



Office of Sustainability

Climate, Sustainability, & Justice at MIT

MIT Day of Dialogue
Wednesday, August 5, 2020
2:30-4:00 pm



Community guidelines

- Share the space
- Use “I” statements – speak from your individual perspective, rather than for group
- Be open to hearing other points of view
- Listen respectfully and actively
- Commit to learning, not debating. Critique ideas, not people.
- Sit comfortably with silence
- What is said in the workshops stays in the workshops, but what is learned is shared (i.e. protect the confidentiality of your discussions, while applying lessons elsewhere.)
- Acknowledge when harm has been done. Seek to engage in repair as a group.

Pronouns

If you're comfortable and willing, we encourage people to update their Zoom name with their pronouns. MIT's Day of Dialogue committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment for everyone. Having pronouns on our profiles – or if a person chooses to share their pronouns verbally – is a way we can refer to colleagues without making assumptions.



Today's discussion

Bringing together a community of thought partners around climate, sustainability, and justice.

This is just the start.

Reminders

- For any issues during the session, chat with **Nicole Morell** or **Sara Kim**
- Update your Zoom name with pronouns
- Follow along with the readings and discussions on the “Companion Document” (link in chat box)
- There will be ASL interpreters in the session
- Stay muted when you are not speaking during both main and breakout sessions



Agenda

1 Welcome & introductions

2 **Environmental Justice**
& Small group discussion
Justin Steil and Mimi Wahid, Urban Studies & Planning

3 **Justice & Campus Sustainability**
& Small group discussion
Susy Jones, MITOS

4 Q&A and Wrap Up

Today's Presenters



Justin Steil

Associate
Professor of Law
and Urban
Planning



Mimi Wahid

Urban Studies & Planning
Year 4



Susy Jones

Senior
Sustainability
Project Manager
MITOS

MITOS Staff & Students

Nicole Morell
Rebecca Fowler
Julie Newman, Director
Stu Iler, Data Scientist
Effie Jia, Student fellow

Producer:
Sara Kim, Biology



Photo: Grist.org, People's Climate March NYC

Environmental Justice

Justin Steil

Assoc. Professor, Department of Urban Studies and Planning

Land acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Indigenous Peoples as the traditional stewards of the land where each of us are today and the enduring relationship that exists between them and their traditional territories.

The land on which MIT sits today is the traditional unceded territory of the Wampanoag Nation. We want to specifically acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory, and we honor and respect the many diverse indigenous people connected to this land on which we gather from time immemorial.

1

“Dreamers have improved themselves, and the damming of the seas for voltage, the extraction of coal, and the transmuting of oil into food, have enabled an expansion in plunder with no known precedent. And this revolution has freed the Dreamers to plunder not just the bodies of humans, but the body of the Earth itself. The Earth is not our creation. It has no respect for us. It has no use for us. And its vengeance is not the fire in the cities, but the fire in the sky...

2

... Something more fierce than Marcus Garvey is riding on the whirlwind. Something more awful than all our African ancestors is rising with the seas. The two phenomena are known to each other. It was the cotton that passed through our chained hands that inaugurated this age. It is the flight from us that sent them sprawling into the subdivided woods. And the methods of transport through these new subdivisions, across the sprawl, is the automobile, the noose around the neck of the earth.”

-Ta-Nehisi Coates,
Between the World and Me

Breakout Session - 5 Minutes

- What are your initial reflections?
- What is Coates saying about the relationship between white supremacy and climate change?

Reminders:

- Refer to P. 1 of Session Companion Document on Google Docs
- Self-facilitated
- All members of the group have a chance to speak, no one person dominates
- Try to split time between two questions
- Share any highlights into the “Chat” when we return to main session

DATE: December 12, 1991

TO: Distribution

FR: Lawrence H. Summers

Subject: GEP

'Dirty' Industries: Just between you and me, shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging MORE migration of the dirty industries to the LDCs [Least Developed Countries]? I can think of three reasons:

#1

The measurements of the costs of health impairing pollution depends on the foregone earnings from increased morbidity and mortality. From this point of view a given amount of health impairing pollution should be done in the country with the lowest cost, which will be the country with the lowest wages. I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that.

