

# Round Table

## Fostering Sustainable Institutions: Engaging Our Universities in the Movement for Change

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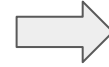
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# How did we get here?

Earth Education for  
Sustainable Societies  
(2019 SERC Meeting)



Higher Education After  
COVID  
(2021 AACU Meeting)



Earth Centered  
Special Interest Group  
(2021 POD Network)



# Timeline of Calls for Higher Education to Take the Lead in Fostering Sustainability

Timeline (larger text!) with  
Links to Reports, Articles,  
Letters, and Manifestos  
Available [Here](#)

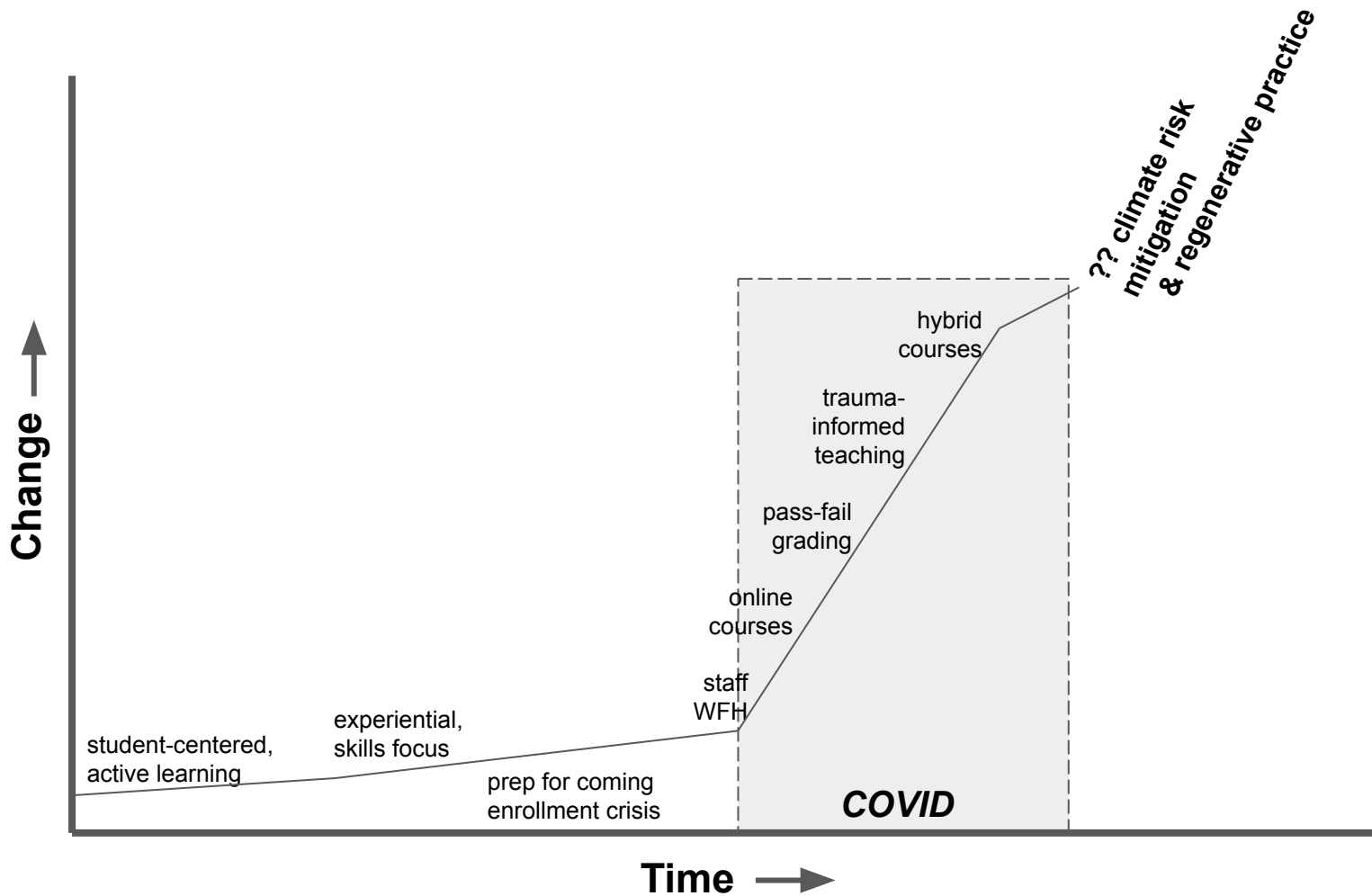
More Extensive Bibliographies  
with Full Citations Available  
[Here](#) and [Here](#)



