October 2024

Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory
Arizona State University

Global Futures: Now

Photo credit: Concordia

The latest evidence of our planet under pressure comes in the wake of Hurricanes Helene and Milton which hit North America over the past few

weeks. The exact measure of devastation from Hurricane Milton is currently unknown; Helene has accounted for the deaths of at least 215 people across six states, with countless more still missing. And it de facto destroyed most of Asheville, a town in North Carolina located far from the point of landfall. As the impacts of climate extremes accelerate, the need for coordinated, cross-sectoral solutions becomes increasingly urgent.

One such effort, Climate Week NYC, has become critical for driving global collaboration and accelerating the transition to a sustainable future. Held alongside the United Nations General Assembly, this annual event brings together world leaders, policymakers, businesses, activists, and scientists to address the urgent and growing threats posed by climate change. This year, the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory participated in several events that aimed to catalyze action through dialogue and collaboration between key stakeholders.

At the 2024 Summit of the Future, world leaders gathered to address long-term global challenges and reimagine multilateral cooperation in the 21st century. Held from September 22–23 at the United Nations in New York, the summit concluded in the adoption of the Pact for the Future , a comprehensive agreement aimed at enhancing international collaboration on a range of issues from climate change and digital governance to peace, security, and sustainable development. GFL and BRIDGES participated in organizing and convening several events during SOTF that highlighted our vision of a future that will leave our life-supporting systems intact.

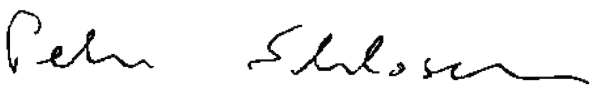
Our current leaders cannot dominate the discussion about our future in the traditional fashion. The next generations of leaders who will live in a rapidly changing world are currently educated in our classrooms and must be prepared to take their future into their own hands. During Climate Week NYC, I spoke about ASU's Dreamscape Learn, a virtual reality platform that enables users to experience and understand complex scenarios holistically. ASU has long embraced technology as an asset in future literacy, both by expanding access to a university education and by enhancing the learning experience.

ASU and the Global Futures Laboratory were also represented at the

Concordia Summit in a session titled, "Countdown to COP29: How Executives are Shaping Global Action Plans to Deliver 2030 Goals." Featuring executives representing a range of private sector industries, the session delved into the critical need to integrate the private sector's voice into climate change conversations, international negotiations, and regulation developments in anticipation of COP29. The Concordia Summit serves as the optimal platform for key stakeholders to exchange ideas and forge partnerships that advance impactful solutions in areas such as climate action, conservation, and geopolitical stability.

With simultaneous environmental and societal pressures endangering the planet, we as a global society must explore ways to reach global climate goals more quickly while also re-examining progress as needed. On September 25th, the Global Futures Laboratory hosted a meeting with key partners at the New York Academy of Sciences focused on 'Advancing the Fast-Track Coalition.' The September meeting aimed to reaffirm the Coalition's purpose and enable partners and potential members to share updates on their initiatives, challenges, and how the coalition could support and complement their work. A coalition focused on fast-tracking solutions is paramount for achieving global climate targets and sustainable and thriving futures for all.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton have once again offered a glimpse of what our world could continue to look like if climate change impacts remain unchecked. Climate Week NYC and other major events such as COP 29 play a pivotal role in driving climate action. There is still much work to be done, but I remain steadfast in my belief that through tangible outcomes and accountability, a thriving future on a healthy planet is possible.



Peter Schlosser
Vice President and Vice Provost of Global Futures

Research: Recreational activities major source of microplastics in aquatic environments

When packing up for a swim trip, there are some things you can't forget: sunscreen, towels and… microplastics? A recent study published in the Water Emerging Contaminants & Nanoplastics journal showed a significant spike in microplastic fiber concentrations in the Salt River following human activity. Microplastic levels in the Salt River increased eightfold after a single day of recreational use, with most fibers traced back to plastics in swimwear. Read an ASU News story on the study here.

