

Sound the Alarm Solutions: Centering Justice in Climate Change Action

Panel Questions from Participants

JUSTICE-RELATED QUESTIONS:

- How can we center Justice while conducting outreach/identifying community needs, especially regarding local climate solutions.
 - Holly Olivarez: I seek out voices and stories from Black- and Indigenous-led people and groups and follow their lead without judgement or trying to interject my own opinions as to how they should do so.
- How can we best advocate for actions that support all classes of people in society? ie. public e-transit instead of personal EVs
 - Holly Olivarez: Amplify the voices of Black and Indigenous folks. Share what they give permission to share. Do not change their framing nor narrative.
- What projects do you see are having the biggest impacts now? Or which have you excited for seeing the impacts they will make? *Specifically Climate Justice projects
 - Holly Olivarez: I used to watch the climate activism groups quite closely but many are led by white folks. I have gotten involved on a local basis with Black-- and Indigenous-led efforts and feel my work is to help amplify their voices in every space I can.

SCIENCE-BASED QUESTIONS:

- What are real experiments we can do with greenhouse gasses to see the increase in heat retention?
 - Holly Olivarez: I watched a scientist breathe into a tube that led to a container that held his breath tightly while a carbon dioxide detector and temperature sensor read what was happening. This was a great visual to show folks!
- Do you think we are concerned enough about METHANE?
 - Holly Olivarez: In the scientific community it seems methane is discussed more and more recently, but most of the focus remains on carbon dioxide.
- What are the current discussions to help mitigate the increasing coral bleaching events globally, and the AMOC slowdown?
 - Holly Olivarez: I've seen everything from Masters students in Santa Barbara working to present the economic gains hotels along the beaches in Miami will feel if they invest in the beaches closest to the properties (for example, tourism goes up where corals are thriving) to local groups creating videos and social media content to educate people about coral bleaching.

INDIVIDUAL AND/OR LARGE-SCALE ACTION QUESTIONS:

- What can we do as individuals to engage companies and lawmakers to contribute to change?
 - Phoebe Dominguez: Lobby! I work a lot on legislative work (specifically with youth) working with people to help them understand how to lobby (or make public comment) not only how to do it but how it works and why it is important. Use your voice it's a privilege and use it to help others. For more information about lobbying, you can lean on some of the amazing people in the climate justice movement.
 - Holly Olivarez: I work to bring messaging from Black- and Indigenous-led groups to companies and lawmakers. I do this by using my voice (talking, writing, social media) in the position I am at a university to share what I've been given permission to share. I also communicate with lawmakers regularly by email, public comment, and social media to do the same. Lastly, I have gotten involved with local Black- and Indigenous-led groups engaging in non-violent (peaceful) direct action such as protests, rallies, marches to work alongside them in raising awareness.
- What is one actionable thing each of us could be doing right now?
 - Phoebe Dominguez: Talk about climate change more talk to the people in your life about it. It's a really good way to get other opinions ideas and resources.
 - Holly Olivarez: Talk about climate change in your daily life! It is odd at first and people get quiet as they don't know how to respond. But the more you do it, you find creative ways to bring it to conversations without doom and gloom. Even saying you don't know but still talking about it will help progress because you will start to know as you talk more about it. You'll hear messaging, you'll notice things you didn't before, etc.
- What are the 3 most effective actions an individual can take to impact climate change and justice?
 - Holly Olivarez: This is different for everyone because we each have different stories and skills. For me, it is 1) re-educate myself on the history/injustices of the United States, 2) find ways to get involved with Black- and Indigenous-led groups who are calling for justice, and 3) talk about climate change/justice in my everyday life (friends, colleagues, grocery store acquaintances, neighbors, etc.).
- How do we stop business as usual and even what we are doing now I feel as if we have taken too much time talking. How do we act?
 - Holly Olivarez: This looks different for everyone. I have become a racial justice advocate at my university as well as a participant in protests, rallies, marches. I contact local lawmakers frequently. My skills are in speaking and networking so I try to use what I've got where I can.

- What actions would you recommend such action groups take to prevent climate challenges like tornados?
 - Holly Olivarez: Keep contacting lawmakers to call for urgent action to stop investing in and using fossil fuels, get involved with Black- and Indigenous-led non-violent direct actions that call for justice and reparations. It is the worst polluters who must stop their actions in order to slow our rapidly changing climate.
- Does the focus on individual carbon footprint distract us from the immense damage being done by major industries and irresponsible governments?
 - Holly Olivarez: Personally I say yes, especially when people are judging people for their carbon footprints. This doesn't mean we shouldn't strive to reduce our carbon footprints as we need to be in the habits already and many of our habits can be conversation starters with folks who need a place to start. I think many small groups with aligned messaging against the worst polluters is most effective.
- What are some of the best ways for members of the general population to lobby against big companies that produce a majority of the world's pollution? (from a student at our school)
 - Holly Olivarez: Get involved with local Black- and Indigenous-led action groups, but also use your position where you are to carry the message. This can be your school board (their investments, their votes re: climate education, etc.), your city council, your county officials.
- How do you encourage people to divest from Chase bank, and other Big Financial institutions, which fund extractive fossil fuel projects?
 - Phoebe Dominguez: I was involved in the 10/29/22 action against Chase bank and one of the things I did while organizing and being involved in that campaign. I talked to people around me. about all the stuff that I learned through the campaign. I found that Giving people the facts was the most effective. I am more than aware that people don't always listen to facts. We are humans and make decisions based on our emotions and are not always rational. Especially climate change deniers so it can be really hard to change people's minds. but don't get discouraged, learn and persevere.
 - Holly Olivarez: Personally I don't. I stopped trying to convince anyone to do anything and started just living the principles that make sense for where I am at in my awareness and education. I've found that my circle of friends and colleagues shifted as I learned more. It's all about showing up and finding community with folks who are showing up. The more of us that show up for action, the more people will join in on that.

