

2016-2017 Annual Report



LIBRO
PROFESSOR OF
REGIONAL
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

UNIVERSITY
of GUELPH

School of
Environmental Design
& Rural Development

“THE PROFESSORSHIP
WILL HELP US DISCOVER
THE OPPORTUNITIES
FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT. IT IS A
TREMENDOUS CHANCE TO
LEVERAGE THE STRENGTHS
OF THE REGION”

STEPHEN BOLTON,
CEO, LIBRO CREDIT UNION

The Libro Professor of Regional Economic Development was established in 2016 through the generous donations from Libro Credit Union, the Klosler family, and the Roberts family. Together, a \$1 million endowment was created to serve as a catalyst for enhancing regional economic development in Southwestern Ontario.



THE PROFESSOR

Originally from rural Manitoba, Ryan Gibson has a deep intrigue and respect for rural communities, rural people, and the events that shape their futures. Growing up witnessing the transformations in rural development, agriculture, and their influence on communities instilled a fascination and commitment to rural issues. Over the past years Ryan has been a student, practitioner, and admirer of rural populations, dynamics, and interactions. Ryan's research and community engagement focuses on rural and regional development, governance, philanthropy, and public policy.

In June 2015, Ryan was elected President of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network; a national organization committed to strengthening communities by creating economic opportunities that enhance social and environmental conditions. Ryan is the Past President of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation and holds appointments with the Rural Development Institute (Brandon University), the International Centre for Northern Governance and Development (University of Saskatchewan), Institute of Island Studies (University of Prince Edward Island), Saint Mary's University, and Assiniboine Community College.

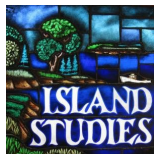
Ryan came to the University of Guelph in the summer 2016 to begin the Libro Professor in Regional Economic Development position.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

The Libro Professor holds a number of appointments and professional affiliations with organizations and institutions across Canada and internationally. Key appointments and affiliations are listed below.



CANADIAN COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NETWORK
Chair, Board of Directors



INSTITUTE OF ISLAND STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
Chair, Advisory Board



REGIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION
Member, Board of Directors



DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY
Adjunct Professor



RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE,
BRANDON UNIVERSITY
Research Affiliate



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR NORTHERN GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Centre Member



INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE RURAL POLICY CONSORTIUM
Contributing Faculty Member



CANADIAN RURAL REVITALIZATION FOUNDATION
Member



ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS COUNCIL OF ONTARIO
Member



TEACHING

Over the past year the Professor taught two courses in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development: Regional Planning, and Community Economic Development. Further, three independent courses were facilitated focusing on social housing, the Community Futures Program, and comparative rural definitions and their applications.

RESEARCH

The Professor was actively engaged in research initiatives focused on economic development, public policy, philanthropy/wealth, and employment. Over the past year, 9 new research projects worth over \$430,000 have been received. Illustrative description of the research initiatives are enclosed in this report.



SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT

The Libro Professor has been actively involved in service and community engagement commitments within the university, within the region, and with the professional community. The Libro Professor met with over 25 community groups, delivered 16 presentations and workshops, 5 guest lectures, 7 articles/book chapters, 4 reports, organized 7 events, and testified as an expert witness on three occasions.

BUILDING STUDENT CAPACITY

Students are an integral focus of the Libro Professorship. Dr. Gibson strives to create research, networking, and capacity building skills development opportunities for students. These opportunities and skills will be valuable assets as students transition to the workforce. Over the 2016-2017 year, Dr. Gibson facilitated over 54 student capacity building opportunities.

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RESEARCH ASSISTANT POSITIONS

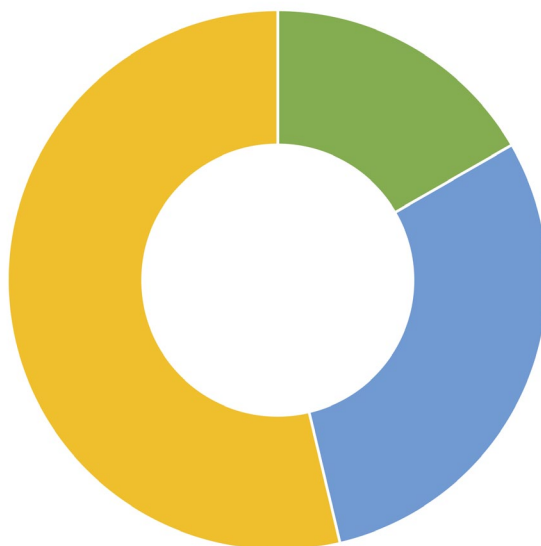
Graduate students were hired as research assistants to undertake work on various research projects.

