

7th International Smart and Healthy Cities Symposium

People-Centered Innovations for Responsive Cities

Presented by the UNESCO Chair in Smart, Healthy and Learning Cities, the Institute for Smart & Healthy Cities at Thomas Jefferson University



Monday, April 20, 5-7pm (EST)

Location: Lawrence Field DEC Center Auditorium, East Falls, Philadelphia, PA

Visit institute-for-smart-and-healthy-cities/events for full details.

SPEAKER BIOS

Opening Remarks & Introduction

Susan C. Aldridge, PhD
President, Thomas Jefferson University



Dr. Susan C. Aldridge, has served as President of Thomas Jefferson University since May 2024, following her tenure as Interim President. A higher education leader with expertise in online learning and strategic growth, she previously led Drexel University Online, doubling University of Maryland Global Campus enrolment to 97,000 students across 28 countries, and expanded Troy University's global operations.

At Drexel, she launched Virtually Inspired and improved online retention through innovative services. Author of *Wired for Success*, she has received awards from HHS, US Distance Learning Association, and recognition as one of Washington DC's Top 100 most powerful women.

Edgar Stach, PhD
Director, Institute for Smart and Healthy Cities, UNESCO Chair in Smart, Healthy and Learning Cities



Dr. Edgar Stach, is Professor at Thomas Jefferson University, College of Architecture and the UNESCO Chair in Smart, Healthy and Learning Cities. Engineering and Commerce and joint Faculty at Oak Ridge National Laboratories USA (ORNL), Building Technologies Research and Integration Center.

Before joining the faculty at Philadelphia University in 2012 he was from 1999 to 2012 faculty (tenured) at The University of Tennessee (UT), College of Architecture and Design and from 1995 to 1999 at the Bauhaus University Weimar in Germany. From 2007 to 2009 he was visiting research Professor at the Department of Building Technology at the TU Delft, Netherlands.



Panel I : Learning Ecosystems & Education-centered City Planning

Daniel Wagner, PhD
UNESCO Chair in Learning and Literacy, University of Pennsylvania



Dr. Dan Wagner is a Professor of Education at the University of Pennsylvania, UNESCO Chair in Learning and Literacy, and Founding Director of the International Literacy Institute, National Center on Adult Literacy, and Penn GSE's International Educational Development program.

He holds a Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Michigan and has served as a Fulbright Scholar, Peace Corps volunteer, and advisor to UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, and USAID. A Fellow of multiple academic associations, Dr. Wagner chaired the Brookings Global Research Task Force on Learning and received the 2014 UNESCO Confucius International Literacy Prize.

Elizabeth Lankenau, AICP
Director of Sustainability, City of Philadelphia



Elizabeth Lankenau, AICP, Director of Sustainability for the City of Philadelphia, leads the Office of Sustainability, overseeing policy, resilience, environmental justice, and energy solutions. A seasoned urban planner, she previously directed infrastructure coordination for the city and worked as an infrastructure planner with the Philadelphia Water Department.

Lankenau excels in cross-sector collaboration, creative problem-solving, and advancing climate goals like energy poverty alleviation and solar projects. Holding an AICP certification, she drives Philadelphia's sustainable future through equitable, resilient initiatives.

Yocasta Lora
Associate State Director of Advocacy & Community Engagement, AARP Pennsylvania | 2025 Zhi-Xing Eisenhower Fellow

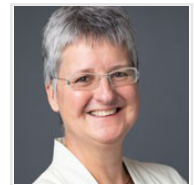


Yocasta Lora is the Associate State Director of Advocacy & Community Engagement at AARP Pennsylvania and a 2025 Zhi-Xing Eisenhower Fellow. She advances people-centered urban policy and governance models that foster inclusive, resilient, and age-friendly cities.

Her work bridges research, policy, and practice across housing, mobility, public spaces, volunteerism, and civic engagement. Serving on Governor Josh Shapiro's Pennsylvania Commission for Women and Mayor Cherelle L. Parker's 30,000 Homes Advisory Board, she contributes to equitable housing policy. As a Fellow, she brings a multi-generational perspective to responsive city governance.

Panel I Moderator

Barbara Klinkhammer Dipl.-Ing.
Dean, College of Architecture & the Built Environment, Thomas Jefferson University, UNESCO Co-Chair in Smart, Healthy and Learning Cities



Barbara Klinkhammer is the Executive Dean of the College of Architecture and the Built Environment at Thomas Jefferson University and the UNESCO Co-Chair in Smart, Healthy and Learning Cities. She is recognized as a thought leader in architecture and urban design, as well as a women pioneer in the fields of architecture and construction.

Klinkhammer came to Jefferson from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where she served as a tenured professor in several administrative roles including Associate Dean, Chair of Interior Design, and Chair of the Graduate Architecture Programs.

