

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Reporters interested in a speaker interview or covering the event with a media pass may contact Noel Sandberg at [noel@wohesc.org](mailto:noel@wohesc.org) or 503.226.2377.



### **Media Advisory**

**February 25, 2020 (Eugene, OR)** – Taking place one week from today, **March 2-4 at the University of Oregon**, the [Washington & Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference \(WOHESC\)](#) is an opportunity for collective direction and solidarity in higher education for our region. As political, social and environmental issues become more complex, WOHESC convenes and empowers stakeholders who are driving leadership and generating solutions for a more sustainable, just and equitable future. Our aim is to both enliven the role of higher education in the future of Washington and Oregon and the role students play in a future world.

WOHESC works to advance equity, diversity and inclusion through thematic elements, speakers and attendees. We aim to examine systemic change and generate dialogue that guides and inspires action. The [2020 WOHESC program](#) encompasses two full days of educational content, featuring higher education expert leaders in diversity, equity inclusion, engagement, academics, operations, facilities and students, who will share their experiences and recommend action on topics ranging from student led initiatives, waste reduction, alternative energy, sustainable agriculture, environmental justice, and more.

#### **Keynote and Notable Speakers:**

- **Juliana v. United States Update: Alex Loznak | Youth Climate Activist, Our Children's Trust; Plaintiff, Juliana v. United States** | Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5:15 p.m.
- **Jessica Black | Director, Center for Indigenous Health, Culture and the Environment, and Associate Professor of Environmental Science Heritage University** | Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 9:15 a.m.
- **Dr. Yvette Alex-Assensoh | Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, University of Oregon**

- **Terry McDonald | Executive Director, St. Vincent DePaul Society of Lane County |**  
Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9:10 a.m.
- **Steve Mital | Director, Office of Sustainability, University of Oregon**

## **Plenaries:**

### **Hiring: Chief Sustainability Officer | Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.**

Twenty years ago the number of people calling themselves sustainability professionals could be counted on one hand. Today they number in the thousands. What do sustainability professionals do? What have they achieved? Where is the field headed? How does one get or create a sustainability position? What educational backgrounds and skill-sets prepare them for their jobs? This plenary features senior sustainability professionals from the private sector, government, and higher education who will answer these questions about this new and evolving profession.

- Michele Crim | Chief Sustainability Officer, City of Portland
- Seth Vidaña | Director of Sustainability, Western Washington University
- Virginia Rustique-Petteni | Senior Director, Global Sustainability Engagement, Nike, Inc.
- Claudia Frere-Anderson | Director, University of Washington Sustainability

### **Understanding the Crisis of our Time: Writing About Climate Change | Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.**

Climate change, global warming, the climate crisis, the climate emergency! - Whatever you call it, it is the existential threat of our time. During this special plenary session, four diverse writers will talk about their approaches to writing about the climate crisis in their varied disciplines. This panel will explore the question: What role does writing play in how we understand, record, and work to solve the climate crisis?

- Moderator: Dr. Sarah Stoeckl | Program Manager, Office of Sustainability, University of Oregon
- McKenzie Funk | Journalist and Author, Windfall: The Booming Business of Global Warming
- Omar El Akkad | Author, American War
- Rebecca Lawton | Author, Scientist and Executive Director, PLAYA Summer Lake
- Dr. M Jackson | Author, The Secret Lives of Glaciers

### **Putting Environmental Justice into Practice | Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.**

Past WOHESCs have begun to describe the intersection of equity, diversity and inclusion with the concept of "sustainability." The response from past attendees has been overwhelmingly positive, but many participants want concrete, on-the-ground examples of how this work is being done. Following this year's conference theme of "Root Causes and Positive Actions," this panel features people working on the various front lines of environmental justice, sustainability and social equity work. Panelists will talk about their experiences, philosophies and how they address the root causes of social and environmental justice with positive action.

- Moderator: Dr. Taylor McHolm | Program Director, Student Sustainability Center, University of Oregon
- Dr. Jessica Black | Director, Center for Indigenous Health, Culture and the Environment, and Associate Professor of Environmental Science, Heritage University
- Joel Iboa | Coalition Manager, Causa Oregon
- Amelia Pape | Adjunct Instructor of Management, Portland State University
- Sean Watts | Owner, SM Watts Consulting
- Luhui Whitebear | PhD Candidate, Assistant Director, NAL Eena Haws, Diversity & Cultural Engagement, Oregon State University

The full program and speaker list can be found at [wohesc.org/program](http://wohesc.org/program).

Registration for WOHESC 2020 is open now with special ticket options available for university faculty, staff and students. Tickets range from \$75-\$299 and are available online at [wohesc.org/register](http://wohesc.org/register) or call 503-226-2377.

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### **Conference Details**

#### **Washington and Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference (WOHESC) 2020**

**Monday, March 2 – Wednesday, March 4, 2020**

University of Oregon | Erb Memorial Union Building | Eugene, Oregon

Tickets available at [wohesc.org/register](http://wohesc.org/register) or via phone at 503-226-2377

### **About WOHESC**

The Washington & Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference (WOHESC), produced by Social Enterprises, Inc., is a platform for inspiring change, facilitating action, and promoting collaboration related to sustainability within the region's higher education institutions. Conversation, workshops, and networking opportunities will empower participants to advance environmental performance at Washington and Oregon State institutions of higher education. More at [wohesc.org](http://wohesc.org).