



Washington Oregon Cascadia Higher Education Sustainability Conference

Call for Program Proposals

March 2-4, 2026 | University of Washington Seattle – Husky Union Building (HUB)

Event Summary

This conference explores what it means to intentionally cultivate sustainable communities within higher education and beyond. Attendees engage in thought-provoking discussions, interactive sessions, and meaningful networking opportunities, all centered on fostering and environmentally conscious and socially responsible communities. Post-event participants leave with actionable insights and strategies to implement on their campuses and in their work, strengthening the movement for sustainability and social justice in the Cascadia region and beyond.

Conference Theme:

Still, We Rise: Intergenerational Leadership for a Sustainable Future

Across campuses and communities, new leaders are rising to meet the moment - rooted in purpose, fueled by hope, and guided by the lessons of those who came before. In the face of climate disruption, institutional barriers, and growing inequity, today's students, educators, and advocates are building a movement defined not just by urgency, but by care, collaboration, and bold imagination. WOHEC 2026 invites us to rise and to dream together. What could a sustainable world look like if we built it hand in hand across generations? How can we transform higher education into a catalyst for climate solutions, regenerative systems, and lasting empowerment for those stepping into leadership?

This year's theme challenges us not only to envision a better future, but to co-create it. Through mentorship, shared responsibility, and practical pathways, we can uplift rising leaders far beyond graduation. Sessions will explore the systems, strategies, and stories that illuminate what is possible when we lead with passion, equity, and vision.

Proposal Selection Criteria

Actionable and Transferable We want attendees to leave our sessions with a skill they can put to use, a project they can implement, or new knowledge of a subject to take back to their own work. **Meaningful and actionable learning objectives** and ideas that transfer between institutions and organizations will increase likelihood of selection for inclusion in the conference program.

Creativity of Subject Matter. We are interested in creative problem solving that goes beyond what has been tried before; that will inspire action and thinking outside the box. We are particularly looking for innovative proposals that will inspire solution-building in conference sessions.

Connectivity. We seek proposals that link faculty and curriculum development activities, campus operations, research, student affairs, and student initiatives. This event aspires to bring stakeholders together from separate divisions of institutions to create collaboration and to break-down traditional silos.

Quality. We are looking for high quality session abstracts that describe how the proposal will convey a clearly articulated subject and objective. We are dedicated to ensuring the presentations at our conference meet the high standards of the academic institutions that host the conference.

Interaction. Above all, our selection team is committed to proposals that will bring an engaging delivery of presentations and inclusive interaction for everyone. Preference will be given to proposals that outline participative and experiential formats that promote reflection and discussion.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. WOHEC strives to weave diversity, equity and inclusion throughout conference thematic elements, speakers and attendees. Submissions that account for this topic, either directly or indirectly, will be given preference in the selection and program development process.

Breakout Session Styles (75 minutes in length)

WOHEC is seeking, but is not limited to, submissions for different session styles described below.

Case Study/Speakers (for inclusion as a part of a session or panel)

Submit a new and original case study that demonstrates leadership, busting the status quo and developing inventive breakthroughs in thinking. This could be combined with other case studies/speakers into one inclusive session.

Participative Panel Discussion (3-4 speakers and a moderator)

An interactive version of conventional panel presentations with 3-4 speakers and a moderator leading the group discussion; emphasis will be on drawing connections between the panelists' perspectives. The aim will be to both share fresh ideas and generate new knowledge amongst the participants in the room.

Interactive Workshop (facilitated conversations for problem solving)

Alternative formats for hands-on, experiential learning; sessions can be outlined in any structure depending on the topic areas and selected proposals. Designed to provide space and facilitation for group discussion, these sessions will bring mixed perspectives together to tackle the bigger picture sustainability challenges facing higher education. These sessions will require experienced facilitators to introduce the topic and provide background information to the room. Proposals will require additional information including a session timing outline and a session pedagogy including learning design, activities and engagement tasks and actionable takeaways.

PLEASE NOTE: WOHEC reserves the right to make changes to submissions and require alternative combinations of speakers and case studies to most effectively shape each session's content and the conference learning experience as a whole.

Posters

Posters are displayed for the duration of the conference and highlighted during a dedicated part of the program to showcase a range of ongoing sustainability projects and research. They are a visual presentation of a topic allowing viewers to learn on their own while the presenter shares in one-on-one or small group conversations.

To submit a proposal for a poster, please use the online proposal submission form below including a description of the project, how it contributes to the overall sustainability of your campus, and how it addresses the conference theme. Posters must be printed and mounted by presenter; WOHEC will not be responsible for printing posters.

Meetups

Propose an onsite meeting of attendees at the conference who share your industry, job role or a particular interest/focus with an opportunity to collaborate, network and share ideas via a small gathering. Past Meetup examples:

Tours

Tours are in-person small group tours of buildings, facilities or other back-of-house previews of cutting-edge sustainable practices of value for attendees to see and learn about first-hand. Tours require an expert leader, a scheduled list of features to preview/showcase and a 60-90-minute timeframe.



Speaker Guidelines

Presentations are not meant to be a platform for business promotion. WOHESC requests that all proposals **offer educational outcomes and actionable takeaways for attendees**. Speakers are responsible for confirming that they have the right to use and will acquire the licenses needed for any copyrighted material used in the presentation. We will ask speakers to sign a release waiver to share presentation materials. Speakers with accepted proposals are expected to register for and attend WOHESC at the discounted speaker rate, at their own expense.

How to Submit

[Click here to submit!](#)

All proposals must be submitted through our [online submission form](#).

Information outlined below is required submitted proposals:

- Submitter's name and contact: "Submitter" is the individual completing the online form and who will be available to answer any questions about its contents, regardless of whether they are the proposed speaker.
- Proposal Title (20 words maximum)
- Abstract (500 words maximum)
- Session Description (3-4 sentences that will be published as a part of the conference program)
- Proposal type/session style
- Relevant Audience- please specify if you are submitting your session for a student focused audience
- Learning objectives (please list 3-4 lessons/insights the audience will take away from this session)
- Additional Speakers (you should secure permission from speakers before including them in the submission)

Interactive Workshop proposals will require the below additional information:

- Session timing outline
- Session pedagogy including learning design, activities and engagement tasks and **actionable takeaways achieved from attending the workshop**. Please also make note of any special materials, room structure or capabilities your session requires.

Call for Proposals Timeline

Call for Program Proposals opens	August 14, 2025
Proposal Deadline	October 17, 2025
Program Selection Decisions Announced	November 14, 2025
WOHESC 2026 Program Announced	December 4, 2025
Conference Dates	March 2-4, 2026

Questions? Please email program@wohesc.org.