Students have been involved in conducting interviews, collecting data, analysis, writing reports, and presenting findings at conferences.

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

Through the research grants, Dr. Gibson has been able to facilitate 29 students to participate in conferences, workshops, and summer institutes. These opportunities allow students to present research findings, build new networks, and expand their knowledge.

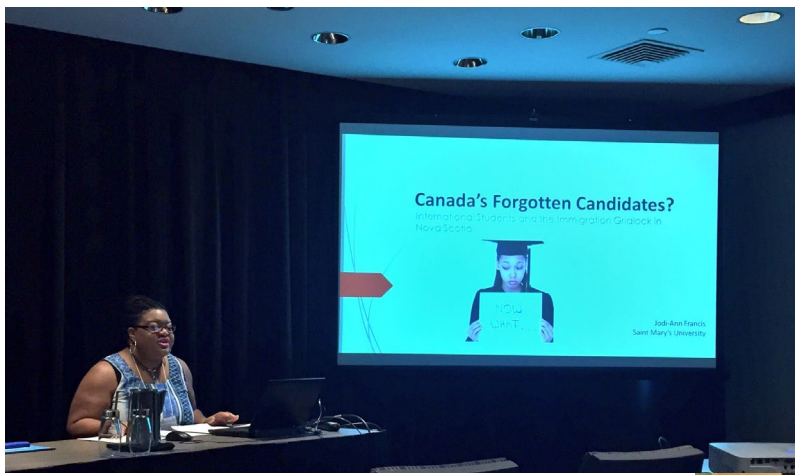


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STUDENT SUPERVISIONS

Academic supervision of graduate students is provided in the Master of Science in Rural Planning and Development programs and the PhD in Rural Studies program at the University of Guelph. In addition, Dr. Gibson supervises students at Saint Mary's University.





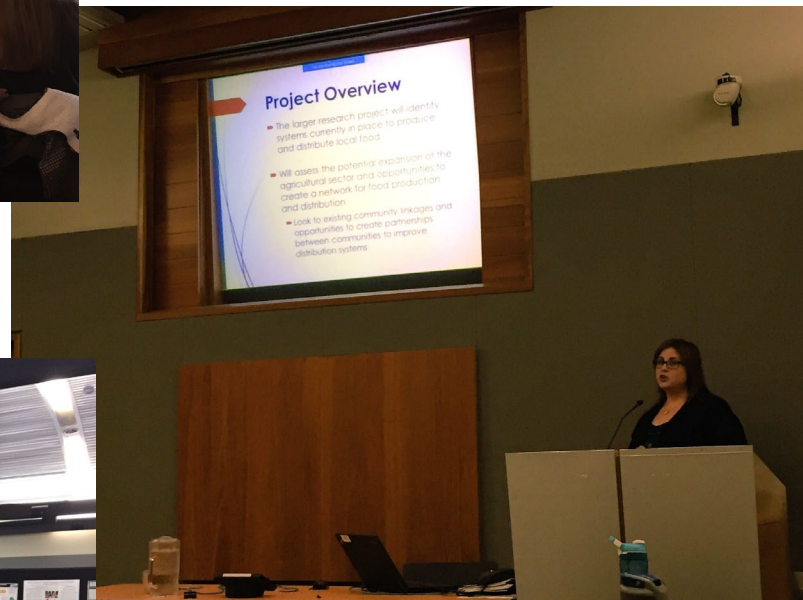
Jodi-Ann Francis presenting at the Metropolis Conference in Montréal.