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Research: On the sensitivity of future hydrology in the Colorado River to the selection of the precipitation partitioning method

A recent study published in Water Resources Research reports projected smaller snowpack levels will reduce the basin's streamflows to concerning levels. Four of the five contributors to the research paper are part of a team from ASU's Center for Hydrologic Innovations, which combines the strengths of the School of Sustainable Engineering and the Built Environment and the

Global Futures Laboratory. Read an ASU News story on the study here.

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HeatReady Schools project featured in The New York Times

HeatReady Schools, a project at the Global Futures Laboratory, recommends that schoolyards be more than 50 percent shaded during the hottest hours. This recommendation is in direct conflict with a popular playground material: asphalt. According to a recent article in The New York Times, some schools in the warmest regions of the United States are changing their schoolyards to encourage safe, shaded outdoor time for children.

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The Arizona Republic: Fighting past inequities, New York, like Phoenix, struggles to acclimate to rising heat

Melissa Guardaro, an assistant research professor who works on sustainability projects for Knowledge Exchange for Resilience, said in an article that historically redlined neighborhoods tend to be the hottest due to increased concrete,

warehouses and asphalt and fewer trees or other cooling landscape elements. This is true of Arizona, but also in New York, where rising temperatures are being felt widely by the state's residents.

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Finding opportunity in artificial intelligence

In an article published in the business magazine Fast Company, Andrew Maynard, a professor in the School for the Future of Innovation in Society, describes the mixed emotions felt across academia upon the introduction of ChatGPT. "Organized panic," as he described, has since melted into increased optimism for the use of artificial intelligence in higher education settings and beyond. "We are very actively looking at how you can scale and accelerate and expand learning environments using generative AI," he said in the article.

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Mokshda Kaul on making the clean energy transition work for all

Mokshda Kaul, a Ph.D. candidate in the sustainable energy program at the School of Sustainability, joined the Agents of Change in Environmental Justice podcast for a discussion on the transition to clean energy. Kaul reflects on energy justice, equitable policymaking and the intersection of economics and climate issues.

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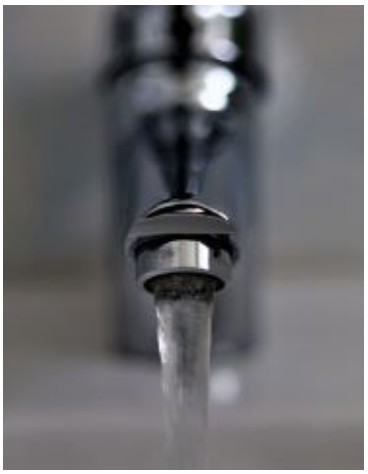

Navigating uncharted waters toward water resilience

The fifth story in a series exploring how ASU is changing the way the world solves problems explores water solutions in the Southwest. The Arizona Water Innovation Initiative and the Water Institute, both supported by the Global Futures Laboratory, are driving innovative solutions toward a thriving water future for those in Arizona and beyond.

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Listen to the final episode in “Cool Ideas for a Long, Hot Summer” series

On the final episode of an Issues podcast featuring Global Futures Laboratory experts,

School of Sustainability professor Melissa K. Nelson discusses the impacts of climate change on Indigenous communities, agriculture and Indigenous sustainability. The miniseries has previously explored the relationship between economics and environmental justice, solar-powered canoes in the Amazon and how refugees create communication networks to respond to climate change.

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Book launch event explores higher education's role in addressing democracy, climate change

To celebrate the book launch of “Democracy in a Hotter Time,” Michael M. Crow participated in a Q&A session in the Carson Ballroom of Old Main. The book, which looks at the intersection of democracy and climate change, was edited by David Orr of The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and features contributors from the Global Futures Scientists and Scholars Network, including Crow.

