

Youth Climate Summit gives high school students tools to address sustainability in their communities

By Matthew Oxford, ASU News
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This month, 53 high school students had the opportunity to learn about how they can address sustainability issues in their schools and communities at the inaugural Youth Climate Summit held at Arizona State University.

Hosted by the [Rob Walton College of Global Futures](#), a unit of the [Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory](#), the event took place at the Rob and Melani Walton Center for Planetary Health on the Tempe campus, and is an extension of the [ASU Student Council Sustainability Officer Program](#).

“Attending ASU’s Youth Climate Summit was not only fun, but extremely educational,” said Marley Outcalt, a senior at Bioscience High School in the Student Council Sustainability Officer program. “Being surrounded by other students who were deeply passionate about sustainability was extremely inspiring.”

The event included a full agenda of speakers ranging from faculty members to current ASU students and external organizations.

[Jennifer Vanos](#) and [Sonja Klinsky](#), ASU professors from the [School of Sustainability](#), spoke about their focus area within sustainability and how research can impact the lives of others.

The Arizona Youth Climate Coalition administered a policy workshop, and Carla De La Chapa, city of Phoenix sustainability director, also offered words of advice to the group.

“The guest speakers who attended were engaging, and the opportunity to hear their thoughts was extremely valuable,” Outcalt said. “I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and look forward to attending similar events in the future.”

"I learned a lot, especially about careers and how sustainability can be a variety of things, not just one single topic," said Danna Juarez Silva, a member of the Student Council Sustainability Officer program. "(Participating in the program) reminds me that it's not just about doing another school activity, it's about impacting people's way of thinking."

The day also featured a student panel that included ASU sustainability students Ava Claus, Seanelle Carlisle and PK Hoppe, as well as Sam Gibbons, who is currently a science communication researcher at Arizona Science Center.

"I had a wonderful time at the Youth Climate Summit," said Carlisle, who is ??a [Global Futures Impact Scholar](#) double-majoring in sustainability and mechanical engineering and serves as the Student Council Sustainability Officer Program leader.

"What stood out to me most was how engaged students were, especially after participating in the student panel," she said. "I had students come up to me after the panel asking about my experience as a student in sustainability."

[Miki Kittilson](#), dean of the Rob Walton College of Global Futures, provided closing remarks before the attendees went to the atrium to end the day with a clothing drive, led by those in the Student Council Sustainability Officer program, and a reflection on how the day's activities relate to [ASU's Principled Innovation framework](#).

"I appreciated all the speakers who took the time to speak with us and give us some inspiration for us to be more sustainable with our community," said Chuy (Jesus) Castaneda Rios, a member of the Student Council Sustainability Officer program. "We can use the ideas they gave us to make an impact in our own communities."

The Rob Walton College of Global Futures took on the management of the Student Council Sustainability Officer Program earlier this year from the city of Phoenix, where it had been run for over a decade.

The program educates and embeds sustainability on school campuses through the leadership of a sustainability officer. The officers receive guidance, mentorship and training to increase civic engagement among the students and community as they work to embed sustainability through projects and activities.

High school students and teachers who are interested in participating in the Student Council Sustainability Officer Program can email CGFenrollment@asu.edu.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



The Youth Climate Summit hosted by the Rob Walton College of Global Futures featured many guest speakers including a student panel. From left: Ava Claus, PK Hoppe, Sam Gibbons, Seanelle Carlisle and Katie Spreitzer. Photo by Matthew Oxford/ASU

Gallery



Miki Kittilson, dean of the Rob Walton College of Global Futures, presents to the group of high school students and teachers in the Rob and Melani Walton Center for Planetary Health.



Jennifer Vanos, an associate professor in the School of Sustainability, speaks to the group about her research focusing on extreme heat and human health in urban areas.



Staff from the Rob Walton College of Global Futures led activities throughout the day for the students to explore sustainability and how it connects to various aspects of their daily lives.