

Session Descriptions

THURSDAY JAN 28

12PM Opening Keynote: Disrupting, Reimagining, and Convening the Future with Ali Boyd

The conference begins with a view of the Third Horizon, looking towards the future we hope to see as it emerges out of challenging times of uncertainty. Join us for an active session that explores the concept of the Third Horizon and applies to our lives and our sustainability efforts at DU. This session will launch us into discussions across the conference, discussions that lead us to action toward our goals.

1PM Panel: Promoting Environmental Justice in BIPOC Communities

Presenters: Rachel Forbes, Anna Craggs, Kylee Peterson, Sarah Wochele

The profession of social work has a long history of promoting environmental justice within vulnerable communities. Social workers can play an important role in engaging with the BIPOC community to promote environmental justice, especially regarding access to safe and healthy housing, food, and air. This panel will provide a call to action for the profession of social work to further fight environmental racism in partnership with BIPOC communities and critiques the profession's history of centering Whiteness in its interventions. An emphasis is placed upon decolonizing social work practice in the regards of intervening where environmental racism is present utilizing an eco-centric approach and centering BIPOC voices. This work cannot be done by social workers alone and must be an interdisciplinary effort as diverse expertise and perspectives are valued in promoting equitable systems. Advocacy efforts on part of social workers in partnership with other professions may include advancing environmentally just policies and restorative approaches to building equitable food and housing systems.

2PM Panel: Breaking Free From Plastics

Presenters: Danny Katz (CoPIRG), Randy Moorman (CoPIRG Student Chapters), Matilda Thornton-Clarke (Eco-Cycle)

The Student PIRGs, CoPIRG and Eco-Cycle have been working across Colorado to help campuses and communities break free from plastic. We're interested in bringing this campaign to DU. We have a plastics problem in this country; producing, using, and tossing at the fastest pace possible. This is not sustainable, and plastics clog our landfills and waterways. The solution is simple - we need to move away from single-use plastic and towards reusable alternatives. Colorado can lead the way on this issue. The panel will bring together leading experts - CoPIRG, Eco-Cycle, and the Student PIRGs - to discuss what's happening in CO, why it needs to happen faster, and how DU students can get involved.

3PM Campus Update: Continue Your Sustainability Learning Journey in Pioneer@Work

Presenter: Bella Peccolo

Following Transformative Direction Four of DU Impact 2025, DU is advancing our institutional structures and becoming more agile and networked with Pioneer@Work, DU's talent management platform. We launched our newest module, the learning management system (LMS), in August 2020, and the system empowers employees to seek out learning opportunities, such as instructor-led classes, eLearnings, and 16,000 LinkedIn Learning courses. You may have experienced this powerful platform as you completed the DEI training or Faculty Institute for Inclusive Teaching (FIIT). This platform now hosts a curricula for Sustainability at DU. Targeting Sustainability Council members, these core sessions and associated playlist of mini workshops is open to anyone wanting to deepen their knowledge of sustainability and how this work looks at DU. We encourage you to attend this session to learn more about how to search for training, add training to your professional development plan, and embark on your learning journey.

3:30PM Panel: mDNA: Completing A Regional Conservation Assessment with a Focus on Equitable Access

Presenters: Chris Hawkins and Leander Lacy

The Metro Denver Nature Alliance (Metro DNA) is a growing coalition of non-profit, government, research, and private sector partners seeking to align nature-based efforts to ensure more equitable access to nature and to promote healthy people, communities, and natural places. Our most recent efforts include a comprehensive Regional Conservation Assessment. Join us to learn more about mDNA, the conservation assessment, how this intersects with our equity work, and where there are opportunities for research and class collaborations.

4PM Skills Workshop: Team Science for Climate Solutions

Presenter: Lisa Reyes Mason

Climate change is a social injustice. It threatens the health and well-being of people and communities worldwide, and especially groups who are socially, economically, or politically minoritized. Addressing the climate crisis requires solutions and skills that are both technical and social. Team science across disciplines, bridging sectors, and in partnership with communities is vital and increasingly acknowledged in academic circles as important. But “walking the talk” of team science can be harder than it seems. This interactive workshop will delve into concrete competencies for team science in four categories: 1) Values, Attitudes, and Beliefs, 2) Habits of Mind, 3) Knowledge, and 4) Interpersonal Skills. Real-life examples of developing these competencies through climate resilience projects will be presented. Participants will also engage in interactive ways of identifying what team science skills they have experience in, which they would like to strengthen, and how to improve their skills moving forward.