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ASU's Future Security Forum

sees climate change, tense foreign relations as threats

The 10th annual Future Security Forum was held in September in Washington, D.C. The event was sponsored by ASU and the New America think tank, in collaboration with Security + Defense PLuS. The forum gathered policymakers, government and military leaders, experts and analysts to discuss what global security will look like over the next decade. Peter Schlosser, vice president and vice provost of Global Futures at ASU, said at the forum that rapid action is needed to address climate events.

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Graduate planning students receive awards for solving real-world planning challenges with community partners

Students connected to ASU's Master of Urban and Environmental Planning program are the recipients of three local and national awards for their socially embedded projects. The projects were part of the students' capstone experience in the program, Planning Workshop. Two of the three projects — one of which took place in Chandler, Arizona — represent the continuation of partnerships between ASU and local communities through Project Cities, a program of the Sustainable Cities Network in

ASU’s Global Futures Laboratory.

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ASU students create new VR experiences for Global Futures course

In a College of Global Futures class, students virtually access several immersive experiences, including visiting the Arctic to measure the thickness of the ice and replenishing a dying coral reef in the ocean off of Hawai‘i. The virtual reality components were designed by student workers in SPLIT Studio, which stands for Student-Powered Lab for Immersive Technology. The studio is housed in EdPlus, the ASU unit that designs digital teaching and learning models to increase student success. The course, which will be open to any student on campus, fulfills the ASU’s new sustainability requirement and will be offered in the spring 2025 semester. Course registration is now open.

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KER event recognizes 'what we can achieve together'

More than 300 leading scientists, researchers and

thought leaders from across the country participated in the Knowledge Exchange for Resilience's (KER) Celebration for Resilience 2024 Symposium and Gala event on Sept. 19. The evening celebrated the contributions made by KER and the community since its inception six years ago when it was funded by a gift from Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust.

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College of Global Futures alumnae bring youth climate conference to their alma mater

Sustainability grads Hailey Campbell and Liz Quigley led LCOY USA, a conference at which youth delegates produce a set of policy demands to eventually be presented at the 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference. They held the conference on familiar ground: the Walton Center's auditorium, a space they have both previously spoken in as students. In an article for ASU News, Campbell and Quigley reflect on the role ASU played in supporting their careers as students.

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ASU BIOS appoints Rosemarie

McMahon as director of advancement

The Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences, a unit of the Global Futures Laboratory, announced Rosemarie McMahon's appointment to the director of advancement in September. According to a news release from ASU BIOS, her expertise is crucial as the research entity enters a new phase of growth. "Rosemarie's experience and leadership in both the corporate and scientific sectors make her a key addition to our team," Bill Curry, president and chief executive of ASU BIOS, said in the release. "Her vision and commitment to advancing sustainability will help shape the future of our institute."

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Events

Enlightening Roundtable How to Land a Federal

with AI and Society Fellows

Join SFIS' AI and Society Fellows, Dr. Akuadasuo Ezenyilimba, Dr. Nitin Verma, and Dr. Marjorie Xie, as they discuss their current research, responsible innovation in the context of AI, and how their upcoming course, FIS 494/HSD 598 AI & Society: Ethics & Impact, will equip students to address the ethical and societal concerns surrounding AI.

Wednesday, October 16
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. (MST)
ISTBX 481

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Job: USAJOBS Information Session

Are you curious about the vast opportunities within the federal workforce? Join us for a workshop where we dive into the world of federal jobs and unveil the keys to successfully securing employment through the USAJOBS.gov website.

Tuesday, October 29
4:30 p.m. – 6 p.m. (MST)
ISTBX 481 and Zoom

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Futurecast

Edition 6 | Spring 2024

Global Futures: Futurecast offers a look into our prospective futures through the eyes of the extensive Global Futures Scientists and Scholars Network. Explore what might come in the seconds, days, and years ahead. Our latest issue talks about how we can draw inspiration from the

patterns in nature to implement strategic decisions in our built world.

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

ASU Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory
Arizona State University

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Be sure to receive this newsletter as well as other journals and updates including our biannual journal, Futurecast.

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