Graduate student workshop on working in the Ontario public service



Graduate student seminar in Bologna, Italy



Sara Epp presenting at the 2017 Rural Symposium



2017 Rural Symposium Audience

INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY

Influencing change in public policy is a key activity of the Libro Professorship. Over the past year, the Professor has met with community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, provincial governments, and national governments to provide evidence, knowledge, and insights on rural and regional economic development. Four key activities from the past year are outlined below.

1 TESTIMONY TO SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL FINANCE

What is the future role for the Government of Canada in rural infrastructure? Dr. Ryan Gibson presented to the Senate Committee on National Finance regarding rural infrastructure investment. The Senate Committee has been studying the design and delivery of the government's infrastructure commitment, and has asked for comments to address the effects of future infrastructure investments on rural development in Canada.

[Click here for more information.](#)



2 TESTIMONY TO HOUSE OF COMMONS FINANCE COMMITTEE

Dr. Gibson testified before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance to discuss alternative local economic development strategies that could be pursued by the federal government on October 20, 2016 in Québec City. The presentation was an opportunity to identify and encourage new strategies the federal government could implement to build stronger and more vibrant communities. [Click here for more details.](#)

3 TESTIMONY TO SWEDEN GOVERNMENT ON RURAL PROOFING IN CANADA

On September 12, 2016, Dr. Gibson participated as a discussant at the rural proofing workshop hosted by the Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis. The Swedish Agency is exploring how to ensure future national policies have positive impacts on rural and northern communities. The workshop brought together researchers from Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom, and Canada to discuss their experiences in rural proofing. [Click here for more details.](#)



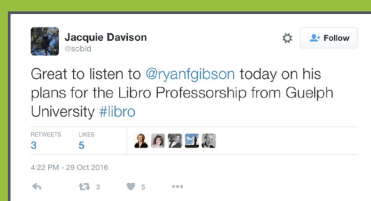
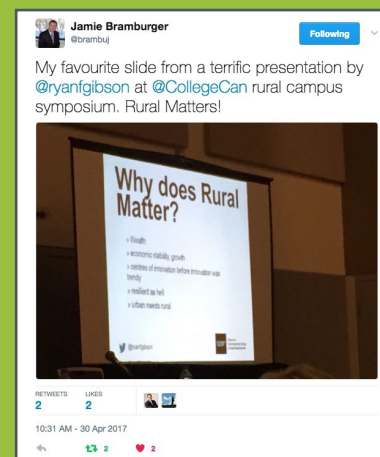
4 EXPERT WITNESS TO SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ON RURAL POLICY

Over the years, Canada has accumulated many lessons learned when it comes to developing and implementing policies in rural areas. These lessons were shared with parliamentarians on June 6, 2017 when Dr. Gibson presented to the Scottish Parliamentary Cross Party Committee on Rural Policy in Edinburgh, Scotland. [Click here for more details.](#)

THE PROFESSOR ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Many of the Libro Professor's activities, achievements, and engagements have been documented through social media, both Twitter (@ryanfgibson) and on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/in/ryanfgibson/). A sample of mentions of Dr. Gibson's work from Twitter are presented here.

Follow Dr. Gibson on Twitter and LinkedIn for the most recent updates!



ADVANCING RESEARCH

The Libro Professor is actively engaged in research initiatives focused on critical topics of regional and rural development. Dr. Gibson's main research interests focus on regional economic development, multi-community collaboration and governance, philanthropy and wealth, and public policy.

In 2016-2017, Dr. Gibson received funding for 9 new research initiatives worth in excess of \$400,000 (noted in orange). These research initiatives focus on better understanding how to build vibrant economies, the role of philanthropy in community planning, and evaluations of rural policies. These research initiatives engage other researchers from across Canada and internationally, university students, and community-based organizations.

Dr. Gibson is also actively engaged in 6 additional research initiatives that started before 2016. These initiatives (noted in blue) focus on enhancing our understanding of precarious employment, community resilience, workforce development, rural policy, and knowledge mobilization.

Throughout the past year, a number of research proposals have been submitted for consideration to funding agencies. There are currently 5 research proposals under review (noted in yellow). These research proposals will be adjudicated over the coming months. Stay tuned for more information.

Further information on all research initiatives can be found at www.ruraldev.ca.

