



## PROGRAM ON THE ENVIRONMENT

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

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### CO-PRODUCING HOPE: EXPLORING THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING IN UNIVERSITIES TO ENHANCE CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Session Day 2, In-Person

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With the impending environmental degradation caused by climate change, it is vital communities have the capacity to adapt to increase their resilience. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the benefits and challenges of community-engaged learning in universities and understand how community-engaged learning could increase climate resilience in frontline communities. To accomplish this task, I worked with Climate Impacts Group (CIG) and the Northwest Climate Resilience Collaborative (NCRC), a NOAA-funded organization working towards assisting Tribes and frontline communities in improving their resilience to climate change. I assisted the NCRC with the foundation of their climate justice school, a program for youth passionate about climate justice and co-production. The goals of the summer school were informed by 16 informal interviews with students and faculty members and a survey with community-based organizations (CBOs). The results indicated that the benefits of community-engaged learning are diversifying student perspectives, improving science communication, and increasing community-integrated policy and research. However, some challenges are institutional barriers, inadequate resources, and insufficient time. Increasing environmental justice curriculum and community engagement in classrooms has the potential to increase communities' resilience to climate change by combining scientific problems and community problems to create a more holistic foundation for research and policy. These changes can increase community's public involvement, improve ethical pitfalls in policy and research, and create more opportunities to legitimize other community knowledge sources.