# Timeline of Calls for Higher Education to Take the Lead in Fostering Sustainability

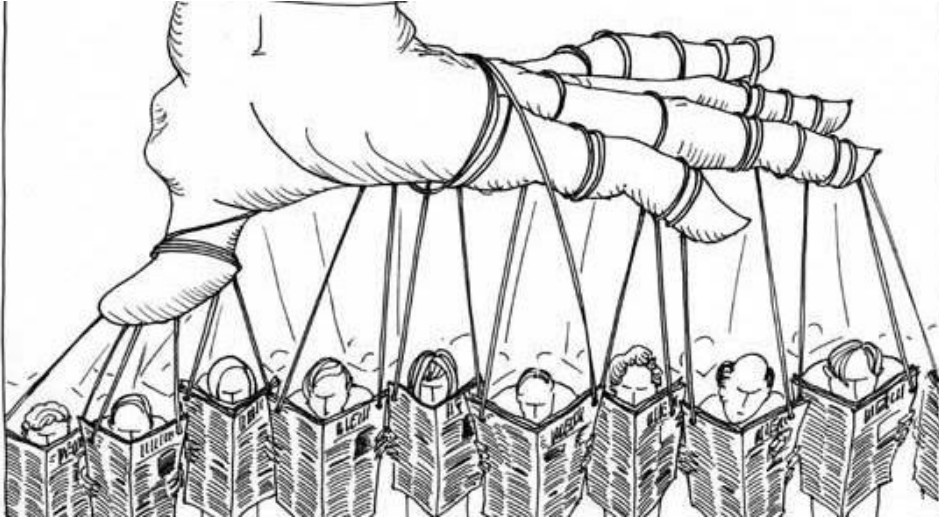
- 1990 - **The Talloires Declaration** – Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future
- 1991 - **What Is Education For? Six Myths About the Foundations of Modern Education, and Six New Principles to Replace Them** – David Orr
- 1995 - **The Essex Report: Workshop on the Principles of Sustainability in Higher Education** – The President's Council on Sustainable Development
- 1998 - **A Strategy to Accelerate the Shift to Sustainability through Higher Education** – University Leaders for a Sustainable Future
- 2002 - **"Sustainability" in Higher Education: From Doublethink and Newspeak to Critical Thinking and Meaningful Learning** – Arjen Wals and Bob Jickling
- 2002 - **Environmental Literacy and Sustainability as Core Requirements: Success Stories and Models** – Debra Rowe
- 2003 - **The Critical Role of Higher Education in Creating a Sustainable Future** – Anthony Cortese
- 2004 - **Higher Education, Sustainability, and the Role of Systemic Learning** – Stephen Sterling
- 2006 - **American College & University President's Climate Commitment** – Second Nature
- 2008 - **A Call to Action: Core Commitments** – Association of American Colleges and Universities
- 2009 - **Sustainability as an Organizing Principle for Higher Education** – Tom Kelly
- 2010 - **Sustainability Curriculum in Higher Education: A Call to Action** – The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
- 2011 - **Climate Change Starter's Guidebook: An Issues Guide for Education Planners and Practitioners** – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- 2011 - **Higher Education's Role in Adapting to a Changing Climate** – Second Nature and the American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment
- 2011 - **Higher Education in the World 4 – Higher Education's Commitment with Sustainability: From Understanding to Action** – Global University Network for Innovation
- 2011 - **The Urgent Need for Universities to Comprehensively Address Global Climate Change Across Disciplines and Programs** – John Lemons
- 2012 - **The Education We Need for the World We Want** – RIO +20 Education Group
- 2012 - **Peoples' Sustainability Treaty on Higher Education** – Peoples' Sustainability Treaties
- 2012 - **What Colleges and Universities Need to Do to Advance Civic Scientific Literacy and Preserve American Democracy** – Jon Miller
- 2013 - **Teaching for Turbulence** – Michael Maniantes
- 2014 - **Nagoya Declaration on Higher Education for Sustainable Development** – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- 2014 - **The Greening Universities Toolkit V2.0** – United Nations Environment Programme
- 2014 - **Higher Education for Strong Sustainability** – Rick Clugston and Wynn Calder
- 2014 - **Universities as Potential Actors for Sustainable Development** – Michael von Hauff and Thuan Nguyen
- 2014 - **How Universities Can Help Create a Wiser World: The Urgent Need for an Academic Revolution** – Nicholas Maxwell
- 2014 - **Integrating Environmental Sustainability into Universities** – Meredith Ralph and Wendy Stubbs
- 2016 - **How to Do Transition in your University or College** – Transition Network
- 2017 - **Higher Education in the World 6 - Towards a Socially Responsible University: Balancing the Global with the Local** – Global University Network for Innovation
- 2017 - **Sustainability as the Organizing Principle for Service-Learning and Community Engagement (SLCE)** – The SLCE Future Directions Project
- 2017 - **Education for A Sustainable Future, Benchmarks: For Individual and Social Learning** – Jamie Cloud
- 2017 - **EarthEd: Rethinking Education on a Changing Planet** – Erik Assadourian
- 2017 - **Can We Meet the Sustainability Challenges? The Role of Education and Lifelong Learning** – Arjen Wals and Aaron Benavot
