



FEATURES & ARTICLES

All Angles discussion series tackles climate change

October 25, 2022

All Angles (<http://iop.pitt.edu/all-angles>), the University discussion series that encourages open dialogue on challenging and complex subjects, returns Oct. 26 with a focus on global energy demand and our environment.

More than 650 students registered to attend the first All Angles session of the 2022-2023 academic year with author Arthur C. Brooks, pictured above. Brooks' installment titled, "Love Your Enemies," offered attendees a roadmap to the benefits that come from choosing to love one another and the strength gained from understanding our differences on complex topics. 150 students received free signed copies of his book, "Love Your Enemies."

Kim Le, a junior biology major in the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, heard about All Angles through the Blue and Gold Society and her scholarship advisor, Sarah Popovich. She registered for Brooks' session, her first-ever All Angles event, she said, because she was interested in hearing the perspective of someone with a different political stance.

"I was surprised [to learn] about certain habits or mindsets," said Le, who is from West Chester, Pennsylvania. She chose Pitt because of its strength in the health sciences, the urban campus and its affordability. However, programming like All Angles, she said, brings a unique element to the table for her and students generally in learning to tackle societal issues and disagree civilly.

[Read more: Pitt launches All Angles series] (<https://www.pitt.edu/pittwire/features-articles/all-angles-speaker-series>)

"There is a strong tendency to shut down and not want to listen to those who disagree with us," said Le. "Attending this programming is a good educational experience to prepare students to engage with the world and potentially be civic leaders. In a world that is so divisive, it's a greater challenge to be understanding than to be 'correct' all the time. It is important to engage in discourse or else we will never grow or change."

Sustainability is one of six core values in the [Plan for Pitt](https://www.planforpitt.pitt.edu/) (<https://www.planforpitt.pitt.edu/>) — the University's strategic plan to strengthen Pitt's people, programs and purpose — and overseen by Aurora Sharrard, Pitt's executive director of sustainability in the Office of Sustainability.

"The Pitt Sustainability (<https://www.sustainable.pitt.edu/pitt-sustainability-plan/>) and Climate Action (<https://www.pitt.edu/pittwire/features-articles/pitt-climate-action-plan>) Plans include and focus on energy, acknowledging its importance in our everyday lives, on our natural and built environments and in our economy," said

Sharrard. “As we combat the climate emergency here at Pitt and around the world, energy use reduction and shifts to cleaner energy sources are key strategies.”

She said All Angles is an excellent way for students engage this timely topic.

“The series is an important opportunity for students to hear various firsthand perspectives and approaches to solving the complex challenges our society faces,” Sharrard said. “Energy systems are complicated, but we hope attendees will come away with a stronger understanding of energy use, sources and systems at a global and national scale.”

About the speakers

The upcoming All Angles session (<http://iop.pitt.edu/event/all-angles-global-demand-energy-and-our-environment>), “The Global Demand for Energy and our Environment,” will feature speakers Scott Tinker, professor and the Allday Endowed Chair in the Jackson School of Geosciences and director of economic geology at The University of Texas at Austin, and Paulina Jaramillo, a Carnegie Mellon University engineering professor and co-director of the Green Institute. Sherrard will moderate the event which will be held from 4–5:30 p.m. in the Lower Lounge of the William Pitt Union.

Among other topics, the speakers will discuss global energy systems and the complexities involved in developing energy policy while observing where these experts agree and disagree regarding solutions to mitigate climate change.

“

None of us own the truth, we can only seek it.

SCOTT TINKER

“Energy impacts everything in our lives,” said Tinker. “And everything in our lives depends on energy. There’s nothing else like it, really. We have to get past the superficial, good and bad, clean and dirty dialogue and begin to understand the real physics and economics of energy resources. There’s nothing perfect, unfortunately. It’s not simple, but it is solvable.”

Though pursuing geology meant following in his father’s footsteps, that wasn’t Tinker’s intention when he first started college. But an introductory class changed everything.

“I set off to university to study anything except geology, but [after that class] I was hooked,” said Tinker, adding that the subject brings together problem-solving and critical thinking in the natural world.

He said that civil dialogue, especially on often divisive topics like climate change, is fundamental to democracy.

“None of us own the truth, we can only seek it,” said Tinker. “Part of that exploration comes from discussions with others with perspectives different from our own, and with whom we don’t always agree. All Angles promotes that dialogue.”

Jaramillo added that hearing different perspectives is beneficial to students in their professional and personal lives, but that it’s only one step in an ongoing process.

“Students must also be cautious about what they take from these events,” said Jaramillo. “There are issues for which there aren’t two sides. For example, it is a fact that human activity is contributing to climate change and that such change is impacting natural and human systems in negative ways. This issue is not up for debate. What is up for debate is how we, as a society, respond to this fact.”

As a high schooler in Colombia, Jaramillo learned about the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, a United Nations effort for industrialized countries to limit or reduce greenhouse gases emissions, which inspired her to pursue a bachelor’s degree in environmental engineering.

Interested in pollution prevention, she then earned a master’s degree and a doctorate in civil and environmental engineering as she focused on modeling greenhouse gas emissions in the natural gas system. She expressed hope that students, too, will walk away from the All Angles event with new knowledge and inspiration.

“I think [students] will hear some disagreements, [but] I hope after hearing both arguments, [they] will take this new information and then learn more about the details of the topics we discussed,” she said. “Speakers won’t give them all the information they need to take an informed position, but I hope they will be intrigued by what they hear and take the initiative to learn more about energy transitions.”

[Register for the event.](https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_00crqHxOlgxszQq) (https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_00crqHxOlgxszQq)

— Kara Henderson, photography courtesy of the Institute of Politics

