRAM

Objective #2: Support, share, and celebrate innovative faculty research and teaching so that we build a community of excellence in sustainability and social impact at Leeds.

**Outcome indicator: Percent of Leeds faculty across all divisions who participate in CESR's Faculty Affiliates program, including the faculty awards.**

- Support, share, and celebrate innovative faculty research.
- Support and celebrate teaching that aligns with CESR's mission.
- Build a community of faculty at Leeds who support CESR's mission (e.g., by co-hosting sustainability and ESG-related seminars in each division to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue and exchange of ideas).

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Objective #3: Develop strategic relationships that enable success for our programs, drive positive impact, and position CESR/Leeds as a center of excellence for sustainability and social impact.

**Outcome indicator: Number and percent of new relationships with companies that lead to experiential learning opportunities, high-profile guest speakers, donations/sponsorships, or jobs/internships.**

- Build relationships with influential companies and organizations to offer new experiential learning opportunities, guest speakers, and job connections.
- Collaborate with CESR's peer centers at other universities to organize national convenings, including ClimateCAP and the Net Impact Case Competition.
- Promote and manage the online Executive Certificate in ESG Strategy Program, which drives revenue for CESR and enhances our reputation.
- Form cross-campus collaborations that position CU Boulder as a center of excellence for sustainability.

# Meet Our Team



Sarah Arney  
Program Coordinator



Katherine Ratledge  
Program Manager



Julie Waggoner  
Director of Operations



Clare Wang  
Faculty Director



Kathryn Wendell  
Executive Director



Noa Greene  
Student Assistant



Coco Goldman  
Student Assistant



Sena Kavi  
Student Assistant



01

Student  
Programs

# Donor Impact

**This year, CESR offered 17 (*vs. 32 last year*) experiential learning opportunities to undergraduate and MBA students.**

We focused on offering more meaningful hands-on experiences involving higher-profile business leaders.

- **Clean Energy Project Finance Bootcamp**
- **Treks to Expo West, ClimateCAP, and Prometheus Materials**
- **Carbon Accounting Workshop**
- **"Business and Sustainability: Great Jobs and Current Trends" panel featuring industry leaders from Wells Fargo, Starbucks, Deloitte, and Fannie Mae**
- **ESG and Sustainability Bootcamp**, featuring industry leaders from Nvidia, Danone, Crocs, Dow, Google, RMI, and more
- **Net Impact Case Competition**, sponsored by Arrow Electronics
- **A Conversation with John Cummings, POWDR CEO**
- **MBArk2Boulder Sustainable Foods Conference**



# “Leaders in Sustainability” Speaker Series



This year CESR piloted conversations with leaders from well-known brands, such as Nike and Apple, to attract and inspire a large audience of primarily undergraduate students from Leeds and across campus.

At each event, our executive director, Kathryn Wendell, moderated the conversation alongside an undergraduate student, followed by app-facilitated audience Q&A.



## **Just Do Good:** A Fireside Chat with Nike's Chief Sustainability Officer

**122 Attendees**

Featured speaker: **Noel Kinder**, *Chief Sustainability Officer at Nike*

Student moderator: **Renner Skidmore** (BusAna '25)

## **Think Different:** Technology, Sustainability, and Social Impact at Apple

**84 Attendees**

Featured speaker: **Mark Levin**, *Sustainability and Social Initiative Solution Owner at Apple*

Student moderator: **Sena Kavi** (BusAna, Mktg '26)



# 4,128

Total Leeds undergraduate population this year

**ALL** learned about ethics, sustainability, and social responsibility through the core curriculum

**267** undergraduate students attended CESR events (vs **71** last year)

**121** students (2.9%) were enrolled in the Social Responsibility & Ethics Certificate (SRE), which is like a minor (vs **113** last year)

**71** students were enrolled in the Social Responsibility & Sustainability Track (SRS), which is like a major (vs **65** last year)

## CESR's Undergraduate Student Reach



# SRE & SRS Employment Examples

## Social Responsibility and Ethics Certificate

- HR Development Program Solar Team, *Caterpillar, Inc.*
- Cyber Risk Analyst, *Deloitte Consulting*
- Co-Founder, *Next Use Composting and Recycling*
- Management Intern, *HR Green*
- Private Banking Analyst, *J.P. Morgan*
- Intern, *FTI Consulting*

