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ASU Julie Ann Wrigley
Global Futures Laboratory™
Arizona State University

Global Futures: **Now**



“Is the whole of life visible to us, or do we in fact know only the one hemisphere before we die? For my part I know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream...”

Vincent van Gogh

The term Anthropocene for the current geological era is a reflection of our known impacts on planetary systems. This is most pronounced in industrialized nations.

Consider that 34-45% of global consumption-based greenhouse gas emissions from households can be attributed to just 10% of households (predominantly based in the Northern Hemisphere).

But what about the unknown effects of the way we live now?

It would not be a stretch to suggest that those learning and working in the College of Global Futures and the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory think about the future more routinely than the average person. As we look ahead, attempting to address the problems of today that we expect to be amplified in the future, we seek to find better pathways and more just outcomes that lead to thriving global futures. We work to uncover solutions that reduce harm, bring human actions back in harmony with Earth's systems and create a more solid footing for generations to come.

We desire balance and certainty, which unfortunately are two states that are highly ambitious—and difficult to attain.

Achieving equilibrium in a static sense is unrealistic in an intrinsically non-equilibrium system. The universe is not in equilibrium—it keeps expanding. The Earth system is not in an equilibrium state—it exchanges energy beyond its boundaries. In Earth system science, we often talk about tipping points—abrupt, irreversible points of no return. But tipping points are a derivative of linear thinking. In reality we are dealing with complex systems in which pressure points are dynamically connected—pressures on one part of the system can be redistributed and the most severe responses can show up in other places. We know quite a bit about the interactive structures of our planet, but there also exist many unknowns, including the planet's capacity for self-regulation.

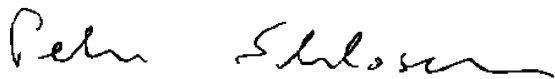
The uncertainty – the “unknown unknowns” – is unsettling for people. For our brains, uncertainty is coupled with threat and risk. In a cloud of uncertainty, the rational mind dissipates (assuming it was ever truly present), and we make decisions based on previous experiences, known events or the immediacy of the perceived threat.

And yet we persevere.

The Earth may be a non-equilibrium system, but we know that humans are living out of sync with the resources available to us now and in the future. And while we may be biologically predisposed to translate uncertainty as risk, uncertainty can also have the potential to be freeing and a force for change. This month, we celebrated the largest graduating class ever from the College of Global Futures. Many of these graduates are changemakers, taking on new roles and heading into unfamiliar spaces. And like

these students, societies are also facing uncertainty, but they have the opportunity to make different choices: retire old processes, create new industries and revolutionize everyday life.

Change is on the horizon, and it needs people capable of shaping the world's complex, interconnected systems, regardless of discomfort with uncertainty and imbalance. I am certain that those educated at the College of Global Futures will be among the people leading the way forward, able to nimbly approach the shifting landscapes of need.



Peter Schlosser

Vice President and Vice Provost of Global Futures

News



Sample artwork from Living Lands, the game developed within the Community Visions of the Salt River seed grant project.

4 teams earn seed grants from ASU's Seize the Moment initiative

The [Seize the Moment](#) initiative was developed in 2020 by the Arizona State University Humanities Lab, ASU-Leonardo Initiative and Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory. It brings together the arts, sciences, humanities and technology to address the most challenging questions of our time through collaborative research, social engagement projects and interdisciplinary, action-focused teaching strategies.

[Read more](#)



Colorado River water agreement

ASU water experts, including members of the [Arizona Water Innovation Initiative](#), have contributed their insights to publications across the nation regarding the new Colorado River water allocation agreement with the federal government.

- [Heatmap: The new Colorado River proposal buys valuable time](#)
- [NPR: New Colorado river water states announce breakthrough water sharing deal](#)
- [The New York Times: A Breakthrough Deal to Keep the Colorado River From Going Dry, for Now](#)
- [Los Angeles Times: Despite deal, Colorado River's long-term water crisis remains unsolved](#)

School of Ocean Futures leads new wave of ocean research

ASU's ocean researchers are finding ways to create more sustainable relationships between humanity and our oceans. These solutions are displayed in an array of researcher highlights for ASU News. Featured projects include research on the seafloor, microplastics, sustainable fishing practices and more.