Panel II : Climate-responsive Design & Sustainable Urban Futures

Jie Yin, PhD

Professor, Deputy Director, Center for Healthy City Planning and Governance, Tongji University



Dr. Yin's research interests lie in the cross-disciplinary field of urban planning and environmental health, including healthy cities, biophilic design, and environmental psychology. He has been funded by several national grants and selected for the Shanghai Overseas High-level Talents Program. He has published over 30 journal articles and two book chapters.

He has been a reviewer for 20 journals and a member of the committees of six academic organizations. He was a Yerby postdoctoral fellow at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and holds a Ph.D. in population health sciences, a S.M. in environmental health from Harvard, and a M.Eng. in urban planning and design from Tongji University.

Francesco Musco, PhD
UNESCO Chair on Heritage & Urban Regeneration,
Director of Research, Università Iuav di Venezia



Dr. Francesco Musco is Full Professor of Urban Planning at IUAV University of Venice and leads the Planning & Climate Change Lab. A certified urban planner with a PhD in Sustainable Development Governance, he pioneers climate adaptation, nature-based solutions, and urban resilience strategies across Europe.

He has secured €9M+ in EU funding for projects like Veneto ADAPT, Adriadapt, and PIONEER, training 500+ professionals and influencing coastal cities from Venice to Seville. As UNESCO Chair coordinator and CORILA President, Musco bridges science, policy, and community for climate-proof cities.

Josiah Kephart, PhD

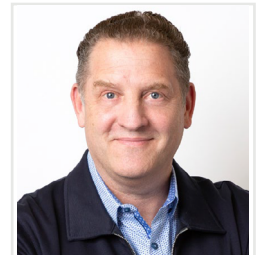
Professor Dornsife School of Public Health, Drexel University



Dr. Josiah Kephart, MPH is an assistant professor at the Urban Health Collaborative in the Dornsife School of Public Health at Drexel University in Philadelphia. Josiah's research focuses on understanding how climate change, air pollution, and the urban environment contribute to health in Latin America and the US.

He is an investigator at the Climate Change and Urban Health in Latin American Project (SALURBAL-Climate) and the Extreme Weather and Urban Health Center at Drexel. Josiah holds an MPH and PhD in exposure science and environmental epidemiology from Johns Hopkins University and a BA in Global Affairs from George Mason University.

Tim Johnson, FAIA, NCARB, LEED AP
Partner NBBJ Architects



Tim Johnson has been committed to tall buildings that positively shape the urban environment, promote human interaction, and minimize our ecological footprint. Tim's award-winning work spans the globe and is recognized for its iconic, market-driven solutions. He is an expert in tall, mixed-use buildings and previously served as Chairman of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat.

Tim is also recognized as an industry innovator and has been featured in the Wall Street Journal, CNN, BBC, Bloomberg News, and other business and design media discussing the impacts of urban density and design transformation in Asia.

Panel II Moderator

Yang Yang, PhD, MS, MArch
Assistant Professor, Computational Design and Simulation,
Thomas Jefferson University



Dr. Yang Yang, is Assistant Professor of Computational Design and Simulation at Thomas Jefferson University's College of Architecture & the Built Environment. Her research develops data-driven simulation tools for sustainable, equitable urban and building design, focusing on human-environment interactions.

Funded by Cornell's Atkinson Center and CTECH, her work advances behavioral modeling and computational solutions. A Cornell PhD (Systems Engineering) and MS alumna, she also holds an MArch and BEng from Tongji University, with prior postdoctoral experience at Cornell's Environmental Systems Lab.

About the Symposium

This symposium reflects **UNESCO's core commitment to fostering international cooperation, interdisciplinary exchange, and knowledge sharing**. It also marks an important milestone in establishing Thomas Jefferson University as an international hub for research, innovation, and policy leadership in smart, healthy, and learning cities.

Panel I: Learning Ecosystems & Education centered City Planning

This panel explores how cities can function as dynamic learning ecosystems, where education, community engagement, and policy intersect to foster inclusive and resilient urban environments.

Panel II: Climate-responsive Design & Sustainable Urban Futures

This panel examines how climate-responsive design, public health, and advanced urban planning strategies can collectively address the environmental challenges facing contemporary cities.

Symposium Registration



RSVP on the link below to reserve your spot!

Visit institute-for-smart-and-healthy-cities/events/shc-symposium/registration.

Questions?

Email us at edgar.stach@jefferson.edu
or vnd005@jefferson.edu

Joining virtually?

Visit [teams-link](#)

For more information:

Visit institute-for-smart-and-healthy-cities

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of [The Provost Office of Thomas Jefferson University](#), [The College of Population Health](#), [The College of Nursing](#), and [The College of Architecture and the Built Environment](#), whose contributions make this work possible.