NEW PROJECTS IN YEAR 1					
PROPOSALS SUBMITTED	Community Acceptance of Bioenergy (2017-2018)	Building Vibrant Rural Communities (2016-2017)	Impact of Grantmaking on Socio-Economic Challenges (2017-2018)	Precarious Employment in Ontario (2016-2019)	Dark Horses of Development (2015-2017)
	Different by Design (2017-2018)	Rural Philanthropy (2017 – 2021)	Making a Difference - Rural Policy (2017 – 2020)	Rural Policy Learning Commons (2015-2021)	Workforce Development (2016-2019)
	New Regionalism in the Canadian Landscape (2016-2017)	Examining Local Economic Development (2017-2018)	Rural Proofing: Examining Canada's Rural Lens (2016-2017)	Canadian Regional Development (2015-2017)	Rural Routes Podcasts (2015-2017)
	Comparative International Rural Policy	Influence of Online Shopping on Economic Development	SME Development in Ukraine	ONGOING RESEARCH PROJECTS	
	New Reality of Rural Economic Development	Corporate Social Responsibility in Mining			



RURAL PHILANTHROPY

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of
Canada, 2017-2021

Rural communities are sites of wealth, fuelling the Canadian economy through natural resource industries. Although rural is a source of wealth, over the past 30 years this wealth has largely been redirected out of rural regions to larger urban centres. This issue is exacerbated by processes of globalization, which facilitate the hyper-mobility of finance. Finance is no longer tied to place. A counterbalance to these trends is the emergence of philanthropic organizations in Canada that have been exploring and implementing place-based collective endowments as a response to re-embedding finance in local areas. Philanthropic organizations can collect money to invest in place-based collective endowments.

This research will examine place-based collective endowments as a mechanism to facilitate revitalization in peripheral regions from theoretical, public policy, and local development perspectives.

[Find out more here.](#)

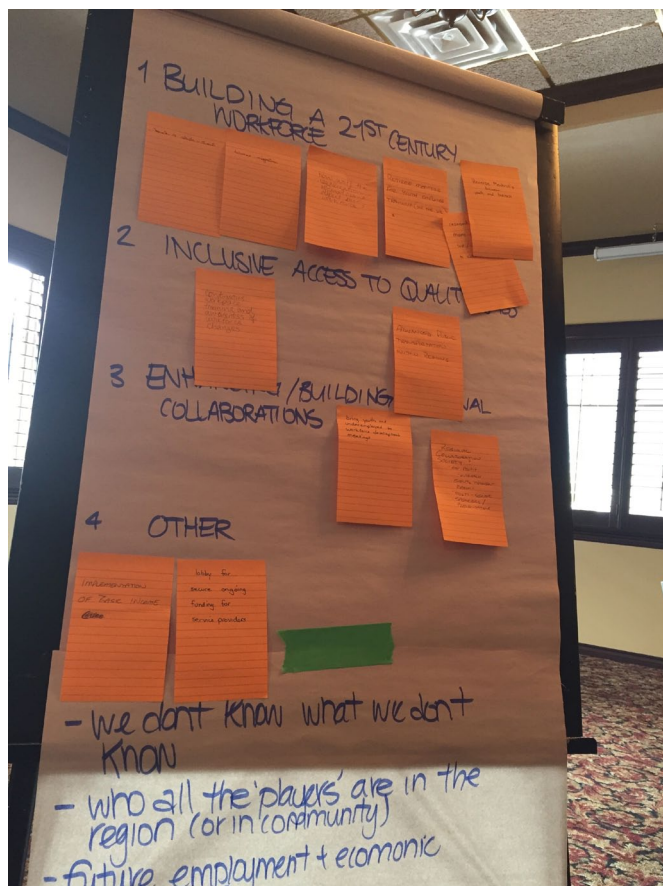
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2017-2020

How effective are provincial rural development policy interventions? How do we know if the intervention was a 'good' or 'effective' investment of public funds? These questions will be examined through this initiative. Examining provincial experiences in designing, implementing, and evaluating rural policies and program will serve to advance rural development in Ontario.

This research initiative will analyze provincial rural policies and programs from across Canada to understand what makes good, effective rural strategies. The findings from this research will provide the government of Ontario evidence-based recommendations for constructing and implementing successful rural policies and programs.