- Some feel that unless we can get utilities and corporations to quit using fossil fuels our individual actions are insufficient. The fossil fuel industry has huge amounts of money and greatly influences our legislators. What is the most effective thing we can do to make the drastic changes for a speedy transition to renewable energy and other measures to stop the increased heating of the planet that brings on more and more natural disasters?
 - Holly Olivarez: This looks different for everyone because we each have our own stories and skills. For me I use the skills I've gained over my life (public speaking and networking) to use my position wherever and however I can. I have become a racial justice advocate at my university and am involved in Black- and Indigenous-led action groups who are calling for justice. There are countless ways to get involved.
- How can we get academia, universities, and national laboratories to be examples of mitigating GHG emissions in conjunction with others' efforts? Do NCAR or NOAA have GHG emission reduction targets and transparent reporting?
 - Holly Olivarez: I show up at every opportunity to be a voice and encourage you to do the same. If enough of us are in alignment with our messaging, those in leadership roles have to address us. And if they do not, I personally am willing to engage in non-violent direct actions to demand they address us/climate.
 - Tiffany Fourment (with UCAR SciEd): NCAR/UCAR have a Sustainability Office focused on efforts to monitor and reduce the environmental impact of the organization in a variety of ways, including the use of alternative fuel vehicles, waste reduction, renewable energy, and more. They regularly put out reports on this progress.

MISCELLANEOUS/SPECIFIC PANEL QUESTIONS:

- Our data collection and analysis are robust. Can we please simultaneously create and fund A CLIMATE DATA "ACTION" CAMPAIGN?
 - Holly Olivarez: I say YES! Let's do it! The thing is if you have the idea, most times it will be you that gets it going. I spent most of my adult life hoping someone would do something and then I had a light-bulb turn on in my head that that someone is me. You just need one other person to get started. I'd be happy to help! holly.olivarez@colorado.edu
- What about those who are living in areas that aren't as affected by pollution?
 - Holly Olivarez: Likely you are and if you are not yet, you will be. Look at rising prices after extreme storms, etc. In any event, consider if it were you or your mom or your child that was and act with the same urgency. We need everyone. Your school boards, city council, county commissions... they all should be talking about climate readiness and only if we keep bringing it up will it become priority in their minds.

- Disastrous weather alerts may not be announced early enough, spoken in other languages, or reach certain communities. What can we do to take action to help others quickly in these events?
 - Holly Olivarez: I have shared alerts but in my own simple jargon or I read weather alerts and type my own on my social media. Over time you can be seen as a resource as folks see your posts are helpful to them.
- How do you answer the individuals who are intelligent but call Climate Change "Fake News" or who simply do not believe in it?
 - Holly Olivarez: Most people are willing to listen to understand. Those who do not are truly considered deniers and I typically do not engage with people who are intentionally trying to mislead or confuse people. The Yale Program for Climate Change has incredible statistics for this that might help: <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/about/projects/>
- Hey so this question is for Phoebe - How was your life and your activism impacted by the pandemic we are all living thorough? I know that our generation has gone through alot and we have all changed the way we are trying to be active, so how has all of that impacted you?
 - Phoebe Dominguez: My life and my activism are very much intertwined. Now I have realized that that has been damaging to me. I think one thing that the pandemic really impacted was I had more time when we were in the thick of it. so I was able to just do activism consistently. but now I am aware and know that it is not sustainable to keep up if you don't want to get burned out. And it's hard in the past. I've talked a little about this but once the pandemic was in less bad times it was hard everything changed. I was not able to do everything at once and I couldn't stop thinking about climate change. And I think trying to keep my activism within boundaries has helped my mental health a lot. I think the biggest thing that has changed the way i'm being active is... I'm trying to be more aware and meet people where they are at. ooh it's nice and warm mood ruined, climate change. ooh pretty sunset, climate change. Horrible air. and the pandemic has been a wake up call for me.
- How can we include adaptation and resiliency planning in our activism calling for mitigation?
 - Holly Olivarez: This looks different for everyone but the more you get involved the more it will become clear for you based on your stories and skills. For me, I am focused on creating a network of diverse people who are getting ready so we may help others as conditions become more extreme.
- What can we do to incorporate technology into creating a place where communities can come together to help others in time of need?
 - Holly Olivarez: Great question and I think you already have the answer! Use technology to create the spaces you mention. This can be groups, hashtags, etc. The thing I've learned is no one else will do it unless I do it and when I do it with my whole self, other people respond and are grateful.