- 2017 - **Identifying and Overcoming Obstacles to the Implementation of Sustainable Development at Universities** – Walter Filho et al.
- 2018 - **Facing the Climate Change Catastrophe: Education as Solution or Cause?** – Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training
- 2019 - **Sustainable Development Primer for Higher Education Presidents, Chancellors, Trustees and Senior Leaders** – The Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium
- 2019 - **Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI)** – Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform, United Nations
- 2019 - **Higher and Further Education Institutions Across the Globe Declare Climate Emergency** – The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education, Second Nature and the UN Environment's Youth and Education Alliance
- 2019 - **Adapting Universities and Colleges to a Changing Climate: Making the Case and Taking Action** – The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education
- 2019 - **EI Statement on Student Action on Climate Change** – Education International
- 2019 - **Open Letter to Vice-Chancellors, UK and UKRI** – Help Us Take Action on Climate Change Now – TransitionLab.Earth
- 2019 - **Action Plan 2019-2020** – Copernicus Alliance
- 2019 - **Sustainability in Higher Education: What More Can Universities Do?** – QS Quacquarelli Symonds
- 2019 - **Greta is Coming: Sterling College President Stands with Students Across the World** – Matthew Derr
- 2019 - **Bildung in the 21st Century—Why Sustainable Prosperity Depends Upon Reimagining Education** – Jonathan Rowson
- 2020 - **Strengthening Sustainability Programs and Curricula at the Undergraduate and Graduate Levels** – Committee on Strengthening Sustainability Programs and Curricula at the Undergraduate and Graduate Levels
- 2020 - **The Role of Education in Taming Authoritarian Attitudes** – Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
- 2020 - **Sustainability Competences: A Systematic Literature Review** – Publications Office of the European Union
- 2020 - **The Little Book of Green Nudges: 40 Nudges to Spark Sustainable Behaviour on Campus** – United Nations Environment Programme, GRID Arendal and Behavioural Insights Team
- 2020 - **The Role of Universities in a Sustainable Society. Why Value-Free Research is Neither Possible Nor Desirable** – Markus Volgt and Christoph Weber
- 2020 - **Democracy Is Under Duress** – Valerie Smith and Jonathan Alger
- 2021 - **Education for Action: How Adapting Our Learning Can Tip the Climate Scales in 2021** – Green Growth Knowledge Platform
- 2021 - **The Planetary Health Education Framework** – The Planetary Health Alliance
- 2021 - **Beyond Doom and Gloom: Climate Solutions** – Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
- 2021 - **Race to Zero for Universities and Colleges** – The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education, The United Nations Environment Programme, and Second Nature
- 2021 - **Global Climate Letter for Universities and Colleges** – The United Nations Environment Programme
- 2021 - **Higher Education** – The U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development
- 2021 - **Global Learning and Intercultural Competence as Imperatives for the Future of Higher Education: Reducing Inequities and Creating Effective Global Problem-solvers** - Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) to the UNESCO Futures of Education initiative
- 2021 - **Current Climate Education is Inadequate** – Teach the Future

# Our Context - Change in Higher Ed.



# Agenda Setting Theory

(McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Denham, 2010)



<https://aspire2beublog.wordpress.com/2016/11/30/theory-logs-agenda-setting/>

How **frequently** and **urgently** we hear about issues in the media influences how important we think they are.