[For more information click here](#)



RURAL PROOFING IN CANADA

Government of Sweden, 2016-2017

This research focused on the experience of Canadian Rural Secretariat and its application of a "rural lens" or rural proofing. During its existence, the Rural Secretariat coordinated the federal government's focus on rural issues, delivered a series of programs and advocated for rural policy. The Rural Lens was created as a policy tool to review federal policies and programs from the perspectives of people living in rural and remote regions. The rural lens was designed to be applied by any government department early in the development of a program or policy using a guide prepared by the Rural Secretariat.

This research examined the impacts and effectiveness of the Rural Lens and generated key lessons learned from the Canadian experience. For more information and to read the final report [click here](#).



OUTPUTS

ARTICLES, BOOKS, AND BOOK CHAPTERS

Brinklow, L. & **Gibson, R.** (2017). *From dark horses to white steeds: Building community resilience*. Charlottetown: Island Studies Press.

Gibson, R. & *Barrett, J. (2017, in press). Fostering rural revitalization through philanthropy? Case study of two rural community foundations. *Journal of Rural and Community Development*.

Gibson, R. & Brinklow, L. (2017). Changing the Narrative: Rural as Resilient and Sustainable. In Press, In L. Brinklow and R. Gibson (Eds.), *From Black Horses to White Steeds: Building Community Resilience* (pp. 1-9). Charlottetown: Island Studies Press.

Gibson, R., Bucklaschuk, J., & Annis, R. (2017). Working Together: Collaborative Response to Welcoming Newcomers in Brandon, Manitoba. In G. Bonifacio and J. Drolet (Eds.), *Immigration and the small city: Canadian experience and perspectives* (pp. 35-53).

Gibson, R., Racher, F., & Annis, R. (2016). Negotiating the culture of care. In Ardene Vollman (Ed.), *Canadian Community as Partner* (pp. 154-176). Philadelphia, USA: Lippincott, Williams, and Wilkins.

Khan, A., **Gibson, R.**, Crowell, E., Perry, L., *Mosher, J., *Dahani, S., and *Gillian, C. (submitted). Bridging the faculties: Towards a transdisciplinarily on environmental sustainability, innovation, and entrepreneurship. *Sustainability*.

Safdar, S., Gui, Y., Annis, R., **Gibson, R.**, & Berry, J. (2017). Intercultural relations in Canada. In Berry, J. (Ed.), *Mutual Intercultural Relations* (pp. 353-374). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

REPORTS

Hall, H., & **Gibson, R.** (2016). *Rural Proofing in Canada: An Examination of the Rural Secretariat and the Rural Lens*. Stockholm: Growth Analysis Unit, Government of Sweden.

Gibson, R., Breen, S., Markey, S., Ashton, B., Brinklow, L., Boyle, C., *Gaspard, V., Lauzon, A., Mealy, R., *Minnes, S., Pollak, A., & Pollett, C. (2017). *Infrastructure Impacts on Rural Development and Economics*. Ottawa: Senate Committee on National Finance.

*Gaspard, V., Longboat, S., & **Gibson, R.** (2017). *From Research to Policy: 2017 Rural Symposium Report*. Guelph: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Gibson, R., & Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (2017). *Building Vibrant Rural Futures: A Summary Report*. Guelph: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

* student contributor

PRESENTATIONS

*Francis, J., & **Gibson, R.** (2017, March). Immigration's forgotten candidates: International students and the immigration gridlock. Looking Forward: Migration and Mobility in 2017 and Beyond, Montréal, Québec.

Fürst, B., **Gibson, R.**, Reibling, S., Fullwood, A., & *Blatherwick, M. (2017, March). Social media and knowledge mobilization. Leslie Harris Centre for Regional Policy and Development Webinar Series, St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Gibson, R. (2017, June). Creating Vibrant Rural Communities. Rural Talks, Exeter, Ontario

Gibson, R. (2017, May). Rural Matters: Realities, implications, and opportunities. Colleges and Institutes Canada 2017 Conference, Ottawa, Ontario.

Gibson, R. (2017, February). Place-based development in rural, island, and remote regions. Rural crossroads: Challenges and opportunities, Bologna, Italy.