#2

The costs of pollution are likely to be non-linear as the initial increments of pollution probably have very low cost. I've always thought that under-populated countries in Africa are vastly UNDER-polluted, their air quality is probably vastly inefficiently low compared to Los Angeles or Mexico City. Only the lamentable facts that so much pollution is generated by non-tradable industries (transport, electrical generation) and that the unit transport costs of solid waste are so high prevent world welfare enhancing trade in air pollution and waste.

#3

The demand for a clean environment for aesthetic and health reasons is likely to have very high income elasticity. The concern over an agent that causes a one in a million change in the odds of prostate cancer is obviously going to be much higher in a country where people survive to get prostate cancer than in a country where under 5 mortality is 200 per thousand. Also, much of the concern over industrial atmosphere discharge is about visibility impairing particulates. These discharges may have very little direct health impact. Clearly trade in goods that embody aesthetic pollution concerns could be welfare enhancing. While production is mobile the consumption of pretty air is a non-tradable.

The problem with the arguments against all of these proposals for more pollution in LDCs (intrinsic rights to certain goods, moral reasons, social concerns, lack of adequate markets, etc.) could be turned around and used more or less effectively against every Bank proposal for liberalization.

— Lawrence Summers



Breakout Session - 5 Minutes

- What are your initial reflections?
- What are the consequences of this type of decision-making?

Reminders:

- Refer to P. 2 of Session Companion Document on Google Docs
- Self-facilitated
- All members of the group have a chance to speak, no one person dominates
- Try to split time between two questions
- Share any highlights into the “Chat” when we return to main session

Environmental Justice Movement

- 1982:** Sit-in against Warren County, NC PCB landfill
- 1987:** Toxic Wastes and Race study
- 1991:** First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit
- 1994:** Executive Order 12898
- 2002:** Bali Principles of Climate Justice



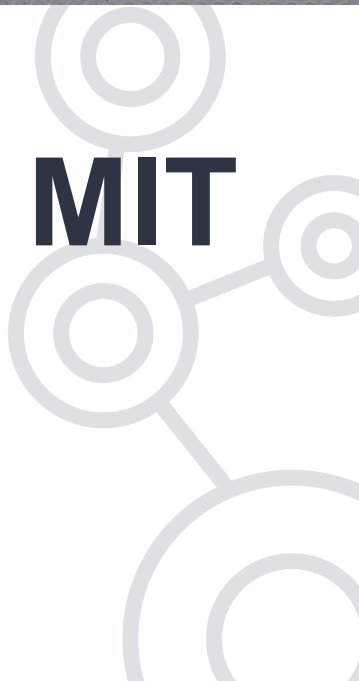
Q&A



Justice & Campus Sustainability at MIT

Susy Jones

Senior Sustainability Project Manager, MITOS



MISSION STATEMENT:

MIT Office of Sustainability

We aim to transform MIT into a powerful model that generates new and proven ways of responding to the unprecedented challenges of a changing planet via operational excellence, education, research and innovation on our campus.

Areas of Impact

LOW-CARBON CAMPUS

Climate
Buildings
Energy
Mobility
Air Quality

CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Water
Landscape
Campus infrastructure