FRIDAY JAN 29

9AM Panel: Post-Covid Mindshift

Presenters: Doni Clemons, Kristin Mitchell, and Isabela Galarza Gonzalez

Covid-19 has exacerbated pre-existing weaknesses in many of our social systems and economic structures, rendering some nonviable. Economists and public health officials report that the success of our economy is inextricably linked to the health of our communities and environment. In our presentation, we will illustrate the way forward as being like a pie in which each section of society plays a part in the whole picture of sustainability and as contributors to climate change. We aim to empower our audience with tangible and practical solutions we can all utilize to create physical and social ecosystems that are more stable and equitable in the face of the unexpected.

10AM Panel: Buildings, Solar, Plans and COVID: Moving Towards Carbon Neutrality in Times of Change

Presenters: Chad King, Marc Wilkinson, and Lynn Bailey

DU has a goal of carbon neutrality. In the last year, we opened three buildings, installed a solar array, completed several plans, and had our operations challenged by the global pandemic, all impacting our carbon footprint and our goals. In this presentation, we will share the innovative sustainable designs embedded in the Denver Advantage buildings and the impacts of our completed solar project on our operations. In planning for carbon neutrality, we have completed several studies on central heating and chilling and campus lighting, pieces of an energy master plan for campus. Finally, in this time of COVID we have seen dramatic changes in energy use, waste production and more. This presentation will explore these multiple factors that go into understanding our carbon footprint and planning for carbon neutrality.

11AM-12:15PM: DU Update Rapid Fire with the Center for Sustainability

Presenters: Hanna Gaetner, Leah McCord, Elizabeth Pepper, Kayla Fatemi-Badi, Russell Yohannan, Grace LaMendola, Jonathan Clark, Kalyn McDonnell, and Stella Brown

Students at the Center for Sustainability work on a huge variety of impactful and interesting projects every year. Hear about some of their work in a fun, fast-paced, and lighthearted session utilizing Pecha Kucha-style presentations. Learn a whole lot in a very little bit of time – from how DU is approaching compost, what the DU Food Pantry and Energy Challenge are like this year, and how we are telling our story. These RapidFire presentations will allow you to get to know the students from the Center for Sustainability, hear more about the fantastic work they are doing, and engage in a new and always-entertaining presentation style.

12:15PM: What is the Sustainability Council Up To?

Presenters: Anna Sher and Seamus Geraty

The Sustainability Council has been around since 2009, working to move DU towards its lofty and challenging goal to become carbon neutral by 2050. This group of faculty, staff, students, and administrators set the goals and overall approach to sustainability for the university and is successful because of committed and passionate volunteers from across every sector of campus. Join this year's Council Chair and Vice-Chair, Anna and Seamus, to hear a bit of history on the Sustainability Council, what the Council is up to now, and where we are going from here. Then join us for our next meeting – all of which are open to the DU public – and find ways to get involved yourself!

1PM Campus Update: Greening the Crimson Tide

Presenter: Kate Meagley and the Happy Tampers

The Happy Tampers are a student group working to eliminate barriers to accessing menstrual products and to create a supportive environment for all menstruators in the DU community. We have shifted towards more sustainable practices including distributing less-wasteful disposable products as well as reusable menstrual products. We support an individual's decision to make decisions that work for their bodies while providing access to reusable products for those who choose to use them. Reusable menstrual products can be more convenient, better for personal health, and produce less waste. We will discuss our new program, the Green Your Flow Giveaway which will provide reusable menstrual products to students for free.

1:30PM Skills Workshop: Investing for Impact

Presenter: Chris Hughen

Chris Hughen teaches an undergraduate course that manages a stock portfolio that is part of DU's endowment fund. Our investment strategy is designed to generate an exceptional return while also minimizing risk by considering the sustainability of our investments. How do we do it? What are our successes and challenges? The presentation will discuss the five key categories of sustainability that investors need to consider, how to determine the most important (material) sustainability issues for a particular company, and the importance of sustainability accounting standards for valuing companies. In short: how to make money while doing good?

2:00PM Closing Keynote: Where Do We Go From Here?

Presenters: Chad King and Emily Schosid

As we wrap up the 2021 Sustainability Conference we look to the future. In this interactive session participants will propose the future we want to see for sustainability at DU. We will examine practices and policies to move us towards our sustainability goals. We will explore ways to be involved in any role on campus, ways to keep our momentum moving forward.