

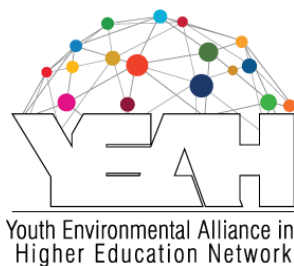
## Side Event Announcement

### *Empowering youth engagement in climate action, solutions, and policy addressing global challenges*

Sunday, December 10, 2023 at 16:45—18:15  
Expo 2020 Blue Zone – SE Room 2 (173 pax)

Panelists will provide perspectives on the role of education in preparing the next generation of environmental stewards and leaders who are global citizens with sustainability mindsets. Student representatives from several campuses and countries will describe unique ways in which they are moving knowledge into action – sharing insights and sustainable solution-oriented ideas. Besides amplifying youth voices globally, they serve as catalysts for change through knowledge sharing and action in their home communities. Additionally, panelists will share ideas for improving education to better prepare students to be not only good environmental stewards, but leaders, innovators, and problem solvers in the sustainability and climate spaces.

Speakers represent the Youth Environmental Alliance in Higher Education, Climate Leaders Academy, SDSN Australia New Zealand Pacific, Smithsonian Institution, and young ambassadors from Boston University, Colorado College, Moravian University, Monash University, Tennessee State University, and Vanderbilt University.



The ***Youth Environmental Alliance in Higher Education (YEAH)*** is a transdisciplinary, multi-institutional network that equips students with real-world experience of collaborative, evidence-based approaches to global environmental sustainability (<https://yeah-net.org>). The YEAH Network is led by faculty who met when bringing student delegations to the COPS and was the brainchild of Dr. Gillian Bowser, of the Warner College of Natural Resources, Colorado State

University. It connects institutions of higher education from all over the globe to provide integrated knowledge to students that empowers them to address complex global environmental problems, ranging from pollinator decline and biodiversity loss to climate shifts and ecosystem transformations. YEAH members are geographically and culturally diverse institutions that share a common desire to prepare and inspire undergraduate and graduate students to effectively analyze global environmental issues and contribute to policy solutions. The YEAH initiative is funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation UBE-REU program. The founding network members include:



The *Climate Leaders Academy* has grown out of YEAH. The CLA is hosted at Vanderbilt University and brings together 12 students from six different universities across the nation (including two Historically Black Colleges and Universities or HBCUs), with the goal to broaden and diversify the talent pool of future climate leaders. Students are immersed in collaborative climate change learning and undertake team-based projects across a range of disciplines and perspectives, culminating in participation at COP. Students receive concrete benefits in the program such as transferable academic credit and engage in truly

transdisciplinary learning across institutions and cultures. Supported with funding from the U.S. National Science Foundation, the project is led by Leah A. Dundon, J.D., Ph.D., Director, Vanderbilt Climate Change Initiative along with co-principal investigators, Dr. Jianwei Li, Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Tennessee State University, Dr. Pamela Templer, Professor and Chair, Department of Biology and Director, BU URBAN Program, at Boston University, and Sarah Green, Professor of Chemistry, Michigan Technological University.



***SDSN Australia, New Zealand & Pacific*** mobilizes universities and knowledge institutions to play a leading role in addressing the Sustainable Development Goals and is hosted by Monash University in Australia. It is the regional network of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, a global initiative for the United Nations (<https://www.unsdsn.org/australia-nz-pacific>).



***Smithsonian Institution/Smithsonian Science Education Center:*** The Smithsonian Science Education Center (SSEC; <https://ssec.si.edu/>) is the only organization at the Smithsonian Institution that is solely dedicated to formal K-12 Education. The SSEC was established in 1985 as the National Science Resources Center (NSRC) under the sponsorship of two prestigious institutions: the Smithsonian Institution and the National Academy of Sciences. In 2012, the name changed to the Smithsonian Science Education Center to reflect our mission: transforming K-12 Education Through Science™ in collaboration with

communities across the globe. SSEC Programmatic Goals include 1) the promotion of authentic, inquiry-based K-12 science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) teaching and learning; 2) Ensuring diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion (DEAI) in K-12 STEM education; and 3) Advancing STEM education for sustainable development (STEM4SD).



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