MATERIAL LIFECYCLES

Procurement
Waste

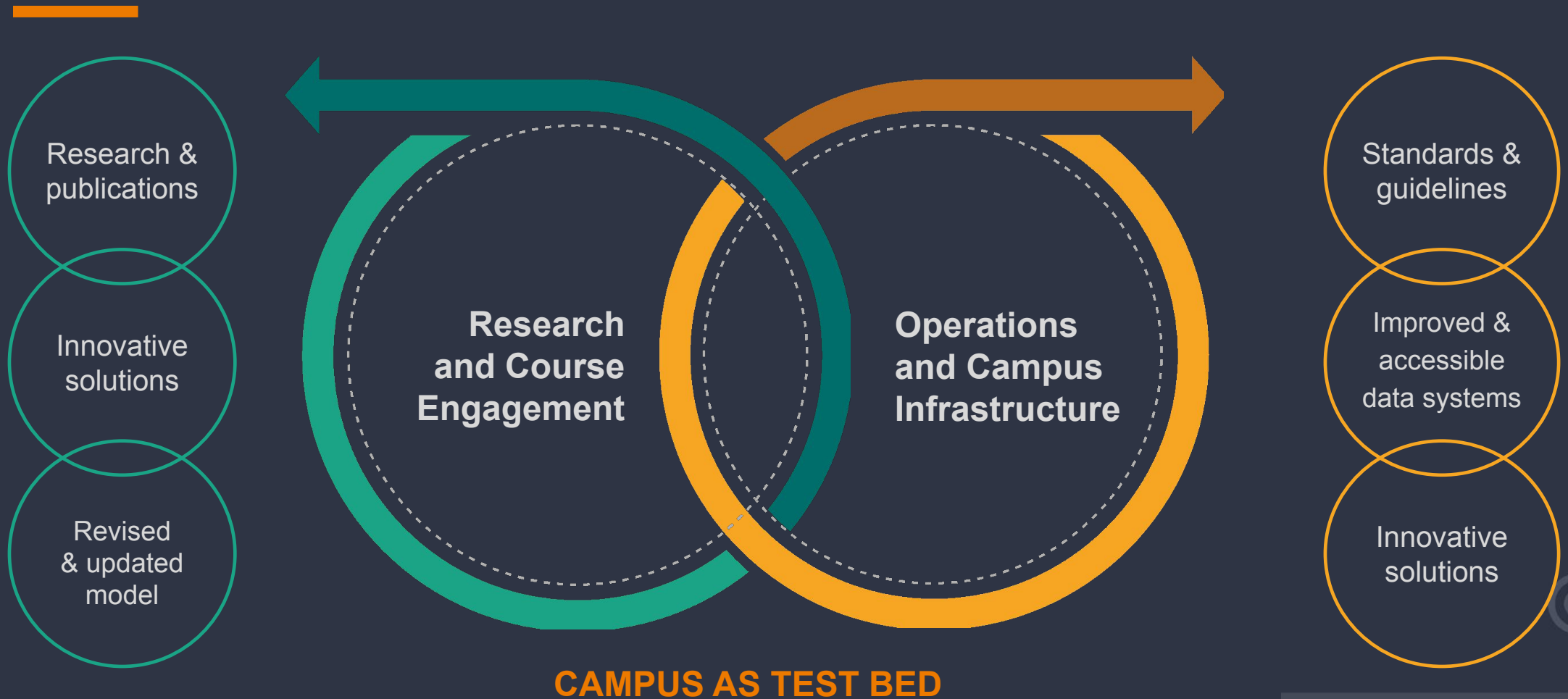
HEALTHY PEOPLE

Food
Wellbeing

THRIVING NETWORKS

Campus
City
Globe

How are we solving for sustainability at MIT?



CAMPUS AS TEST BED

Breakout Session - 10 Minutes



What brought you to the table today? What issues have been on your mind?



*If our campus was environmentally-just, how would you know?
What would be different?*

Reminders:

- Refer to P. 3 of Session Companion Document on Google Docs
- Self-facilitated
- All members of the group have a chance to speak, no one person dominates
- Try to split time between two questions
- Share any highlights into the “Chat” when we return to main session



Q&A



Wrap up

Write into the chat one thing that someone else said that impacted you or that you want to raise up.

Stay in touch:

sustainability.mit.edu

sustainableMIT@mit.edu

Resources

- Delegates to the **First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit** held on October 24-27, 1991, in Washington DC, drafted and adopted these **17 principles** of **Environmental Justice**. Since then, the **Principles** have served as a defining document for the growing grassroots movement for **environmental justice**.
 - LINK: <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/ej-principles.pdf>
- Some leading authors regarding environmental justice include Robert Bullard, Laura Pulido, Julie Sze, Robert Pellow, Sheila Foster and Robert Cole