

## **The City Institute Director's Message**

As we approach the end of the academic year I wanted to send out another message about our activities over the last academic year and our plans going forward. But first let me update you on my own position. I had agreed to stand in as Acting Director for a one year period while a search took place for a permanent Director. However, as the year went on and I found myself more enamoured of the job I decided to stand for the post and I am delighted to announce that I was very recently appointed as Director for a five year period (2014 – 2019).

We have had a busy year at CITY with a range of activities.

Our MCRI project on Global Suburbanisms, headed by Professor Roger Keil, was showcased with a very successful three day international conference held in September 2013 at York University, attracting over 200 participants. Other activities in the Winter semester involved a day conference at City Hall with the NDP, anchored by Matt Kellway, MP and NDP Urban Affairs Critic, to discuss their forthcoming White Paper on urban policy. With over 100 academics, policy makers, local councilors, MPs and members of NGOs and other public bodies there was much lively discussion on both the content and direction of the paper. The Official Leader of the Opposition and NDP Leader, Tom Mulcair, was also in attendance and met with a number of urban scholars from York University and a number of other universities in southern Ontario. Another well attended public event was held at York University on the vexed nature of the relationship between the academy and activism in relation to urban social justice. Speakers included CITY graduate students, Narmeen Hashim and Gokboru Tanyildiz, Jane-Finch activists, Sun and Butterfly, as well as David Buchbinder and three residents of Thorncliffe Park, Manzu Man Ara, Naheed Zia and Zakia Rahime and the renowned activist, Selma James from the British based Global Women's Strike. Plans are now being put in place to work with activists at Jane-Finch as well as to have an artist in residence at the City Institute. Finally, we ended this semester with an excellent packed half day event on postgraduate training on conference presentations.

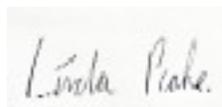
Over the year we also had a number of seminar presentations from visiting fellows at CITY from Germany and Singapore, as well as from

myself. We also have two further activities in June, one to be held with the LaMarsh Centre for Child and Youth Research on “Toronto: A Healthy Community for Youth” that aims to connect young people and researchers. And yet another event taking place on the 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> June that CITY is participating in is a symposium on “Urban Transformations” of Toronto’s St. Clair West, organized by Jay Young, Ph.D (Postdoctoral Fellow, McMaster University).

The year has also been a busy one in terms of administration. CITY has gone through a rechartering exercise and I am pleased to say we are passing through this somewhat time consuming exercise with flying colours, securing our existence for another five year period. The charter is in its very final stages and we expect it to be finalized any day now. Currently we are engaging in a university wide administrative exercise, the Academic and Administrative Program Review. Changes have also been made to our Advisory Board and we have said farewell to Frances Lankin, Barbara Hall, Heather Haynes, Andrea Gabor and Uzma Shakir. We have enthusiastically welcomed Jane Farrow to the Board and hope to add a few more folks during 2014. We have also had to say goodbye to Adam Charnaw, a staff member at CITY, whose contract finished in March. Lastly, work on the website is on going, as is work on establishing a governance document for CITY.

All of these activities - academic, activist, administrative - are necessary elements in building up a community and this is something I feel confident that we are achieving, building on and expanding our membership. This is especially true of the post-doctoral and postgraduate students housed at CITY. They are a bright and exciting group and it is a pleasure to work among them; the future of critical academic work on the urban and urban social justice work is in good hands.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Peake". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Professor Linda Peake, Director, The City Institute