

April 11, 2022

MEMO TO: Traci N. T. Fujita, Director of Council Services

F R O M: Brittney Sunderland, Legislative Analyst ~~RS~~

SUBJECT: **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING: COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S WEBINAR ON COASTAL RESILIENCE** (PAF 21-012(35))

You have requested a brief report on Columbia University's webinar on Coastal Resilience, held on March 29, 2022. Hosted by Alex Halliday, Columbia Climate School Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, the webinar was organized as a casual conversation with a brief question and answer period. The two panelists were:

- Kate Orff, Faculty Director of the Center for Resilient Cities and Landscapes and Associate Professor at the Columbia Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, and
- Marco Tedesco, Lamont Research Professor at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University.

The conversation centered around the socioeconomic impacts that global warming and sea-level rise create for affected communities, the disproportional distribution of climate consequences, and how solutions will require fast-paced adaptation and policy implementation applied in an equitable context. The 2022 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report was also briefly discussed. Professor Tedesco noted the report did not see improvements, but rather an acceleration of sea-level rise and the warming of our climate. Nonetheless, he is encouraged by the current conversation. Because arguments have historically centered around the validity of global warming, the economic and social implications have not yet received proper, if any, attention. There is optimism about the opportunity to now deal with areas of climate change that have previously been ignored.

Professors Orff and Tedesco both discussed how their previous professional work led to their interest in finding climate change solutions and providing information that will help underserved and overburdened communities with their climate change needs. In relation to coastal resilience and sea-level rise, Professor Orff is using her background as an architect to direct her work toward water-focused strategies, nature-based solutions, building back natural

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systems, and iterative-modeling processes to improve communities whose survival is based on use of natural water systems. Professor. Tedesco has similarly shifted his background in scientific research to apply those principles to collect comprehensive, accessible, and easy-to-understand data. Compelled by his desire to improve conditions for those who are notoriously marginalized and underserved, his work is now centered around coastal communities and communities impacted by environmental gentrification.

The panelists said there is an immediate need to provide a service to society to help develop tools to be used to impact climate change effects. Urgency was a recurring theme, with panelists noting that the work needs to start now. They also highlighted the importance of shifting the narrative, so that less focus is placed on the deprivation people will experience with changing habits and needs, and redirect it toward creating communities in which people are working together to create a more sustainable method of living.

I hope you find this information useful. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

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cc: David Raatz, Deputy Director of Council Services