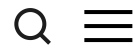




Tishman Environment
and Design Center



TISHMAN CENTER · AUGUST 2, 2024

Honoring Our Legacy: Celebrating Leadership Transitions at the Tishman Center and The New School



Dear Tishman Environment and
Design Center Community,

We proudly congratulate Joel
Towers on the announcement of his
new role as The New School's tenth
president. In light of this transition,
I am honored to share that I will
now serve as the sole Director of
the Tishman Environment and
Design Center. Joel served as the
founding director and, most
recently, as co-director with me at
the Tishman Center. In his multiple
leadership roles within the
University and beyond, Joel has
championed the integration of
climate justice and sustainability.
We look forward to working closely
with him to continue building this
into the fabric of our community.
As I begin my new role as Director, I
am mindful of the rich legacy of the
Center that our former Director,
Michelle DePass, helped us
relaunch. Under her leadership, we
reimagined the Center's mission as
a home for environmental justice

movement support, and I look forward to continuing this mission as the Director.

I joined The New School community in 2014 as a scholar-activist deeply rooted in the environmental justice movement in my hometown of Newark, NJ, where I grew up and worked for over a decade as the EJ Director for the Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC), an organization with a long history of resident-led grassroots activism. As an Assistant Professor of Professional Practice in the Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management (EPSM) program, I chaired the graduate program for over six years and continue to teach courses on Environmental Justice and capstone seminars, training the next generation of EJ leaders. I serve as a Board Trustee for several EJ organizations, including ICC, the New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance, and the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA). On the national level, I proudly co-founded our national [Environmental Justice movement fellowship](#) that supports a powerful network of EJ movement leaders who are scaling their impact collectively. I was an inaugural member of the Equitable and Just National Climate Platform, which helped to shape the Biden-Harris Administration's Climate and Environmental Justice agenda, and I also serve as an external

member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council's (WHEJAC) Carbon Management Workgroup. I will continue to integrate my personal and professional commitments to the EJ movement into the priorities and values at the Tishman Center.

There is much work to be done in this pivotal moment of transitions as the climate crisis deepens and EJ communities continue to grapple with the legacy of environmental racism and injustices. Now more than ever, we need to marshall our collective imaginations, resources, and power to put the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing into action. In the year ahead, we are preparing to reinforce our support and amplification of frontline solutions. We will do this alongside our second cohort of 20 EJ Movement Fellows from across the country that will be focused on strengthening EJ and democracy. We will also be helping to deliver \$50M of federal investments to EJ communities across the Western U.S. as part of the Unite-EJ coalition, creating a community of practice with over 20 peer institutions centering justice in higher education, supporting the launch of new regional climate hubs and advancing innovative climate and EJ policies at the federal and state levels.

Over the last decade, the Tishman Center has grown significantly, including our team, which now has 13 full-time staff members, many of whom come from the EJ movement or EJ communities. This work is not possible without them and their deep commitment to our mission and values. I am privileged to lead an amazing team of dedicated and talented staff who bring their whole hearts and minds to this arduous work. As I step into the role of Director of the Tishman Center, I am filled with excitement to continue advancing environmental and climate justice within our university community and with our EJ movement partners and allies. Most of all, I am hopeful about the power of our collective efforts to realize our mission - *a future of environmental justice, a world that is free from racism, in balance with nature, with care and respect for all beings.*

Yours Respectfully,



Ana Isabel Baptista, Ph.D.

Director of the Tishman
Environment and Design Center

Associate Professor, EPSM



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