



TISHMAN CENTER · MARCH 29, 2021

2020 Faculty Grants Update, Part 1 of 4: “Whole Earth Curriculum”

In Fall ‘19, faculty grants were awarded to support four projects related to the Tishman Center’s mission. One of those projects, “Developing Milano’s ‘Whole Earth’ Curriculum” was led by Leonardo E. Figueroa Helland (Milano/EPSC Faculty), and Mindy Fullilove (Milano/Urban Policy Faculty). As part of the project, a task force was

created to investigate how the New School can reexamine its curriculum with a focus on climate justice, as well as to evaluate the school's contribution to climate justice and its role in the greater community.

The Milano Whole Earth Task Force included several student helpers from EPSM, Genesis Abreu (EPSM Graduate Research Assistant/BIPOC Earth Student Collective/Climate Solutions Collective), John Clinton (Milano Dean/EPSM Faculty), Ana Baptista (Milano/EPSM Faculty, TEDC Assoc. Director), and Mark Lipton (Milano/Management Faculty).

The project resulted in three deliverables: a) a public syllabus, (b) the Teach-in, and (c) the survey. The [public syllabus](#), published as of March 2020, lists various readings and resources related to six topics in climate justice (see list of topics below). The six topics served as modules during the interactive [teach-in](#) on March 2, 2020. The four-hour teach-in included 54 people, including 35 students from several departments within the New School, 10 faculty, 1 staff, 3 alum and 5 community members from outside TNS. It featured lectures, group conversations, and panelists from

organizers of Decolonize This Place, Amin Husain and Amy Wang, and Jess Serrante from Radical Support Collective. After the teach-in, the participants were asked to fill out an extensive survey to gather insights about how the New School should act on climate justice

Module 1. Planetary
Emergency: Urgency of
Change for Just
Sustainabilities (led by L.
Figueroa)

Module 2. Root Shock and
Culture Shift: Crisis and
Response (led by M.
Fullilove)

Module 3. Social
Movements and Policy
Change: Envi. & Climate
Justice (led by A. Baptista)

Module 4. Education and
Teaching for Change in
Times of Planetary Crisis
(led by J. Clinton)

Module 5. Management &
Public Engagement for
Change during Crisis (led
by M. Lipton)

Module 6. Direct
Nonviolent Action in the
Face of Climate Policy
Deadlock: Social
Mobilization Debate

Climate Justice (lead and moderated by G. Abreu and with speakers from Decolonize this Place and Radical Support)

Wrap-up Discussion:
Collective Contributions
for an Emergency Action
Plan.



The participants' responses were evaluated to extract actionable items for the New School to address climate justice. The three major takeaways were:

a. **Developing a critical and transformative systems-based**

curriculum: Building and strengthening student, faculty, and staff competencies to address the climate emergency and advance climate justice

- Student participants in particular were interested in curriculum changes
- There's a need for intersectional education that takes into consideration race, coloniality, class, gender, North/South power relations, and other systems of inequality
- There needs to be climate education in all departments and schools across the New School, not just the Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management program or the Milano School
- Interdepartmental and cross-disciplinary collaborations should be emphasized more
- Climate education could be a requirement for first year studies
- Faculty should be trained to teach within context of climate justice
- Students are looking for more a skill-based education in order to create substantial changes in communities



b. Uplifting frontline, fenceline and marginalized communities, including their leadership and knowledge in (co)designing education, research, governance and public engagement: Reshaping collaboration and centering grassroots knowledge

- The New School should welcome, invite, and uplift BIPOC expertise and knowledges
- Collaboration with marginalized communities should be prioritized
- The New School could become a welcoming hub for climate justice communities
- Grassroots leaders can be given compensated visiting-roles at the New School
- Teaching positions are typically granted to professionals with conventional knowledge, but that is a missed opportunity to include subaltern knowledges
- Access to New School courses and resources could be made available to climate justice organizations and leaders, as well as to people in marginalized communities



c. Restructuring institutional resources, governance, property, and land: From a bureaucratic hierarchical system of power to a decentralized cooperative approach for community empowerment, rooted in decolonization

- Participants put a strong emphasis on the New School divesting from fossil fuel and other environmentally destructive industries

- Students and faculty need transparency and accountability regarding how the New School invests.

- Raising tuition often burdens or excludes low-income students, and perpetuates inequality. Financial transparency and accountability from the New School could prevent tuition hikes

- A cooperative (instead of a hierarchical) school governance could also create an open and accessible education in the interest of social, climate and environmental justice.

- Student success could be measured less by economic output, and more by the enhancements in communities and the environment

- To address inequality, the New School could do more to address the erosion of care labor, self-care activities and social reproduction. For example, university-provided childcare, enhanced health services including mental health services, access and security related to housing, access to basic needs and employment were also discussed.

- Funding and recruitment can be directed towards students from the global South

-The New School should make an explicit commitment to Indigenous communities, since it is located on Lenape land

This project delivered powerful, actionable takeaways on how the New School can change for its students, its community, and its planet. The New School will need to continue to challenge itself in order to reflect the change it wants to see in the world. Leonardo E. Figueroa Helland, Mindy Fullilove, and other faculty will be continuing the curriculum conversation during Earth Week 2021.

Join the conversation on the "Whole Earth curriculum" on April 20th for the Tishman Center's Earth Week programming. Event info TBD.



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