Impact is greater when media highlight:

- Personal relevance
- Social significance

***How can we help institutional leaders understand 1. How climate change will impact them and 2. How sustainability initiatives will benefit them?***

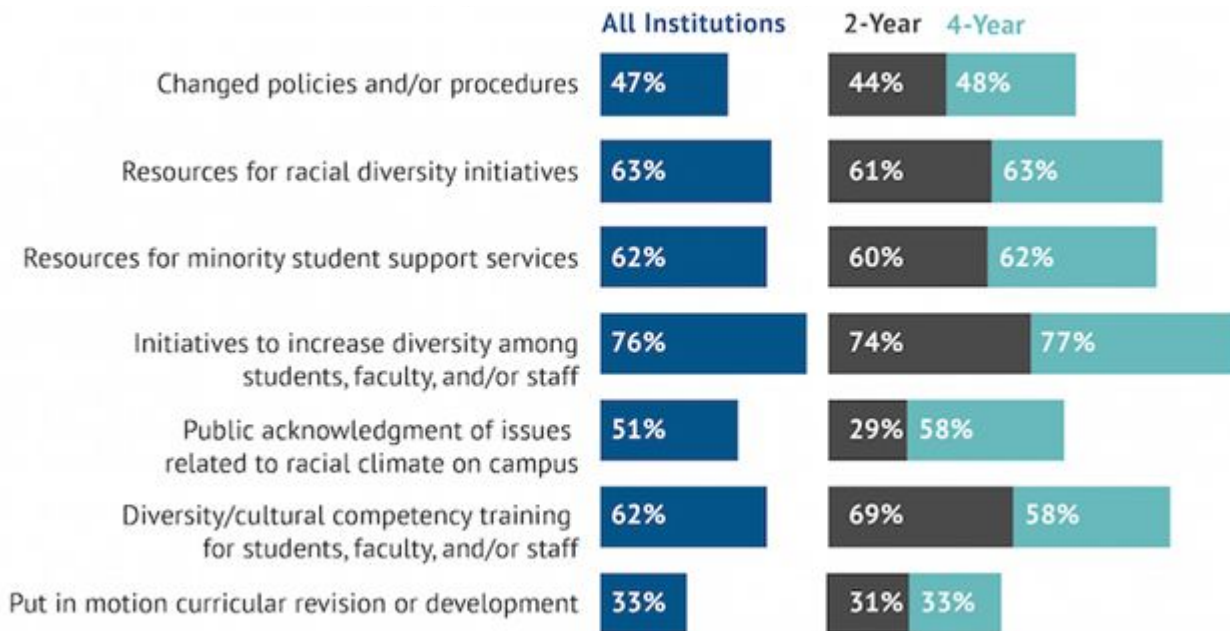
# Diversity, Equity, Inclusion - Shifts in Higher Education

As of 2016, **more than two-thirds of major US universities had appointed a chief diversity officer** or executive-level equivalent, with at least 30 institutions having created the role in the last five years alone. [Pihakis, J. Paikeday, T. Armstrong, K and Meneer, E \(2019\)](#).

## Many Resources Available:

- [AAC&U Diversity, Equity, & Inclusive Excellence site](#)
- [USC Libraries DEI Resource Collection](#)
- [National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education](#)
  - Established formally in 2006
  - 681 individual and institutional members in the U.S. (up from 240 in 2009<sup>1</sup>)

## DEI Actions Taken in the Last Five Years Within Higher Education (2016)



Espinosa, L, Chessman, H and Wayt, L (2016). Racial Climate on Campus: A Survey of College Presidents. Higher Education Today. <https://www.higheredtoday.org/2016/03/08/racial-climate-on-campus-a-survey-of-college-presidents/>



# Slides from the AACU & SIG Meeting

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1sGxn1mR2XG95S-r9C0HbMKA557XNBJ\\_X8hgbAfmIKKk/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1sGxn1mR2XG95S-r9C0HbMKA557XNBJ_X8hgbAfmIKKk/edit?usp=sharing)

A photograph of a single yellow flower with five petals and a dark center, growing from a crack in a grey asphalt surface. The flower's stem is thin and green, with several small, feathery green leaves. The background is a blurred asphalt surface. Overlaid on the image is the text "#SHIFT HAPPENS" in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. The text is centered horizontally and spans across the middle of the image, with the flower's stem passing through the letters.