## Social Responsibility and Sustainability Track

- Sustainability Analyst, *DevryBV (ESG Consulting)*
- Renewable Energy Development Intern, *Scout Clean Energy*
- Airport Operations Intern, *United Airlines*
- Analytics & Sales Intern, *Bloomberg*
- Business Intern, *Xcel Energy*
- Operations Intern, *Charles Schwab*

## Stories of Impact



*“Throughout my experience with the SRE program, my biggest takeaway has been the understanding that sustainability and ethics are not just add-ons to a business strategy but are integral to its core.”*

- Josh Begun (Mgmt, SRE ‘24), Senior Program Manager,  
*The Ranch Hudson Valley*



*“The students I’ve met in my CESR classes are some of the greatest friends I’ve made at Leeds, and I am grateful for that. This curriculum surrounds you with a group of remarkable people who are poised to change the world - take advantage of that network and remain teachable.”*

- Abby Lowery (Mktg, SRE ‘24), Sales Associate Leader,  
*PepsiCo*



**130**

Total Leeds Full-Time MBA population this year (vs **164** last year)

**ALL** learned about ethics, sustainability, and social responsibility through the core curriculum

**34** students (26%) were enrolled in the three CESR Pathways (vs **43** last year)

**73** MBA students attended CESR events (vs **43** last year)

## CESR's Graduate Student Reach



# CESR MBA Pathways

## Clean Energy

**16** MBA students (20 in AY23)



## Sustainability & ESG

**26** MBA students (27 in AY23)



## Natural & Organic

**8** MBA students (18 in AY23)



MBA Pathway students can now earn a graduation cord.

### New resources and support

- **Industry experts** to provide career advice and guidance.
- A dedicated **Slack channel** to streamline communication.
- **Priority consideration** for funding.

### To earn a cord, students must complete

- Six credits of relevant **coursework**.
- Three **experiential learning opportunities**.
- One relevant **internship or consulting project**.

**Note:** This year students had to register for the Pathways for the first time, which caused a decrease in our numbers. Students can enroll in multiple Pathways.

# MBA Placement Examples

## Clean Energy

- Project Manager, *National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)*
- Financial Analyst: Renewable Development, *Invenergy*
- Associate: Clean Energy Market Analysis, *Renewable Energy Buyers Alliance*
- Energy Trader Graduate Intern, *Guzman Energy*

## Sustainability

- Market Transformation and Development Intern, *US Green Building Council*
- ESG Audit & Assurance Intern, *Deloitte Consulting*
- MBA Intern in ESG Financial Services, *Infosys*

## Natural & Organic

- Corporate Associate, *Galway Sustainable Capital, Inc.*
- MBA Internal Sales and Marketing Associate, *Yasso*
- Category Analyst, *OLIPOP*



# Mary Boling

(Clean Energy Pathway, MBA '24)

**Associate, Clean Energy Market Analysis**  
*Clean Energy Buyers Alliance (CEBA)*



---

Arrow Electronics Sustainability Consultant + Site Visit  
President of Net Impact Club  
Duke Energy in Emerging Markets Case Competition  
Clean Energy Project Finance and Carbon Accounting Workshops  
Internships at Optera (Market Research), Alterra Mountain  
Company (Change Management)  
Impact Business Buff Award Winner

---

“CESR and the Leeds community have supported me both on and off campus to take advantage of opportunities that would help me successfully pivot into the clean energy space...

When opportunities presented themselves outside of Boulder that would further my learning, both CESR and the broader Leeds community helped me secure funding to make those opportunities a possibility.”

**- Mary Boling**

# Travel Stipends

CESR's generous donors enabled **15** students to access career-enhancing case competitions, company visits, and conferences.

### Students attended:

- Arrow Electronics supply chain sustainability site visit
- ClimateCAP MBA Summit
- Duke Energy in Emerging Markets Case Competition (Placed #2 out of more than 60 teams.)
- Department of Energy Case Competition
- ExpoWest



# Net Impact Case Competition

Since 2001, the Net Impact Case Competition (NICC) has been an established sustainability case competition in which graduate students from around the world provide creative solutions to real-world business problems.

