

UCSF Climate-Health Dialogue, Nov 21, 2019  
What did we learn?

On November 21, 2019, almost 60 faculty, students, staff and friends gathered at Mission Bay to talk about the emerging presence of a Climate-Health discipline at UCSF, and to establish a baseline of perceived strengths, challenges and opportunities to prepare for the future.

The first section below summarizes *common themes* that emerged across the Breakout sessions for **Research, Education/Clinical Care and Advocacy**. Below that are *specific themes and ideas* that arose in each group.

***Common themes:***

1. UCSF has the potential to serve as an international leader in education, research, clinical care and advocacy in Climate-Health. With its strong reputation and passion to make a difference, UCSF can bend the curve of global warming and train Climate-Health leaders of the future – IF the community acts quickly to establish goals, coordinate efforts, and support high impact endeavors.
2. Work in silos has inhibited collaboration among the many dedicated and talented community members. There have been few opportunities for dialogue and informed growth. The geography of multiple worksites contributes to this challenge. Students, in particular, expressed frustration that there is no integrated process for finding mentors, obtaining more education and developing academic projects. All of this points to the need for a Climate Health centralized hub to facilitate collaborations and mitigate the barriers of space, financial support and time that discourage very busy people from getting started.
3. Solutions to global warming are also well-known solutions to health disparities.
4. UCSF has strong local, national and international partnerships that should be expanded and nourished to address Climate-Health issues. Partnerships should be encouraged with multiple entities, such as public health groups, non-profit organizations, corporations and other medical institutions.
5. The UCSF community needs more developed pathways to translate Climate Health research into education and policy change.
6. The UCSF Fossil Fuel Library contains a treasure trove of information, which ties in well with climate-related drivers of disease, and reflects one of several major opportunities for discovery and innovation that can accelerate progress toward a healthier planet.

## ***Specific Themes and Ideas:***

### **Policy/Advocacy**

-We need to translate science to policy by maximizing partnerships:

Communities (building on several existing programs)

California Medical Association

Corporate partners such as Salesforce

UC campuses and leadership

Policymakers

Strong medical systems and institutions

-Build a dedicated student curriculum in science and ethics of advocacy; maximize mentorships; create advocacy curricula that extend across partnerships, particularly within all reaches of health professionals (who have a lot of influence with the public)

-Needs: greater focus on the effects of environmental exposures/climate events on human health (minimal to none in the cancer center, for example)

-Storytelling with patients: hear how climate events have affected them. Goal to shape people's understanding of climate change effects on human mental and physical health

### **Education/Clinical Care**

This Breakout had particularly significant contributions from our health professional students, who recently surveyed and graded UCSF on its climate health productivity. Are you curious to see how UCSF scored? – [link](#). Many thanks to these incredible young people, who helped all of us realize how much is actually happening at UCSF, and where gaps exist.

-Students need education and experience in how to link high value care to sustainability

-There is a great need to develop teaching materials across the educational spectrum, for students, patients, faculty, community health professionals, hospital staff and lay public.

-Disaster preparedness plans are required on increasing scales. How to collaborate with local, state and international organizations to prepare for climate crises, food and water scarcity, and other major challenges to public health.

-We have a major opportunity to teach health professionals and lay public about the effects of health (care) on carbon footprint, and we should engage the public and patients in these efforts.

-Clinicians everywhere need training

-Identify, connect and build on what is already happening

-Create a repository/toolbox of UCSF climate-health educational materials, activities and opportunities

-We have a huge clinic system that can play a central role in developing patient education materials and care strategies

*-Create a UCSF Climate Health teaching certificate*

## **Research**

- To advance our scientific endeavors we should build cohesive cross-disciplinary working relationships across UCSF which will leverage greater success
- Environmental justice research is a unifying theme
- Maximize study of the Fossil Fuel documents
- Modeling infectious diseases will become increasingly important
- Wildfires are an opportunity to study costs and pollution impacts on health
- Mapping systems; making connections between disparate and narrow research questions
- What are the opportunities for funding, and how can we encourage more?
- We have strong existing climate-related programs, including reproductive health/environment, food security, Fossil Fuel and Chemical documents, etc.
- Suggest yearly symposium on Climate-Health research and activities