**#SHIFT  
HAPPENS**

# Instructions for Breakout Groups

## Directions:

- 1) Each group will be linked a slide deck with 3 prompts.
- 2) **Consider specific strategies** for each prompt, drawing on your institutional practices and unique experiences.
- 3) To add ideas to your slide, you can click on a sticky and drag it to the slide, then start typing. You can also copy and paste a sticky (or insert a text box) if you need more stickies!

# Discussion Prompts

In this round-table session, we will

1. share experiences and lessons learned in attempting to broadly engage higher education leadership in these crucial conversations, and
2. brainstorm approaches toward capturing university leaders' attention and encouraging momentum toward sustainability.



## Prompt 1:

**Past calls for action have not had an impact- why? How do we shift that?**

## Prompt 2:

**What topics around agenda setting would be meaningful?**

*“We must redouble efforts to promote new and participatory approaches to environmental education and public engagement through formal and informal venues.” Stafford et al. 2010*

**Prompt 3:**  
**Activism/advocacy and navigating the politics/institutional structure of this?**

*How do we ensure our graduates are not our most harmful emissions? - Paul Morgan, 2020*

# Your group's take-away comment (Double Click on Shape to add Ideas)

Encourage student engagement with administrators. E.g., Town hall events, divestment from funds that cause harm.

Move from saying to doing. Change is action.

Leverage admissions for change, ie students want to see changes and these changes will attract more students

Sense that there are a lot of barriers and frustrations when it comes to making changes

Sustainability change as a recruiting tool

Students voices and committed leadership are key to support sustainable initiatives

Change policies and structures! Remove roadblocks.

Advocate for substantive vs performative action

Students may be the key!

Power of donors and Board of Trustees is big - can we engage them in pushing for change?

For public institutions State level rules for bids on new infrastructure can halt movement for sustainable change

Appeal to the desire to save money or earn good publicity

Graduate sustainability research

Student-driven townhall meetings

Star cache



# Next Steps

1. Put your email in the linked google form in the chat to stay in touch with us.
  - We will make available all slides to anyone who wants them.
2. What steps might we take together? Or, what do you think would be most likely to move your institution, and higher ed as a whole, forward?
  - Calls-to-action? Petitions?
  - Articles?
  - Stories and blueprints for sustainable institutional transformation?
  - Future conference sessions?

# Web Page of Resources

**Many Links to Resources on the Topics Listed Below:**

[http://faculty.washington.edu/rturner1/Sustainability/Bibliography/AAC&U\\_Session\\_Resources.htm](http://faculty.washington.edu/rturner1/Sustainability/Bibliography/AAC&U_Session_Resources.htm)

- **Synthesis of Global Risks and Opportunities**
  - Our Great Challenges and the Likelihood of An Increasingly Turbulent Future
  - Why the Time is Now for a Great Reset
- **The Role of Higher Education in Steering Culture and Fostering Environmental Sustainability, Democracy, and Justice**
  - Mission and Values of Liberal Arts Education (and How They Align with the Principles of Sustainability)
  - The Ability of Institutions of Higher Education to Transform Thinking and Culture
  - The Imperatives for Higher Education To Take the Lead in Fostering a More Sustainable and Just World
  - Coming Into Alignment with What Students Want and Need
  - The What, Why, and How of Sustainability Teaching and Learning
  - Sustainability Transformations of University Operations
  - The Business Case for Prioritizing Sustainability at Institutions of Higher Education

# THANK YOU!

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“What we can do and want to do is projected in our imagination, quite outside ourselves, and into the future. We are attracted to what is already ours in secret.

“Thus passionate anticipation transforms what is indeed possible into dreamt-for reality.”

*-- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*