In the past **six years** the competition has hosted:

**7** of the top 10 Business Schools in the US

**13** of the top 20 Worldwide



## Championship Teams:

1. CU Boulder Masters of the Environment
2. University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management
3. University of Alberta, Alberta School of Business

Total Awarded: **\$17,500**

The year's prompt: **propose a biodiversity strategy for Arrow Electronics.**

**78 competitors** pitched innovative solutions to judges from industry.





# CESR's alumni achieve extraordinary impact throughout their careers

**Omid Alemi**  
(MBA '17)

*Director  
at Excelsior Energy Capital  
Teaches the Clean Energy  
Finance Bootcamp*



**Lauren Kotze**  
(Fin, SRE '16)

*Sustainability Manger  
at The Cheesecake Factory  
2023 GreenBiz 30 Under 30*



**Sarah Reice**  
(Fin, SRE '18)

*Sustainability Manager  
at Anthropologie  
2024 GreenBiz 30 Under 30*



**Zhenghua "Z" Yang**  
(Fin, SRE '14)

*Founder & Executive Director  
at Serenity Forge  
2020 Forbes 30 Under 30*



## Donor Impact



# Impact Business Buff Award Winners 2024

## Faculty:



Joshua Nunziato  
(from undergrads)



Dejun 'Tony' Kong  
(from MBAs)

## Graduating Students:



Gabriel Cervantes  
(SRS '24)



Steven Winterbach  
(SRS, SRE '24)



Mary Boling  
(MBA, Clean Energy '24)

## 'Rising Star' Students:



Natalie Bovie  
(MKTG, SRE '25)



Emma Ritson  
(MBA/MENV,  
Sustainability '25)

Leeds students nominate inspiring faculty and peers for CESR's **Impact Business Buff Awards**.

"I believe that the impact I leave is one of empowerment - helping to empower my classmates to see themselves as a catalyst for positive change and to have the curiosity and drive to make a meaningful impact in this world."

- **Steven Winterbach**



02

Faculty  
Programs

# CESR's Faculty Affiliates Program

Currently 58 Leeds faculty members (representing over 1/3 of all Leeds faculty across all seven divisions) participate in CESR's Faculty Affiliates Program.

Visit our webpage to view the faculty profiles:  
*[leeds.ly/cesrfaculty](https://leeds.ly/cesrfaculty)*

# CESR's Faculty Awards

## Research Grants

**26**

Faculty applied

*(up from 17 in AY23)*

**8**

awards given

*(vs 7 in AY23)*

**7 of 7**

divisions represented

*(vs 5 in AY23)*

**\$32,000**

awarded

*(same as AY23)*

## Teaching and Curriculum Awards

*(new in AY24)*

**14**

Faculty applied

**6**

awards given

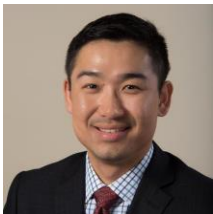
**4**

divisions represented

**\$13,000**

awarded

## Best Paper Award (co-winners)



**Dejun 'Tony' Kong:** *Appraising and Reacting to Perceived Pay For Performance: Leader Competence and Warmth as Critical Contingencies*



**Bryce Schonberger:** *Does Sensationalism Affect Executive Compensation? Evidence from Pay Ratio Disclosure Reform*

## Highest Impact Paper Award



**Ethan Poskanzer:** *Through the Front Door: Why Do Organizations (Still) Prefer Legacy Applicants?*

**These awards were made possible by CESR's donor-supported endowments.**

## Research Fellowship Grants



**Stephen Billings and Jaehee Song:** *Declining Homeownership and Wealth in Minority Neighborhoods: The Role of Corporate Buying of Single-Family Homes*



**Rebecca Mitchell and Christina Lacerenza:** *Nurturing the Garden: Team-Level Structures that Promote Female Leadership*



**Dejun 'Tony' Kong:** *"A New Way of Seeing" DEI That Guides Better Practices*



**Levente Szentkirályi:** *No CSR, No Market: Rejecting the Supererogatory Industry Standard of Sustainable Development Goals*



**Jeff York:** *Catching the Wave: The Emergence (or lack thereof) of Marine Energy*



# Dejun 'Tony' Kong

**Associate Professor**, Organizational Leadership and Information Analytics,  
Faculty Director of the Leadership Certificate, CESR Faculty Affiliate