Gibson, R. (2016, November). Talking Governance for Regional Development. On Our Way: Sharing Knowledge and Building Capacity for Regional Development, St Anthony, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Gibson, R. (2016, October). Weaving rural policy makers: Emergent themes from the Provincial-Territorial Rural Policy Workshop. Building Vibrant Rural Futures Conference, Guelph, Ontario.

Gibson, R. (2016, October). Investing in Communities. Invest in Our Communities, Our Future!, Plum Point, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Gibson, R., & Hall, H. (2016, September). Rural Proofing in Canada: An examination of the Rural Secretariat and the Rural Lens. Growth Analysis Conference, Stockholm, Sweden.

Gibson, R., Markey, S., Lauzon, A., & Breen, S. (2016). The state of rural Canada: Implications for policy, research, and practice. Econous: The National Community Economic Development Conference, Montréal, Québec.

Gibson, R. (2016, October). Growing Prosperity: The Libro Professorship. Libro Fall Forum 2016, London, Ontario.

Gibson, R., & *Horrocks, L. (2016, October). Facilitating Rural Policy Connections. Building Vibrant Rural Futures Conference, Guelph, Ontario.

Gibson, R. (2016, September). New realities, new strategies: Moving rural and northern communities forward. Culture Shift - Planning Authorities Workshop, Sudbury, Ontario.

Markey, S., **Gibson, R.**, Hall, H., Lauzon, A., Guimond, L., Greenwood, R., and Southcott, C. (2016, September). The State of Rural Canada - A Panel Discussion. Rural Policy Learning Commons Webinar Series, Brandon, Manitoba.

Markey, S., & **Gibson, R.** (2017, February). What is the future of rural Canada. Rural crossroads: Challenges and opportunities, Bologna, Italy.

Vodden, K., **Gibson, R.**, Duff, S., Jean, B., & Hackett, M. (2016, October). Rural Development Through Regionalism - The View from Policy Makers. Building Vibrant Rural Futures Conference, Guelph, Ontario.

** student contributor*

INVITED LECTURES

Gibson, R. (2017, June). What is Rural - The Canadian Approach. Presentation delivered at the 2017 International Comparative Rural Policy Summer Institute in Barcelona, Spain.

Regoli, F., & **Gibson, R.** (2017, July). Community Futures: Canada's Rural Entrepreneurship Program. Presentation delivered at the 2017 International Comparative Rural Policy Summer Institute in Barcelona, Spain.

Gibson, R., Devlin, J., Stallmann, J., Aguilar, F., & Hall, H. (2016, July). Regional Collaboration for Economic Development. Presentation delivered at the 2016 International Comparative Rural Policy Summer Institute in Fairbanks, Alaska.

Steel, B., **Gibson, R.**, & Jean, B. (2016, July). Governance, Regional Collaboration, Cooperatives, Rural Philanthropy, and Rural Revitalization. Presentation delivered at the 2016 International Comparative Rural Policy Summer Institute in Fairbanks, Alaska.

Loring, P., Hall, H., & **Gibson, R.**, (2016, July). Policy Issues in the Rural North. Presentation delivered at the 2016 International Comparative Rural Policy Summer Institute in Fairbanks, Alaska.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Gibson, R. (2017). [Rural Routes Podcast on Northern Housing.](#)

Fürst, B., **Gibson, R.**, Reibling, S., Fullwood, A., & *Blatherwick, M. (2017, March). [Social media and knowledge mobilization webinar.](#)

Gibson, R. (2016). [Rural Routes Podcast on Building Community Philanthropy.](#)

Markey, S., & **Gibson, R.** (2016). [Rural Routes Podcast on the State of Rural Canada.](#)

Gibson, R. (2016). [New forms of governance in rural Canada.](#) Interview with Ryakuga Radio.



