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Title of the presentation: Resilient cities and the future socioecological change

Abstract

Access to affordable fresh food is an ongoing challenge in urban neighborhoods across the United States including in the nation's capital, Washington DC. Several DC neighborhoods are designated food deserts with no access to a full-service grocery store. The Urban Food Hubs of the College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES) of the University of the District of Columbia exemplify the University's commitment to building capacity in these underserved DC neighborhoods. The four components of the Urban Food Hubs are (1) food production, (2) food preparation, (3) food distribution, and (4) waste and water recovery. They are designed to not only provide access to fresh food, but also to create jobs, improve public health, mitigate water management problems, and create urban resiliency. This presentation argues that the positive economic, social/cultural, and physical/environmental impacts of the Urban Food Hubs also introduce neglected ecosystems services into the urban-scape of Washington DC in all four of the UN ecosystems services categories – provisioning, regulating, supporting, and cultural ecosystems services. The Urban Food Hubs model is scalable and replicable in a wide range of urban communities including those experiencing high land-use pressures.

Short bio

Dr. Sabine O'Hara is the founding Dean of CAUSES and Landgrant Programs, of the College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES) at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC). UDC is the only public university in Washington DC, and the only exclusively urban landgrant university in the United States. As Dean of CAUSES, Dr. O'Hara is responsible for academic, research and community outreach programs in the tradition of landgrant universities, and is leading the University's efforts to build a cutting edge model for urban agriculture and urban sustainability that improves the quality of life and economic opportunity for urban populations, and the resilience of urban communities.

Dr. O'Hara is a respected author, researcher, and higher education executive, and is well known for her expertise in sustainable economic development, community-based assessment, urban agriculture, and global education. She has experience in virtually every aspect of university administration including curriculum development, strategic planning, program accreditation, participatory research, and international partnerships.

Dr. O'Hara is a strong advocate of higher education who believes that education cannot merely provide answers to our questions, but must also question our answers. She is the founder and principal of Global Ecology LLC, the 10th President of Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia, and held faculty and administrative positions at Green Mountain College in Vermont, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, in Troy New York, and as Executive Director of the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, a preeminent international exchange organization that administers the Fulbright Scholar Program.

A native of Germany, O'Hara earned doctoral and Master's degrees in environmental and agricultural economics from the University of Göttingen, Germany. She serves on the board of several national and international organizations including as past president of the International Society for Ecological Economics and the US Society of Ecological Economics, Advisory Board member of King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and as editorial board member of several academic journals.