[Read more](#)



ASU's sustainability practices recognized as nation's best

ASU has earned a rating of No. 1 in the United States and No. 2 in the world for its sustainability practices by the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System, or STARS, a program from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. ASU not only scored above other highly esteemed institutions, but also beat its previous score — increasing from 2020 by four points, totaling 91.10 points out of 100.

[Read more](#)

Raincoats made of algae could be the future of sustainable fashion

[Charlotte McCurdy](#), an assistant professor of industrial design in The Design School and a Senior Global Futures Scientist, came to The Design School in the fall 2022 semester and teaches industrial design and a

class titled Design for Ecology and Social Equity. Instead of just buying less, she wants to create consumer products out of materials that are carbon negative.

[Read more](#)



Hackathon hosted in partnership with School for the Future of Innovation in Society gathers global students to tackle social, environmental issues

Nearly 150 students worked in teams to explore how satellite Earth observations and remote sensing technology from space can be used to better understand and address social inequities, sustainable development and environmental justice issues. Participants came from nine countries and seven other universities to take part in the Interplanetary Initiative pilot project [SpaceHACK for Sustainability Hackathon](#).

[Read more](#)

Statewide assessment led by Senior Global Futures Scientist explores municipal recycling efforts

Senior Global Futures Scientist [Rajesh Buch](#) and Richard Rushforth, an assistant research professor at Northern Arizona University, are leading a statewide assessment on municipal recycling in Arizona. The team will estimate the amount and type of recyclable waste dumped throughout Arizona, the economic impact that recycling could have and the cost-benefit of operating recycling programs depending on communities' size and finances.



[Read more](#)



Gov. Katie Hobbs delivers Earth Day address at Walton Center for Planetary Health

Students, faculty and staff from across the Global Futures Laboratory and beyond were joined by Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs for a showcase of ASU's expertise, technology and insights related to humanity's relationship with our planet as part of Earth Day 2023 celebrations. Throughout each portion of the event, the overarching theme was clear: We are actively shaping our future for an Arizona — and world — where all may thrive.

[Read more](#)

State leaders join ASU officials to celebrate Arizona Water Innovation Initiative launch

On April 25, state water officials and members of the ASU community, including President Michael M. Crow and Knowledge Enterprise Executive Vice President Sally C. Morton, gathered to celebrate the official launch of the initiative. The initiative is funded by a \$40 million investment from the state and a \$5 million gift from the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust.

[Read more](#)



ASU researchers in Hawai'i reflect on ethics of university's presence on the island state

[Greg Asner](#), [Cliff Kapon](#) and [Katie Kamelamela](#) are among the voices who shared their thoughts on ASU's presence in Hawai'i for ASU's student publication, The State Press. The article highlights a variety of opinions on a landlocked university such as ASU finding a home in Hawai'i while some Native Hawaiians are being vocal about foreign entities in the islands.

[Read more](#)



The “ethical and societal considerations” in the CHIPS and Science Act

[David Guston](#), associate vice provost for discovery, engagement and outcomes in the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory and Foundation Professor in the School for the Future of Innovation in Society, said examining recent mandates reveals how the National Science Foundation can achieve the goals of the CHIPS and Science Act while also centering societal concerns as it reorients the scientific enterprise.

[Read more](#)

Senior Global Futures Scientist supports coral reef resiliency with a valuable tool: data

[Mary Donovan](#), a Senior Global Futures Scientist in addition to assistant professor in the School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning and the Center for Global Discovery and Conservation Science, is using innovative methods to utilize global and local data in new ways and give local communities new insights to make their coral reefs more resilient to threats.

[Read more](#)



Futurecast

Edition 4 | Spring 2023

In this issue of Futurecast, we explore a number of topics including the current state of global stability, how ASU is driving water conservation through innovation, the vulnerabilities of our energy systems and how human health and heat are interrelated.

[Read now](#)

Global Futures Viewbook

We must rediscover our planet and our relationship

with it.

What does this mean, exactly? For the faculty, students, researchers and global partners of the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory, it means a commitment to urgently exploring pathways to impactful solutions and decisions that address the challenges we have caused through resource extraction and thoughtless consumption as part of a relentless pursuit of “progress.”

We believe better is possible.

[Learn more](#)

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for global impact**

-Times Higher Education, 2021

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