RESEARCH GRANTS

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Examining Local Economic Development: An International Comparison between Ontario and Ireland

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Institutional Grant (2017-2018, \$1,500)

Exploring the Role of Place-Based Collective Endowments in the Canadian Periphery

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Grant (2017-2021 | \$205,726)

Making a Difference? Evaluating Rural Development Policy Interventions

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (2017-2020 | \$139,000)

CO-INVESTIGATOR

Building Vibrant Rural Futures

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (2016-2017 | \$50,000)

Principal Investigator: Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation

Community Acceptance of Bioenergy

Rural Policy Learning Commons (2017-2018 | \$10,000)

Principal Investigator: Matteo Vittuari (Università di Bologna)

Different by Design: Exploring the Unique Potential and Many Possibilities that Exist in Rural Places

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Connection Grant (2017-2018 | \$40,200)

Principal Investigator: Terri MacDonald (Selkirk College)

New Regionalism in the Canadian Landscape

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Connection Grant (2016-2017 | \$49,303)

Principal Investigator: Kelly Vodden (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

Precarious Employment in Rural Ontario

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Principal Investigator: Al Lauzon (University of Guelph)

Regional Workforce Development in Rural British Columbia

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Partnership Development Grant (2016-2019 | \$240,000)

Principal Investigator: Terri MacDonald (Selkirk College)

Rural Policy Learning Commons

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Partnership Grant (2015-2021 | \$2,500,000)

Principal Investigator: Bill Reimer (Brandon University)

Rural Proofing: Examining Canada's Rural Secretariat and Rural Lens

Growth Analysis Unit, Government of Sweden (2016-2017 | \$15,000)

Principal Investigator: Heather Hall (University of Waterloo)

CONFERENCE/EVENT ORGANIZING

2018 Rural to Rural Conference Planning Committee

Blythe, Ontario | Member of the Planning Committee

2016 Canadian Association of Geographers Conference

Halifax, Nova Scotia | Co-Chair of the Planning Committee

Building Vibrant Rural Communities

Guelph, Ontario | Co-Chair of the Planning Committee

Different by Design: Exploring Innovation for Rural Prosperity

Nelson, British Columbia | Member of the Planning Committee

Econous: The National Community Economic Development Conference

Montréal, Québec | Member of the Planning Committee

International Conference on the Governance of Geography

Québec City, Québec | Co-chair of the Planning Committee

Traditions and Transformations in the Sustainability of Rural Communities: Balancing Living Culture and Nature

Bø, Norway | Member of the Planning Committee



LOOKING FORWARD

1 RESEARCH ON RURAL POLICY AND WEALTH TRANSFERS

The upcoming year will be busy with research examining provincial rural policy from across Canada and understanding rural philanthropy initiatives. The research will engage a number of graduate student research assistants and will generate new knowledge that will be shared through the website, social media, webinars, and publications.

2 NEW BOOK ON BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

In the fall 2017 a new edited book called *From Black Horses to White Steeds: Building Community Resilience* will be released. The book focuses on how small places have created sustainability and resilience. The book is being published by the Island Studies Press. Watch www.ruraldev.ca for more details this fall.

3 INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE RURAL POLICY TRAINING

The Libro Professor has been invited to join the 2018 International Comparative Rural Policy Summer Institute program hosted by Tuskegee University (Alabama, USA). The program will provide training opportunities for graduate students across North America and Europe.

4 CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT WITH SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO COMMUNITIES

Over the past year, the Professor has met with community leaders, community-based organizations, and regional stakeholders from across Southwestern Ontario. This engagement continues in the upcoming year.

5 NEW RESEARCH IDEAS

There are no shortages of potential questions that need to be resolved. The Professor is looking forward to conversations about new research ideas to build sustainability and prosperity for the region.



STAY CONNECTED



gibsonr@uoguelph.ca



www.ruraldev.ca



www.ryangibson.ca



[@ryanfgibson](https://twitter.com/ryanfgibson)



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ryanfgibson/>

IDEAS FOR RESEARCH? QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE RESOLVED?

Do you have a question that you would like answered? Could your organization benefit from someone examining an issue you are encountering? If so, let us know! We encourage individuals and groups/organizations to propose ideas that could be pursued by students and faculty at the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph. The submission of an idea does not need to be lengthy. Rather, it should provide enough information for someone to understand the current issue and why it is important. All ideas will be shared with students and faculty members. Should someone be interested in your idea, they will contact you directly. Unfortunately, we can not guarantee someone will be able to take up your question. [Click here to submit an idea!](#)



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