---



### **2024 Recognition (from CESR):**

Impact Business Buff Award Winner

Best Paper Award Co-Winner

Research Fellowship Grantee

Climate Curriculum Award Finalist

---

“I’m honored to be a CESR faculty affiliate, supporting CESR’s mission and activities. CESR has supported my work in various ways (e.g., funding, promotion of me and my work), and so has the Leeds School. As a minority faculty member, I greatly appreciate the support and encouragement. I love the fact that CESR has good leadership who promotes inclusion and equity (evidenced by the diverse backgrounds of CESR faculty affiliates), which is very important to me.”

**- Tony Kong**

## In January 2024, *The New York Times* featured a CESR-supported research project from Leeds




This project by Tony Cookson, Emily Gallagher, and Philip Mulder (University of Wisconsin) was the recipient of a CESR Research Fellowship Grant in 2022, which helped to enable the project's launch and completion of the paper.

The New York Times

### ***GoFundMe Is a Boon for Disaster Survivors. Especially the Wealthy Ones.***

Campaigns on the crowdfunding site raised more money for wildfire survivors with high incomes than for those who need help most, researchers found.

[Share full article](#) [Share](#) [Bookmark](#) [Comments 62](#)



A home burning in the Marshall Fire in Louisville, Colo., in 2021. Marc Piscotty/Getty Images

**By Christopher Flavelle**  
Christopher Flavelle writes about efforts to adapt to climate change.

Jan. 29, 2024



## Climate Curriculum Award **Winners:**



Andrea Pawliczek



Austin Moss

## Climate Curriculum Award **Finalists:**



Dejun 'Tony' Kong



Sarah Cowan



Catherine Ruth Lau



Sabrina Volpone



Asaf Bernstein

The **purpose** of this **new award** is to encourage and reward Leeds faculty who have made a contribution to **the integration of climate and sustainability topics** into business courses. It was made possible by a generous gift from the Leeds Family Educational Legacy Fund.



**Dejun 'Tony' Kong, Sarah Cowan, Andrea Pawliczek, Austin Moss, Catherine Ruth Lau, Sabrina Volpone, Asaf Bernstein**

(Award Winners + Finalists from Left to Right)



03

Community  
Engagement

# Companies We Worked With This Year



Fannie Mae®



DANONE  
ONE PLANET. ONE HEALTH



plante moran



# Digital Outreach Efforts



**1,150**

**Total Followers**

**64.7%**

**CO Residents**

**2,450**

**Subscribers**

**38.7%**

**Avg. Open Rate**



**COMMUNITY  
NEWSLETTER**

CESR joined LinkedIn in **2023** to increase our visibility to external audiences and share useful insights from Leeds faculty research, inspiring stories of students and alumni, and impactful examples of our partnerships.

We send a quarterly newsletter to alumni, donors, and other partners including insights on current events, an inside look at teaching and research, and student stories.

**Top 5 Industries:** Higher Education, Internet and Software Development, Business Management Consulting, Non-profit Organizations, Financial and Accounting Services



The active alumni community organized 6 professional development and networking events in 2024.



**612** students have graduated from the program since 2016.



**98%** of alumni would recommend the program.

# CESR's Executive Certificate in ESG Strategy

# Stephanie Ly

---

Head of Impact & ESG, *Aurora Solar* (CESG'24)

### **On her personal meaning of ESG and its importance:**

“I will always be an advocate for businesses to be a force multiplier for good. It’s not only the right thing to do, but ESG makes good business sense. It’s a powerful and useful framework to drive transparency, financial performance, reputation, branding, and so much more. It’s in everyone’s best interest to holistically care about business impact and ESG outcomes.”

### **On her recommendation of the ESG Certificate Program:**

“It is for anyone looking for holistic and engaging experiences built on practical knowledge. The format of the course is ideal for working professionals. The content is relevant, and the materials are fun and engaging to learn. My favorite part of this course is that each week features a guest speaker who is leading the way in the specific topic, whether that’s Social Impact, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI), B Corps, or Financial Reporting.”



**Spring 2024 B:CIVIC Scholarship Recipient**